

Are These Common Client Complaints Plaguing Your Law Practice?

Client complaints are often early warning signs of deeper operational issues. Missed communication, unclear billing, and slow response times can quickly erode trust and lead to negative reviews or even formal complaints.

This guide breaks down the most common complaints law firms face, how to resolve them, and what clients can do if issues escalate, including how to file a complaint against a lawyer.

9 Fundamental Time and Billing Features

Accurate time tracking leads to precise invoices, better project management, and fairer pricing for legal services. Download this checklist to discover the 9 key features you need.

[Get the guide](#)

Common Client Complaints in Law Firms

Most complaints fall into a few consistent categories:

- Lack of communication
- Unexpected legal fees
- Delayed progress
- Confusion about case status

These issues are rarely isolated. They are often tied to inefficient systems and inconsistent workflows.

Poor Communication and Responsiveness

Clients expect timely updates. When they do not hear from their attorney, they assume nothing is happening.

Common complaint:

“My lawyer never returns my calls.”

Solution:

- Set communication expectations early
 - Use consistent update schedules
 - Track client interactions across matters
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Billing Disputes and Lack of Transparency

Billing confusion is one of the fastest ways to lose client trust.

Common complaint:

“I do not understand what I am being charged for.”

Root causes include:

- Vague invoice descriptions
- Inconsistent billing practices
- Delayed invoicing

Clear, itemized billing reduces disputes and improves collections. When firms fail here, complaints often escalate.

Delays and Missed Deadlines

Clients may not understand legal timelines, but they do notice delays.

Common complaint:

“My case is taking too long.”

Prevention strategies:

- Provide realistic timelines
 - Track deadlines consistently
 - Communicate delays proactively
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Lack of Case Clarity

Clients want to understand what is happening and why.

Common complaint:

“I do not know what my lawyer is doing.”

Fix:

- Break down legal steps in plain language
- Provide regular progress updates
- Document key decisions

Free Legal Billing Terms Cheat Sheet

Legal billing terms can be confusing. TimeSolv has prepared a list of the most commonly used legal billing terms that lawyers use in routine. It's a must to have it in your pinned files, sticky notes, or however you carry your essentials while practicing.

Download the cheat sheet and master every billing term!

[Get Your Free Cheat Sheet](#)

Unauthorized Practice of Law (UPL)

The **unauthorized practice of law** is a high-volume search topic and a serious ethical issue that can lead to formal complaints.

What Is Unauthorized Practice of Law?

Unauthorized practice of law occurs when someone who is not licensed to practice law provides legal advice or services.

This can include:

- Non-lawyers giving legal advice
- Disbarred attorneys continuing to practice
- Out-of-state attorneys working without proper authorization

Examples of Unauthorized Practice of Law

- A paralegal offering legal advice without attorney supervision
- A business consultant drafting legal contracts independently
- An online service providing personalized legal guidance without licensed attorneys

Why This Leads to Complaints

Clients who discover they received improper or unlicensed legal help often file complaints with state bar associations.

This is one of the most serious types of complaints because it involves both ethical and legal violations.

How to File a Complaint Against an Attorney

Search intent around “how do I file a complaint against an attorney” continues to grow. Including clear guidance helps capture this traffic and builds topical authority.

Steps to File a Complaint Against a Lawyer

1. Contact the State Bar Association

Each state regulates attorneys through its bar association.

2. Submit a Written Complaint

Most states provide an online or downloadable complaint form.

3. Provide Supporting Documentation

Include emails, invoices, contracts, or any relevant records.

4. Wait for Review

The bar will evaluate whether the complaint involves an ethical violation.

Where to File a Complaint

- State bar association website
 - Legal disciplinary board
 - Consumer protection agencies in some cases
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Common Reasons Clients File Complaints

- Billing disputes
 - Lack of communication
 - Ethical violations
 - Unauthorized practice of law
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How Law Firms Can Reduce Client Complaints

Most complaints are preventable with better systems.

1. Standardize Billing Processes

Clear invoices reduce confusion and disputes.

2. Improve Communication Workflows

Consistent updates eliminate uncertainty.

3. Track Time Accurately

Missing or inconsistent time entries often lead to billing errors.

4. Automate Where Possible

Manual processes create gaps that lead to complaints.

Why Operational Efficiency Matters

Many client complaints stem from administrative inefficiencies, not legal ability.

When time tracking, billing, and payments are disconnected, firms are more likely to:

- Miss billable hours
- Send unclear invoices
- Delay communication

TimeSolv helps address these issues by connecting time tracking, billing, and payments in one system. This reduces friction, improves accuracy, and creates a better client experience.

FAQ: Client Complaints and Legal Issues

What is the unauthorized practice of law?

It is when someone provides legal services without a valid law license.

How do I file a complaint against an attorney?

You can file a complaint through your state bar association, usually online or by submitting a formal complaint form.

Can I file a complaint against a lawyer for poor communication?

Yes. While not always an ethical violation, repeated communication failures can lead to disciplinary review.

What happens after filing a complaint?

The bar association reviews the complaint and determines whether further investigation is needed.

Can billing disputes lead to complaints?

Yes. Billing issues are one of the most common reasons clients file complaints against lawyers.

Final Thoughts

Client complaints are not just reputational risks. They are signals that something in your process is not working.

Firms that improve communication, billing clarity, and operational consistency can reduce complaints and strengthen client relationships.

See how TimeSolv makes can improve productivity and keep clients happy.

[Schedule your demo today.](#)