

Employment Lawyer Curt Surls publishes article series on the work of Paralegals in law offices

Most law firms and businesses could not function without Paralegals. Curt Surls, Esq. reviews the work relationship Lawyers-Paralegals in 4 articles.

MANHATTAN BEACH, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES, November 30, 2018 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In the ever-changing economy, Paralegals are gradually taking on more and more tasks that in the past were handled exclusively by Attorneys. The beneficiaries of this evolution are primarily the clients themselves, notes employment attorney [Curt Surls](#) in his recent article series. The complete articles will be published on the blog of [Mr. Surls](#) at <https://curtsurlsblog.blogspot.com/>

The occupation of the Paralegal (or Legal Assistant) has evolved into a critical component to the make-up of the modern law office. Today, most law firms and businesses with legal departments could not function without them. In fact, it seems that Paralegals already handle most of the day-to-day routine legal support, including gathering information from clients. However, there have been some dramatic changes since the 1990s due to the fact that the number of attorneys has increased significantly, and at the same time the rise of personal computers and the Internet has changed the way Attorneys and Paralegals work. In fact, the economic pressure is on to transfer more and more legal work assignments to Paralegal to keep a law firm or other business competitive.



Curt Surls, Employment Lawyer

This four-part article reviews how Paralegals are used in a law office or business setting today, how work assignments are divided up between Attorneys and Paralegals, and what ethical requirements apply. In adapting to today's economic reality, the likely beneficiary of the emerging trends is the client.

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Curtis Surls, Employment Lawyer

The Basic Paralegal-Attorney Work Relationship

The general job description for Paralegals may seem rather mundane: “Assist lawyers by investigating facts, preparing legal documents, or researching legal precedent. Conduct research to support a legal proceeding, to formulate a defense, or to initiate legal action.” (see O*NET, below). In fact, as discussed below, it is a hands-on job of increasing importance as law firms and businesses are under

pressure to reduce costs in a competitive economy.

According to O*NET, a Paralegal's work assignments may include:

- * Prepare affidavits or other documents, such as legal correspondence, and organize and maintain documents in paper or electronic filing system.
 - * Prepare legal documents, including briefs, pleadings, appeals, wills, contracts, and real estate closing statements.
 - * Prepare for trial by performing tasks such as organizing exhibits.
 - * Investigate facts and law of cases and search pertinent sources, such as public records and internet sources, to determine causes of action and to prepare cases.
 - * Meet with clients and other professionals to discuss details of case.
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Further, Paralegal work involves now requires extensive use of Technology Skills, such as

- * Analytical or scientific software — Office software; LexisNexis, CourtLink Strategic Profiles; Uniscribe; Wilson's Computer Applications RealEasy Appraisals
- * Data base user interface and query software — Data entry software; Microsoft Access; Relativity e-Discovery; TrialWorks
- * Desktop publishing software — Digital contract software; Microsoft Publisher; ProForce Paralegal Pro-Pack; Sure Will Writer
- * Document management software — Adobe Systems Adobe Acrobat; CaseSoft DepPrep; PDF Snake Easy Bates; Summation Blaze
- * Information retrieval or search software — American LegalNet USCourtForms; LexisNexis; Thomson West FindLaw; Westlaw Real Property Deed

Detailed Work Activities involve:

- * Maintain the order of legal documents.
- * Prepare legal documents.
- * Research relevant legal materials to aid decision making.
- * Confer with court staff to clarify information.
- * Meet with individuals involved in legal processes to provide information and clarify issues.

Source: O*NET

The image shows a screenshot of a website. The top part is the header for the 'Law Office of Curt Surls', featuring a navigation menu with 'Home', 'Attorney Profile', 'Practice Areas', 'Map & Directions', and 'Contact'. A phone number '424-789-6055' is in the top right. Below the header is a banner image of a pier at sunset with the text 'OVER 20 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN EMPLOYMENT LAW'. Underneath the banner is the text 'Website of Curt Surls, Employment Law Specialist' and the URL 'celavoice.org/category/curt-surls/'. The main content area features the 'CELA VOICE' logo and the tagline 'PROMOTING FAIRNESS AND EQUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE'. A star icon and the text 'CELA VOICE WRITERS' are on the right. A breadcrumb trail shows 'Curt Surls'. The main article title is 'Bill protecting workers from forced arbitration awaits Governor approval'. Below the title is a black and white photo of a person in a suit holding a pen and a document. At the bottom of the article preview, it says 'Articles by Curt Surls on CELA VOICE'.

The reality today is that a large part of client interactions is handled by Paralegals, such as gathering necessary information, drafting forms, applications and pleadings, and providing answers to questions about the contents of the client file and missing documents. Thus, Paralegal work is not quite as mundane as it appears from the O*NET description. In fact, most of the colorful day-to-day client interactions are presumably handled by Paralegals (subject to ethical rules as discussed below).

One thing has continued unchanged; Paralegals provide essential support to Attorneys, as well as assist in the production and delivery of legal services to the modern client. This “go between client and attorney” career began to develop in the late 1960's when law firms and individual law practitioners sought ways to not only to improve efficiency, but also to reduce costs and expenses – expenses that could be passed along to the client over the course of legal representation. Still, the beneficiary has been the Client because such support work is billed at a much lower rate, and Paralegals tend to be much more accessible than Attorneys with their hectic, deadline-driven schedule. Thus, there is a benefit to both the law firm and the client - Paralegals are able and qualified to perform many services that reduce Attorney time spent on a particular legal matter, thus again resulting in a lower cost to the client. The use of Paralegal services also greatly improves case efficiency and accuracy as the Attorney is now free to spend more time on the more vital aspects of the client's case. In many cases, work is prepared or drafted by a Paralegal and then reviewed and finalized by an Attorney. This process in many instances provides “a second set of eyes” to check the work product. However, there are ethical restrictions so that the Paralegal does not dispense legal advice and acts like an attorney, even though the boundaries are becoming blurry, explains Mr. Surls.

The complete articles will be published on the blog of Mr. Surls at <https://curtsurlsblog.blogspot.com/>

About Curt Surls

[Curtis Surls](#) is an attorney in the areas of Employment Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, and Wrongful Termination. Located in Manhattan Beach, California, the Law Office of Curt Surls offers a complete range of employment law services to those living throughout Southern California, including all of Los Angeles, Riverside, Orange and San Bernardino counties. With nearly 30 years of experience focusing almost exclusively on this area of law, attorney Curt Surls and his law firm provide the personalized assistance and effective support his clients need.

References:

Law Firm Website: <https://www.curtsurlslaw.com/>

Professional Profile on law firm website: <https://www.curtsurlslaw.com/attorney-profile/>

Blog: <https://curtsurlsblog.blogspot.com/>

LinkedIn Profile: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/curt-surls-83118b5/>

Attorney Profile: <https://solomonlawguild.com/curt-surls%2C-esq>

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