

TIPS FOR MANAGING DEADLINES

Missed deadlines are a major source of malpractice claims. Lawyers sometimes fail to determine the limitation period on a matter or fail to properly calendar it, miss other deadlines or fail to act when they arise. Here are tips to avoid these claims.



1. FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH LIMITATION AND NOTICE PERIODS

- The most problematic limitation periods are the ones you don't know you don't know. Take time to educate yourself on limitation and notice periods and other deadlines.
- The [practicePRO resource page](#) provides helpful guides on limitation periods and notice periods in Ontario.



2. ADVISE CLIENTS OF DEADLINE AND DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

- Make sure the client is made aware (in writing) of all deadlines for submitting documents to you and knows the consequences of a delay or failure to provide documents.
- Give the client a response date that allows for follow-up (i.e. that allows you to review and request further documents or responses from your client before the final deadline).



3. KEEP YOUR FILES MOVING USING PRACTICE MANAGEMENT TOOLS

- Diarize key deadlines and the steps you need to take to move your client's matter forward.
- Use practice management software and tickler systems to alert you to these approaching deadlines.



4. DON'T LEAVE THINGS TO THE LAST MINUTE

- Get in the habit of completing tasks before actual deadlines. If there is an unexpected problem, the extra time will allow you to take corrective action before the deadline has passed.



5. CHECK AND DOUBLE-CHECK DATES

- Always take the time to double-check that correct dates are entered on all documents and diary systems, and instruct staff to do the same.



6. AVOID ADMINISTRATIVE DISMISSALS

- Under Rule 48.14 of the Rules of Civil Procedure, matters commenced now are dismissed on a rolling basis five years after commencement. These dismissals will happen without notice to the parties. [LAWPRO's Rule 48 Toolkit](#) can help you avoid such administrative dismissal claims.

LEARN MORE ABOUT EFFECTIVE TIME MANAGEMENT AND MANAGING YOUR RISKS:
See the [“Malpractice Claims Fact Sheets”](#) and the [practicePRO time management webpage](#).