

Public Discipline

These summaries are based on information provided by the Office of Lawyer Regulation (OLR), an agency of the Wisconsin Supreme Court. The OLR assists the court in supervising the practice of law and protecting the public from misconduct by lawyers. The full text of matters summarized can be located at <https://compendium.wicourts.gov/app/search>.

Disciplinary Proceeding against Brian Emmanuel Jorde

Brian Emmanuel Jorde consented to the imposition of a public reprimand, as discipline reciprocal to that imposed by Iowa. A Wisconsin Supreme Court-appointed referee issued the public reprimand on Sept. 2, 2025, pursuant to SCR 22.09(3).

Jorde's public reprimand in Iowa was based on violations of rules equivalent to SCR 20:8.4(c), SCR 20:3.3(a)(3), and SCR 20:5.3. Jorde filed in two states an affidavit in a proceeding that contained two pages of fictitious testimony, alleged to have been given by the affiant. He also affixed the affiant's electronic signature to the affidavit without her permission. The affiant was not Jorde's client and was not a party to the proceedings in which the affidavit was filed. In response to the affiant's questions about the matter, Jorde claimed the affidavit had been inadvertently filed by a staff member. The affiant requested several times that Jorde withdraw the affidavit. One state declined to remove the affidavit from the record. Jorde did not contact the second state about withdrawing the affidavit.

Jorde had no prior discipline.

Disciplinary Proceeding against Robert T. Malloy

On Aug. 14, 2025, the Wisconsin Supreme Court suspended for 18 months the law license of Robert T. Malloy, effective immediately. The court ordered Malloy to pay \$2,000 in restitution to one client and to pay the cost of the disciplinary proceeding, which totaled \$8,362.30. *Disciplinary Proc. Against Malloy*, 2025 WI 39.

Malloy engaged in eight counts of mis-

conduct related to two client matters. In the first matter, Malloy failed to explain to the client the purpose and effect of funds paid to Malloy by the client's family and deposited those funds into his business account rather than his trust account, in violation of SCR 20:1.5(b)(2) and (f). Malloy failed to respond to the client's request for an accounting upon termination of the representation, in violation of 20:1.5(b)(3). In violation of SCR 20:3.4(c), Malloy failed to comply with the circuit court's order to provide the client's file to successor counsel. He also failed to deliver the client's file to successor counsel and failed to refund unearned advanced fees, in violation of SCR 20:1.16(d). Finally, Malloy violated SCR 22.03(2) and (6), enforced via SCR 20:8.4(h), for failing to timely and fully respond to Office of Lawyer Regulation (OLR) requests for information and to cooperate with the OLR's investigation.

In the second matter, Malloy engaged in the unauthorized practice of law while his license was suspended, in violation of SCR 22.26(2), enforced via SCR 20:8.4(f). Malloy also failed to ascertain assets comprising the marital estate and filed incomplete, inaccurate, and unsigned documents, in violation of SCR 20:1.1.

In 1994, Malloy was publicly reprimanded. In 1997, Malloy's license was suspended for one year and, later that same year, his license was suspended for three months, consecutive to the first suspension. In 2000, the court denied Malloy's petition for reinstatement. In 2002 he was again publicly reprimanded for misconduct that occurred before the suspensions. In 2019, the court granted Malloy's second petition for reinstatement.

Disciplinary Proceeding against John P. Buran

On Aug. 14, 2025, the Wisconsin Supreme Court suspended for 30 months the law license of John P. Buran, effective immediately. The court also ordered Buran to pay the cost of the disciplinary proceeding, which totaled \$9,102.97. *Disciplinary Proc. Against Buran*, 2025 WI 40.

The court found that Buran had engaged in three counts of misconduct relating to multiple clients. Buran employed a legal assistant who left the position at some point in 2007. With respect to the first count of misconduct, in 2016 and again in 2021, Buran forged the former legal assistant's name as a witness on two wills prepared for one client.

Regarding counts two and three, between September 2008 and August 2020, Buran forged the former legal assistant's signature as a witness to seven additional wills. Buran filed six of those wills for probate in Manitowoc County Circuit Court probate proceedings. Buran failed to disclose that any of the six wills on which he had forged a witness signature might be defective or invalid. The record does not reflect that any of those wills were rejected or the subject of a dispute. The court again determined that Buran's forging of the former legal assistant's signature on the seven additional wills violated SCR 20:8.4(c). In addition, the court found that by filing for probate in circuit court proceedings six wills on which he had forged a witness signature without informing the court of that fact, Buran violated SCR 20:3.3(a)(1).

Buran had no prior misconduct.

Disciplinary Proceeding against Peter J. Kovac

On Aug. 15, 2025, the Wisconsin Supreme Court revoked the law license of Peter J. Kovac, effective immediately. The court also ordered Kovac to pay the cost of the disciplinary proceeding, which totaled \$6,816.88. *Disciplinary Proc. Against Kovac*, 2025 WI 41.

The court found Kovac had committed 11 counts of misconduct with regard to



two clients in three separate legal matters. The court noted that in two of the matters, the client's convictions on serious charges were overturned because of Kovac's misconduct.

