

LEGAL TROUBLES

Common Situations

Modern life is complicated. Sometimes its complications are greater than you can handle by yourself. Here are some common situations in which it might be prudent to seek the help of an attorney.

Family Matters

Do you have a will? Dying without one (called "dying intestate") can bring problems and unnecessary costs to your heirs, possibly delaying the disposition of your estate. If you have small children and you and your spouse both die at the same time, a will spells out who is to become guardian of the children.

Divorce on the horizon? If it's available in your state, "no fault" divorces make sense for some people (especially those without children or extensive community property), but hiring an attorney to represent your interests before the judge can make good sense.

Money Matters

Are you buying property? If it's a complicated arrangement, asking a real estate attorney to review the transaction papers on your behalf can save you money and complications in the long run.

If you've been injured in an accident, or injured on the job, it can be helpful at least to discuss the matter with an attorney, especially if lost wages or high medical bills are involved.

A reputable bankruptcy attorney can review your financial situation and make recommendations for action if creditors are lined up at your door. It's especially important to get reliable advice if a mortgage is involved.

Criminal Matters

If you're arrested and taken before a judge, an attorney will be appointed

for you if you can't afford one, or until you can locate one on your own.

Your local district attorney's job is to represent you (as a representative of "the people") if you've been the victim of a crime.

Small Claims Court

If you have a problem which can be satisfied by the payment of a relatively small amount of money, such as trying to get a refund from a merchant, small claims court might be for you. You must act as your own representative in small claims court. Check with your local municipal court to find out the maximum amount of money for which you can sue.

Ask an attorney to review the documents involved in a purchase as important as your new house.

