

LEGAL PROFESSION ACT  
(CHAPTER 161, SECTION 71(1))

## LEGAL PROFESSION (GROUP PRACTICE) RULES

## ARRANGEMENT OF RULES

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[1st April 1999]

**Citation**

1. These Rules may be cited as the Legal Profession (Group Practice) Rules.

PART I

PRELIMINARY

**Definitions**

2. In these Rules, unless the context otherwise requires —

“Central Provident Fund Board” means the Central Provident Fund Board constituted under the Central Provident Fund Act (Cap. 36);

*[S 397/2011 wef 01/08/2011]*

“client account” has the same meaning as in rule 2(1) of the Legal Profession (Solicitors’ Accounts) Rules (R 8);

*[S 397/2011 wef 01/08/2011]*

“conveyancing account”, “conveyancing (CPF) account” and “conveyancing money” have the same meanings as in rule 2(2) of the Conveyancing and Law of Property (Conveyancing) Rules 2011 (G.N. No. S 391/2011);

*[S 397/2011 wef 01/08/2011]*

“firm” means a law firm as defined in the Legal Profession (Professional Conduct) Rules (R 1);

*[S 666/2006 wef 01/01/2007]*

“firm name” means the name or style under which the practice of a firm is being carried on;

“group practice” means a practice comprising 2 or more firms which expressly practise as a group under a group name as separate firms in mutual co-operation;

“manager” means the manager referred to in rule 7.

**Application**

3. These Rules shall apply to all firms in a group practice and are intended to govern their relationship within the group practice and their dealings with clients and other persons outside the group practice without prejudice to rules of etiquette and professional practice and any other applicable law.

## PART II

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES

**Purpose and spirit of group practice**

4.—(1) The purpose and spirit of a group practice is to enable the firms in the group practice to come together in mutual co-operation without being partners of each other as such.

(2) A firm in a group practice may instruct another firm in the group practice to undertake work entrusted by a client to the instructing firm, subject to paragraph (3) and to any rule of etiquette and professional practice and any written instruction of the client to the contrary.

(3) A copy of paragraph (2) shall be displayed prominently within the office of a group practice or, where a group practice does not have an office, within the office of each firm in the group practice.

(4) An advocate and solicitor of a firm in a group practice, who is a commissioner for oaths or notary public, may attest to any document requiring attestation of clients of another firm in the group practice.

**Separate liability**

5.—(1) Each firm in a group practice shall be liable for and duly and punctually pay and discharge its own debts and liabilities and shall keep the manager and the other firms in the group practice and their respective estates indemnified against such debts and liabilities and against all actions, proceedings, costs, claims and demands in respect thereof.

(2) Each firm in a group practice shall bear its own professional indemnity insurance premia, accountancy and audit costs, professional and similar subscriptions and levies payable to the Law Society and the Singapore Academy of Law.

**Name, style and register of group practice**

6.—(1) A group practice shall bear a name which describes the group practice as such and shall bear the words “Group Law Practice” as part of its name.

(2) No firm which is not a member of a group practice shall describe itself as a group practice.

(3) A firm in a group practice may in the course of its professional undertakings and in documents in which its name appears, including its letterheads, nameplates and business calling cards, use the name of the group practice in conjunction with its own firm name.

(4) The sole proprietors and partners of firms which wish to practise as a group practice shall apply to the Council for approval of the proposed name of the group practice and the manner in which the name of the group practice will be used in conjunction with the firm name of each firm in the group practice.

(5) No firm shall practise as a member of a group practice unless the name of the group practice shall have been approved in accordance with paragraph (4).

(6) The approval or rejection of any proposed name shall be at the sole discretion of the Council.

(7) Without limiting the discretion of the Council, the Council shall not approve any proposed name which in its opinion —

- (a) is or may be reasonably be regarded as being ostentatious, in bad taste, misleading, exploitative, deceptive, inaccurate, false, sensational, offensive or in any other way unbecoming the dignity of the legal profession;
- (b) is so similar to that of an existing group practice as to be likely to be confused with it; or
- (c) is inconsistent with any of the provisions of the Legal Profession (Publicity) Rules (R 13).

(8) The Council may, if it thinks fit, direct a group practice to change its name and the group practice shall comply with the direction within 6 weeks after the date of the direction or such longer period as the Council allows.

(9) If a group practice fails to comply with any direction under paragraph (8), the sole proprietors and partners of the firms of the group practice shall immediately cease to practise under the name of the group practice.

(10) Any firm which joins or withdraws from a group practice shall within 7 days of such joining or withdrawal notify the Council.

(11) The Council shall maintain a register of group practices and the firms in each group practice.

### **Management of group practice**

7.—(1) A group practice may be managed by a manager.

(2) The manager may provide, or firms in a group practice may otherwise share, the infrastructure and management services which may be required for the efficient and proper functioning of the group practice.

(3) For the purposes of this rule —

“infrastructure” includes the premises in which the group practice operates, furnishings, law books, office and related equipment and paraphernalia, utilities, electronic services for the purpose of searches and research;

“management services” includes all aspects of the management of the group practice, such as the hiring and termination of secretarial, clerical and other staff or agent of the group practice, but does not include any aspect which a firm in the group practice has by these Rules or by contract agreed to provide for itself.

### **Bank account**

8.—(1) Where a group practice does not have a manager, the firms in the group practice may open and operate a common office account.

(2) Where a group practice has a manager, the firms in the group practice may open and operate a common office account for the purpose of meeting common expenses not borne by the manager.

(3) Each firm in a group practice shall maintain, separately from the other firms in the group practice —

(a) its own client account;

(b) if it holds or receives (or will hold or receive) any conveyancing money, its own conveyancing account; and

- (c) if it is appointed to act for the Central Provident Fund Board in any conveyancing transaction, its own conveyancing (CPF) account.

*[S 397/2011 wef 01/08/2011]*

### **Incapacity or death of sole proprietor**

**9.** The sole proprietor of a firm in a group practice shall appoint in writing another firm in the group practice to act in his stead in the event of his incapacity or death.

*[G.N. No. S 103/99]*

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY  
LEGAL PROFESSION (GROUP PRACTICE) RULES  
(CHAPTER 161, R 19)

This Legislative History is provided for the convenience of users of the Legal Profession (Group Practice) Rules. It is not part of these Rules.

**1. G. N. No. S 103/1999 — Legal Profession (Group Practice) Rules 1999**

Date of commencement : 1 April 1999

**2. 2001 Revised Edition — Legal Profession (Group Practice) Rules**

Date of operation : 31 January 2001

**3. G. N. No. S 666/2006 — Legal Profession (Group Practice) (Amendment) Rules 2006**

Date of commencement : 1 January 2007

**4. G.N. No. S 397/2011 — Legal Profession (Group Practice) (Amendment) Rules 2011**

Date of commencement : 1 August 2011