

**Rule 1.11 Special Conflicts Of Interest For Former And Current Government Officers And Employees**  
**(Commission's Proposed Rule – CLEAN VERSION)**

- (a) Except as law may otherwise expressly permit, a lawyer who has formerly served as a public officer or employee of the government:
- (1) is subject to Rule 1.9(c); and
  - (2) shall not otherwise represent a client in connection with a matter in which the lawyer participated personally and substantially as a public officer or employee, unless the appropriate government agency gives its informed written consent to the representation. This paragraph shall not apply to matters governed by Rule 1.12(a).
- (b) When a lawyer is prohibited from representation under paragraph (a), no lawyer in a firm with which that lawyer is associated may knowingly undertake or continue representation in such a matter unless:
- (1) the personally prohibited lawyer is timely screened from any participation in the matter and is apportioned no part of the fee therefrom; and
  - (2) written notice is promptly given to the appropriate government agency to enable it to ascertain compliance with the provisions of this Rule.
- (c) Except as law may otherwise expressly permit, a lawyer who was a public officer or employee and, during that employment, acquired information that the lawyer knows is confidential government information about a person, may not represent a private client whose interests are adverse to that person in a matter in which the information could be used to the material disadvantage of that person. As used in this Rule, the term “confidential government information” means information that has been obtained under governmental authority, that, at the time this Rule is applied, the government is prohibited by law from disclosing to the public, or has a legal privilege not to disclose, and that is not otherwise available to the public. A firm with which that lawyer is associated may undertake or continue representation in the matter only if the personally prohibited lawyer is timely screened from any participation in the matter and is apportioned no part of the fee therefrom.
- (d) Except as law may otherwise expressly permit, a lawyer currently serving as a public officer or employee:
- (1) is subject to Rules 1.7 and 1.9; and
  - (2) shall not:
    - (i) participate in a matter in which the lawyer participated personally and substantially while in private practice or nongovernmental employment, unless the appropriate government agency gives its informed written consent; or
    - (ii) negotiate for private employment with any person who is involved as a party, or as a lawyer for a party, or with a law firm for a party, in a matter in which the lawyer is

participating personally and substantially, except that a lawyer serving as a law clerk to a judge, other adjudicative officer or arbitrator may negotiate for private employment as permitted by Rule 1.12(b) and subject to the conditions stated in Rule 1.12(b).

- (e) As used in this Rule, the term “matter” includes:
- (1) any judicial or other proceeding, application, request for a ruling or other determination, contract, claim, controversy, investigation, charge, accusation, arrest or other particular matter involving a specific party or parties, and
  - (2) any other matter covered by the conflict of interest rules of the appropriate government agency.

#### COMMENT

- [1] A lawyer who has served or is currently serving as a public officer or employee is personally subject to these Rules, including the prohibition against concurrent conflicts of interest stated in Rule 1.7 and conflicts resulting from duties to former clients as stated in Rule 1.9. In addition, such a lawyer may be subject to statutes and government regulations regarding conflict of interest. See, e.g., Business and Professions Code section 6131. Such statutes and regulations may circumscribe the extent to which the government agency may give consent under this Rule. See Rule 1.0.1(e-1) for the definition of “informed written consent.”
- [2] Paragraphs (a)(1) and (a)(2) restate the obligations of an individual lawyer toward a former government client, whether the lawyer

currently is in private practice or nongovernmental employment or the lawyer currently serves as an officer or employee of a different government agency. See Comment [5]. Paragraph (d)(1) restates the obligations to a former private client of an individual lawyer who is currently serving as an officer or employee of the government. Rule 1.10 is not applicable to the conflicts of interest addressed by this Rule. Rather, paragraph (b) sets forth a special imputation rule for former government lawyers that provides for screening and notice. Concerning imputation and screening within a government agency, see Comments [9B] and [9C], below.

- [3] Paragraphs (a)(2) and (d)(2) apply regardless of whether a lawyer is adverse to a former client and are thus designed not only to protect the former client, but also to prevent a lawyer from exploiting public office for the advantage of another client. For example, a lawyer who has pursued a claim on behalf of the government may not pursue the same claim on behalf of a later government or private client after the lawyer has left government service, except when authorized to do so by the government agency under paragraph (a). Similarly, a lawyer who has pursued a claim on behalf of a private client may not pursue the claim on behalf of the government, except when authorized to do so by paragraph (d). As with paragraphs (a)(1) and (d)(1), Rule 1.10 is not applicable to the conflicts of interest addressed by paragraphs (a)(2) and (d)(2).
- [4] This Rule represents a balancing of interests. On the one hand, where the successive clients are a government agency and another client, public or private, the risk exists that power or discretion vested in that agency might be used for the special benefit of the other client. A lawyer should not be in a position where benefit to the other client might affect performance of the lawyer’s professional

functions on behalf of the government. Also, unfair advantage could accrue to the other client by reason of access to confidential government information about the client's adversary obtainable only through the lawyer's government service. On the other hand, the rules governing lawyers presently or formerly employed by a government agency should not be so restrictive as to inhibit transfer of employment to and from the government. The government has a legitimate need to attract qualified lawyers as well as to maintain high ethical standards. Thus, a former government lawyer is disqualified only from particular matters in which the lawyer participated personally and substantially. The provisions for screening and waiver in paragraph (b) are necessary to prevent this Rule from imposing too severe an obstacle against entering public service. The limitations of representation in paragraphs (a)(2) and (d)(2) to matters involving a specific party or parties, rather than imputing conflicts to all substantive issues on which the lawyer worked, serves a similar function.