Regarding representation of the first client, Kovac violated SCR 20:1.5(b)(1) and (2) by failing to timely communicate to the client in writing the scope of his representation, the rate or basis of fees, and expenses that might be incurred in either the civil or the criminal case in which he represented the client. Kovac also failed to diligently pursue the client's interests in both the criminal and the civil matters, in violation of SCR 20:1.3. In violation of SCR 20:1.4(a)(3), Kovac failed for six months to keep the client informed about the status of both the criminal and the civil matters. Kovac failed to review all the client's file materials in his possession and failed to determine whether he had delivered all such materials to successor postconviction counsel in the criminal case, in violation of SCR 20:1.16(d). Finally, Kovac violated SCR 22.03(2) and (6), enforceable via SCR 20:8.4(h), by failing to cooperate with its investigation into the client's grievance.

With regard to his representation of the second client, Kovac violated SCR 20:1.1 by failing to present alibi witnesses at trial and take the necessary steps to do so, including filing a notice of alibi and preparing defense witnesses to testify. Kovac also violated SCR 20:1.3 by failing in multiple ways to diligently pursue the client's matter. In violation of SCR 20:1.4(a)(2),

Kovac failed to reasonably consult, before trial, with the client about his defense and failed to communicate with the client about the restitution hearing. In violation of SCR 20:1.4(a)(3), Kovac failed to keep the client reasonably informed about the status of the criminal case by failing to explain to the client that he had reconsidered or decided not to file any postconviction motions. Finally, Kovac violated SCR 22.03(2) and (6), enforceable via SCR 20:8.4(h), by failing to provide requested information and documents during the

investigation of the client's grievance.

In revoking Kovac's license, the court stated that Kovac "is a disgrace to the profession and a danger to the public."

In 2008, Kovac received a public reprimand. He was privately reprimanded in 2012. In 2016, Kovac's license was suspended for 90 days. In 2020, he received a five-month suspension. He thereafter received another concurrent five-month suspension. **WL**

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Private Discipline

The Wisconsin Supreme Court permits the Office of Lawyer Regulation (OLR) to publish, for educational purposes, a summary of facts and professional conduct rule violations in matters in which the OLR imposed private reprimands. The summaries do not disclose information identifying the reprimanded attorneys. The summaries of selected private reprimands are printed to help attorneys avoid similar misconduct problems.

Lack of Diligence

Violations of SCR 20:1.3 and 8 C.F.R. § 1003.102(q)

A lawyer, representing a client seeking asylum, violated SCR 20:1.3 and 8 C.F.R. § 1003.102(q) by failing to timely file the client's application for asylum with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. The lawyer was aware of the filing deadline and created a case reminder. When the client called to ask about a work permit based on a pending asylum application, the lawyer reviewed the client's file and realized the lawyer had missed the filing deadline.

A Wisconsin Supreme Court-appointed referee approved the parties' private reprimand agreement, including their stipulation of facts and proposed violation, and issued a private consensual reprimand pursuant to SCR 22.09(3).

The lawyer had been practicing for more than 10 years and had no prior discipline.

Lack of Diligence

Violation of SCR 20:1.3

A Wisconsin attorney was appointed to represent a client in appealing a first-degree sexual assault conviction. The attorney failed to file a postconviction motion, file a notice of appeal, or request an extension. The client contacted the State Public Defender's Office (SPD), which subsequently reached out to the attorney. The attorney gave no explanation but assured the SPD that the attorney would move to reinstate the appeal. After the attorney again took no action, the SPD attempted to contact the attorney, this time without suc-

cess. The SPD was ultimately successful in restoring the client's postconviction rights.

By failing to take any action after being appointed, the attorney violated SCR 20:1.3, "A lawyer shall act with reasonable diligence and promptness in representing a client."

A Wisconsin Supreme Court-appointed referee approved the parties' private reprimand agreement, including their stipulation of facts and proposed violation, and issued a private consensual reprimand pursuant to SCR 22.09(3).

The attorney had been practicing for 20 years and had no prior discipline.

Lack of Diligence and Communication

Violations of SCR 20:1.3 and SCR 20:1.4(a)(3)

A lawyer in a personal injury matter violated SCR 20:1.4(a)(3) by failing to file a summons and complaint on the client's behalf before the applicable statute of limitation lapsed.

Upon realizing the calendaring mistake regarding the statute of limitation, the lawyer took immediate action to notify the client and provide information to assist the client with a potential malpractice claim.

A Wisconsin Supreme Court-appointed referee approved a consensual private reprimand agreement between the lawyer and the Office of Lawyer Regulation (OLR), including their stipulation of facts and proposed violations, and issued a private reprimand pursuant to SCR 22.09(3).

Lack of Diligence

Violation of SCR 20:1.3

A lawyer hired to represent a client in re-

vocation proceedings violated SCR 20:1.3 by failing to establish contact with the client, by failing to inform the Division of Hearings and Appeals that the attorney had been hired, and by failing to attend either revocation hearing with the client.

