

PARALEGAL SPECIALIST - CONFIDENTIAL

Definition:

Performs and coordinates a variety of highly specialized paralegal duties to support legal, litigation, and risk management functions. These functions include (but not limited to) researching law, investigating facts, calendaring deadlines and hearing dates, and preparing documents and affidavits to assist attorneys to prepare for and conduct cases. Ensures efficient operation of the administrative aspects of the legal department.

Distinguishing Characteristics:

This position represents the highest, or senior level, in a paraprofessional legal career ladder, independently working with a variety of individuals and groups inside and outside the organization. Advancement to Paralegal Specialist involves compliance with the qualifications of the position and demonstration of the following: advanced research skills, investigative skills, advanced keyboarding skills (70 wpm); the ability to analyze law sources and produce written summaries of law and facts; the ability to calendar filing deadlines and other case dates; knowledge of the litigation process, including discovery; and the ability to prepare cases. In addition, the incumbent must be able to serve on behalf of an attorney at investigative meetings, hearings, or testimonies to recommend actions and record proceedings.

Supervision Exercised and Received:

Works under limited supervision. Oversees and may assign work to legal secretaries and other clerical support staff.

Examples of Duties and Responsibilities:

Duties and responsibilities may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Researches and analyzes statutes, regulations, government agency guidance, judicial decisions, legal articles, and reports to prepare complex legal documents such as briefs, opinions, resolutions, pleadings, appeals, and contracts, for review and approval by an attorney.
- Prepares affidavits of documents and maintains a document file. Delivers or directs delivery of subpoenas to witnesses and parties to action.
- Independently drafts for review, then files pleadings, motions, and other case-related documents with the court system or administrative office.
- Attends non-routine, difficult, and often sensitive meetings or hearings to record significant elements of discussion and record official action. Oversees or prepares agendas in advance of proceedings, minutes or summaries of proceedings, and files and distributes minutes for official records.
- Investigates facts, and law pertaining to claims and cases to determine causes of action, possible defenses, other information relevant to a case. Investigations can take place from inception through discovery, trial, and appeal.
- Interviews persons to compile information for legal records and reports, prompting the delivery of clear explanations and use of well-developed skill in questioning to determine the proper line of inquiry and obtain highly sensitive facts.
- Drafts subpoenas, letters, requests for information, requests for documents, responses, objections, and other discovery-related documents and correspondence, or templates thereof, for attorney review.
- Maintains case calendars, including filing deadlines, hearing dates, and other important dates, in accordance with legal requirements and the attorney's preferences. Track deadlines and consult with the attorney as necessary to ensure deadlines are met.
- Maintains case files and other project files, both electronic and hard copy, in an organized and timely manner. Maintains files and prepares documents relating to collective bargaining negotiations, employee grievances, and other matters of employer-employee relations.
- Regularly has access to and may gather confidential information relating to collective bargaining negotiations, grievances, and other matters of employer-employee relations.
- May direct and coordinate some or all of the work of legal secretarial and clerical staff.
- May maintain some fiscal records for the department, such as budget or special fund accounts. May prepare and process invoices, requisitions, expense claims and vouchers, payroll information, and compile periodic reports.
- Composes correspondence and other documents of an important and confidential nature from dictation, brief instructions, independent research, and research notes. Verifies and corrects grammar and composition as required.
- Performs other duties as required to accomplish the objectives of the position.

Employment Standards:

Knowledge of:

- Specialized knowledge of legal concepts, principles, terminology, and procedures.
- Working knowledge of and skill in the use of general legal reference materials, including state and federal statutes, regulations, government agency guidance, case law, opinions, treatises, handbooks, and other reference materials.
- In-depth knowledge of modern legal office practices and procedures.
- In-depth knowledge of the legal filing system, including e-filing.
- In-depth technical knowledge of modern legal research, including use of Lexis Nexis and/or Westlaw, and civil case preparation methods.
- Broad working knowledge of the special procedures, processes, technicalities, and work methods for legal problem solving and decision making.
- In-depth knowledge of and skill in using computerized word processing, spreadsheet, and related office productivity software.
- Math skills sufficient to compute sums, quotients, fractions, percents, ratios and other computations as required by the assignment.
- Well-developed human relation skills to assist in highly sensitive investigations, communicate technical or involved information to a variety of audiences, and work effectively and cooperatively across organizational lines.
- Safe work practices.