- [4A] By requiring a former government lawyer to comply with Rule 1.9(c), Rule 1.11(a)(1) protects information obtained while working for the government to the same extent as information learned while representing a private client. Accordingly, unless the information acquired during government service is "generally known" or these Rules would otherwise permit its use or disclosure, the information may not be used or revealed to the government's disadvantage. This provision applies regardless of whether the lawyer was working in a "legal" capacity. Thus, information learned by the lawyer while in public service in an administrative, policy or advisory position also is covered by Rule 1.11(a)(1). Paragraph (c) of this Rule adds further protections against exploitation of confidential information. Paragraph (c) prohibits a lawyer who has information about a person

acquired when the lawyer was a public officer or employee, that the lawyer knows is confidential government information, from representing a private client whose interests are adverse to that person in a matter in which the information could be used to that person's material disadvantage. A firm with which the lawyer is associated may undertake or continue representation in the matter only if the lawyer who possesses the confidential government information is timely screened. Thus, a purpose and effect of the prohibitions contained in Rule 1.11(c) are to prevent the lawyer's subsequent private client from obtaining an unfair advantage because the lawyer has confidential government information about the client's adversary.

- [5] When a lawyer has been employed by one government agency and then moves to a second government agency, it may be appropriate to treat that second agency as another client for purposes of this Rule, as when a lawyer is employed by a city and subsequently is employed by a federal agency. Because the conflict of interest is governed by paragraphs (a) and (b), the latter agency is required to screen the lawyer. The question of whether two government agencies should be regarded as the same or different clients for conflict of interest purposes is beyond the scope of these Rules. See Rule 1.13, Comment [14]. See also *Civil Service Commission v. Superior Court* (1984) 163 Cal.App.3d 70 [209 Cal.Rptr. 159].

#### **Screening of Former Government Lawyers Pursuant to Paragraphs (b) and (c)**

- [6] Paragraphs (b) and (c) contemplate a screening arrangement for former government lawyers. See Rule 1.0.1(k) (requirements for screening procedures). These paragraphs do not prohibit a lawyer

from receiving a salary or partnership share established by prior independent agreement, but that lawyer may not receive compensation directly relating the lawyer's compensation to the fee in the matter in which the lawyer is disqualified.

- [7] Notice to the appropriate government agency, including a description of the screened lawyer's prior representation and of the screening procedures employed, generally should be given as soon as practicable after the need for screening becomes apparent.
- [8] Paragraph (c) operates only when the lawyer in question has actual knowledge of the information; it does not operate with respect to information that merely could be imputed to the lawyer.
- [9] Paragraphs (a) and (d) do not prohibit a lawyer from jointly representing a private party and a government agency when doing so is permitted by Rule 1.7 and is not otherwise prohibited by law.

**Consent required to permit government lawyer to represent the government in a matter in which the lawyer participated personally and substantially**

- [9A] A government officer or employee may participate in a matter in which the lawyer participated personally and substantially while in private practice or non-governmental employment only if: (i) the government agency gives its informed written consent as required by subparagraph (d)(2)(i); and (ii) the former client gives its informed written consent as required by Rule 1.9, to which the lawyer is subject by subparagraph (d)(1).

**This Rule Not Determinative of Disqualification**

- [9B] This Rule does not address whether a lawyer or law firm will be disqualified from a representation. See, e.g., *Hollywood v. Superior Court* (2008) 43 Cal.4th 721 [76 Cal.Rptr.3d 264]. Whether a lawyer or law firm will or will not be disqualified is a matter to be determined by an appropriate tribunal. See, e.g., *City & County of San Francisco v. Cobra Solutions, Inc.*, 38 Cal. 4th 839 [43 Cal.Rptr.3d 771] (2006); *Younger v. Superior Court* (1978) 77 Cal. App. 3d 892 [144 Cal.Rptr. 34]. Regarding prosecutors in criminal matters, see Penal Code section 1424.
- [9C] This Rule leaves open the issues of: (1) whether, in a particular matter, a lawyer's conflict under paragraph (d) will be imputed to other lawyers serving in the same governmental agency; and (2) whether the use of a timely screen will avoid that imputation. These issues are a matter of case law.

**Matter**

- [10] For purposes of paragraph (e) of this Rule, a "matter" may continue in another form. In determining whether two particular matters are the same, the lawyer should consider the extent to which the matters involve the same basic facts, the same or related parties, and the time elapsed.