A Wisconsin Supreme Court-appointed referee approved the parties' private reprimand agreement, including their stipulation of facts and proposed violation, and issued a private consensual reprimand pursuant to SCR 22.09(3).

The lawyer had been practicing for more than 10 years and had one prior private reprimand, in 2008.

Lack of Diligence and Communication

Violations of SCR 20:1.3 and 20:1.4(a)(3) and (4)

A lawyer was hired to file a federal lawsuit against the Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) after an inmate died in its custody. The lawyer petitioned for special administration in state court to allow the client to sue the DOC in the name of the decedent's estate. Aside from two phone conversations, before filing the federal lawsuit the lawyer failed to discuss either the lawsuit or state probate matter with the client and failed to respond to the client's multiple written requests for case-related information. The lawyer thereby violated SCR 20:1.4(a)(3) and (4).

Additionally, by having no information to support the claims at the time the lawyer filed the lawsuit and then doing no work during the lawsuit to obtain evidence that the lawyer knew was needed through discovery, the lawyer violated SCR 20:1.3. By failing to inform the client of the court's dismissal of the lawsuit, the lawyer violated SCR 20:1.4(a)(3).

A Wisconsin Supreme Court-appointed referee approved the parties' private reprimand agreement, including their stipulation of facts and proposed violations, and issued a private consensual reprimand pursuant to SCR 22.09(3).

The lawyer had been practicing for more than 10 years and had no prior discipline.

Lack of Diligence

Violation of SCR 20:1.3

A lawyer's firm was hired to initiate a probate matter. The client, who had been appointed as personal representative, chose to stay with the lawyer when the lawyer left the firm for a solo practice. Thereafter, by failing to diligently pursue the probate matter by obtaining a closing certificate and signed receipt for claim and by failing to appear at four order-to-show-cause hearings, resulting in the court removing the lawyer as attorney of record for the client as personal representative, the lawyer violated SCR 20:1.3.

A Wisconsin Supreme Court-appointed referee approved the parties' private reprimand agreement, including their stipulation of facts and proposed violation, and issued a private consensual reprimand pursuant to SCR 22.09(3).

The lawyer had been practicing for more than 10 years and had no prior discipline.

Lack of Notice and Delivery; Disputes of Trust Property

Violations of SCR 20:1.15(e)(1) and SCR 20:1.15(e)(3)

A lawyer received settlement funds and had received notice that a medical provider had an interest in the funds, identified by a lien and letter of protection. By failing to promptly notify the medical provider in writing, the lawyer violated SCR 20:1.15(e)(1).

Having received the lien and letter of protection from the medical provider and knowing of a dispute regarding the division of the client's settlement funds held in trust, by failing to hold the disputed portion of the funds in trust until the dispute was resolved, the lawyer also violated SCR 20:1.15(e)(3).

A Wisconsin Supreme Court-appointed referee approved the parties' reprimand agreement, including their stipulation of facts and proposed violations, and issued a private consensual reprimand pursuant to SCR 22.09(3).

The lawyer had been practicing for more than 25 years and had no prior discipline.

Lack of Diligence

Violation of SCR 20:1.3

A client hired a lawyer to appeal a municipal court judgment, which found the client guilty of disorderly conduct.

The lawyer violated SCR 20:1.3 for failing to give the municipality written notice of appeal within 20 days after the municipal court's judgment, which led to dismissal of the client's appeal.

A Wisconsin Supreme Court-appointed referee approved the parties' reprimand agreement, including their stipulation of facts and proposed violations, and issued a private consensual reprimand pursuant to SCR 22.09(3).

The lawyer had been practicing for more than 20 years and had no prior discipline.

Depositing Advanced Fee into Business Account; Declining or Terminating Representation

Violations of SCR 20:1.5 and SCR 20:1.16

A lawyer hired to represent a client in a

criminal case violated SCR 20:1.5(f) by depositing an advanced fee payment into the lawyer's business account without fully complying with SCR 20:1.5(g). The lawyer also violated SCR 20:1.16(d) by failing to timely comply with the client's requests for copies of documents from the client file made after the termination of the representation.

As a condition of the imposition of the private reprimand, the lawyer applied to the State Bar of Wisconsin's Fee Arbitration Program regarding the fee in the underlying matter and paid the entirety of the fee for both parties.

A Wisconsin Supreme Court-appointed referee approved the parties' private reprimand agreement, including their stipulation of facts and proposed violations, and issued a private consensual reprimand pursuant to SCR 22.09(3).

The lawyer had been practicing for more than 10 years and had no prior discipline. **WL**

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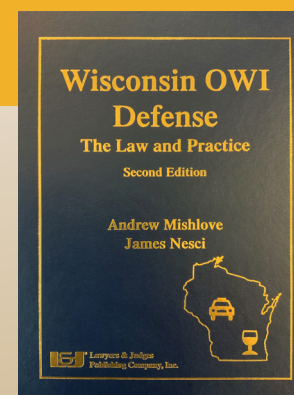
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