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**Ethics Alert**

If you are assisting an attorney in preparing a claim, be certain that the claim is made in a court that has jurisdiction over such a claim.

**Why is this important?** A court can only consider a case, if it has the jurisdiction to hear it. You must make sure as a paralegal and attorney, you are filing your claims in the correct court in the correct jurisdiction. Otherwise, you will face unnecessary obstacles and unethical behaviors.

With such dilemma would be having a client’s case dismissed. If the claim is filed with the clerk and then later determined that it was filed in error would and can result in a dismissal. A client’s case can be harmed if not file before the statute of limitations expired.

If you only have three years to file a personal injury case in New York. You are cutting it short before the date and you send it to the wrong court-- your client just lost their opportunity to present their case on the matter. Another example would be you wouldn't file a divorce case in Family Court when there is no jurisdiction to hear that matter but in Supreme Court.

A Malpractice suite can be brought against the attorney for negligence and a breach of the Duty to care. The American Bar Association’s preamble and scopes of a Lawyer’s responsibilities is stated as; [1] A lawyer, as a member of the legal profession, is a representative of clients, an officer of the legal system and a public citizen having special responsibility for the quality of justice.

Even though Paralegals are not licensed, we are still obligated to practice good conducts of Ethics and professional responsibility. **NALA** (*National Association of Legal Assistants, Inc.*) has established ‘Canons’ which are rules that were step up to help aid paralegals and attorneys. In Canon #6 - A paralegal must strive to maintain integrity and a high degree of competency through education and training with respect to professional responsibility, local rules and practice, and through continuing education in substantive areas of law to better assist the legal profession in fulfilling its duty to provide legal service.

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