Ability to:

- Perform all of the relevant duties of the position with only limited supervision.
- Conduct research independently including the ability to plan and implement steps to reach an objective.
- Employ critical thinking, analysis and judgement.
- Operate a personal computer, printers, and specialized office productivity software.
- Compose and transcribe correspondence and reports at a rate of 70 w.p.m.
- Understand, interpret and apply statutes, court decisions, ordinances, resolutions, agency policies and procedures, collective bargaining agreements, and legal documents.
- Learn about and operate effectively within administrative agency proceedings, including those of the California Office of Administrative Hearings and the California Public Employment Relations Board.
- Use discretion and hold all communications to be strictly confidential.
- Write complex, technical, sensitive, and confidential correspondence in a professional manner.
- Maintain confidential and sensitive information.
- Prioritize work in order to meet multiple deadlines and maintain schedules.
- Support multiple attorneys simultaneously on different types of cases and other projects.
- Remain calm in stressful situations.
- Work effectively as part of a team devoted to customer service, both within the office and externally for clients and others.

Computer Skills:

- Advanced word processing skills, such as the ability to format, save files for cross-platform use and in different versions, work with toolbars, menus, and rulers, insert graphics, use borders, compare versions of documents, create forms and templates, adjust formatting, and print labels and envelopes.
- Advanced database skills, such as the ability to sort and retrieve records; create layouts, reports, create and print mailing labels; perform mail merge for form letters; add, edit, delete fields and records.
- Advanced spreadsheet skills, including the ability to open, modify, save, and print a new or existing spreadsheet, create spreadsheets to track or communicate data, enter text and numbers and use spreadsheet program formulas to compile data effectively.
- Advanced email skills, including the ability to send and open a file attachment, search emails, create email address lists and groups, archive emails in an organized manner, and retrieve sent and received emails as necessary.
- Advanced electronic presentation software such as the ability to create a slide show, add new slides, change the template design, use transitions and other effects, create handouts, insert sounds and animation, set up and run a presentation from an LCD display or projector.

- Advanced Internet usage including the ability to configure your browser, find reliable information on the Internet, perform custom searches, edit preferences, locate, download, print and use photos, art, text, audio, video (while observing copyright regulations), and save material in a useable format.

Education and Experience:

Any combination of education and experience that would likely provide the knowledge and abilities is qualifying. A typical way to obtain the knowledge and abilities would be:

Education:

- The position requires an Associates Degree in a paralegal program along with a Paralegal Certificate.

Experience:

- Requires paralegal experience in a legal environment.

Physical Demands:

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job.

- The position requires ordinary ambulatory ability to retrieve work materials, intermittent walking, standing, stooping, and carrying and lifting of light-to-medium weight materials such as case files, law books, and similar materials (under 30 pounds).
- Requires visual acuity sufficient to recognize people, words, and numbers.
- Requires hand-eye-arm and finger dexterity to use a personal computer keyboard, ten-key, and other common office equipment.
- Requires speaking and hearing ability sufficient to hear over phone and carry on complex, technical, and confidential conversations with individuals and small groups.
- Must have normal (20/20) vision, corrected or uncorrected.

Work Environment:

The following conditions may be present:

- Work is performed in an office environment with minimal exposure to health and safety considerations.

Other Requirements:

- Must be fingerprinted and a satisfactory Department of Justice records check must be received by SCOE, prior to employment.
- TB testing will be required upon employment.
- Must pass a pre-employment physical (if applicable).
- May be required to obtain first aid and CPR certificates within the first 6-12 months of employment.
- May be required to drive with or without students; some positions may require a current California driver license, proof of insurance, and possible participation in the DMV Pull Notice Program once employed.