

## § 776.9

of the members constitutes a quorum. The Chairman of the Committee shall be the AJAG for Military Justice. The Chairman may excuse members disqualified for cause, illness, or exigencies of military service, and may request JAG to appoint additional or alternate members on a temporary or permanent basis.

(b) *Purpose.* (1) When requested by JAG or by the Rules Counsel, the Committee will provide formal advisory opinions to JAG regarding application of rules contained in subpart B of this part to individual or hypothetical cases.

(2) On its own motion, the Committee may also issue formal advisory opinions on ethical issues of importance to the DON legal community.

(3) Upon written request, the Committee will also provide formal advisory opinions to covered attorneys about the propriety of proposed courses of action. If such requests are predicated upon full disclosure of all relevant facts, and if the Committee advises that the proposed course of conduct is not violative of subpart B of this part, then no adverse action under this part may be taken against a covered attorney who acts consistent with the Committee's advice.

(4) The Chairman will forward copies of all opinions issued by the Committee to the Rules Counsel.

(c) *Limitation.* The Committee will not normally provide ethics advice or opinions concerning professional responsibility matters (e.g., ineffective assistance of counsel, prosecutorial misconduct, etc.) that are then the subject of litigation.

## § 776.9 Rules Counsel.

Appointed by JAG to act as special assistants for the administration of this part, the Rules Counsel derive authority from JAG and, as detailed in this part, have "by direction" authority. The Rules Counsel shall cause opinions issued by the Professional Responsibility Committee of general interest to the DON legal community to be published in summarized, non-personal form in suitable publications. Unless another officer is appointed by JAG to act in individual cases, the fol-

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lowing officers shall act as Rules Counsel:

(a) Director, JA Division, HQMC, for cases involving Marine Corps judge advocates, or civil service and contracted civilian attorneys who perform legal services under his cognizance; and

(b) AJAG for Civil Law, in all other cases.

## § 776.10 Informal ethics advice.

(a) *Advisors.* Covered attorneys may seek informal ethics advice either from the officers named below or from supervisory attorneys in the field. Within the Office of the JAG and HQMC, the following officials are designated to respond, either orally or in writing, to informal inquiries concerning this part in the areas of practice indicated:

(1) Head, Military Affairs/Personnel Law Branch, Administrative Law Division: administrative boards and related matters;

(2) Deputy Director, Criminal Law Division: military justice matters;

(3) Director, Legal Assistance Division: legal assistance matters;

(4) Deputy Director, JA Division, HQMC: cases involving Marine Corps judge advocates, or civil service and contracted civilian attorneys who perform legal services under the cognizance and supervision of Director, JA Division, HQMC; and

(5) Head, Standards of Conduct/Government Ethics Branch, Administrative Law Division: all other matters.

(b) *Limitation.* Informal ethics advice will not normally be provided by JAG/HQMC advisors concerning professional responsibility matters (e.g., ineffective assistance of counsel, prosecutorial misconduct) that are then the subject of litigation.

(c) *Written advice.* A request for informal advice does not relieve the requester of the obligation to comply with subpart B of this part. Although covered attorneys are encouraged to seek advice when in doubt as to their responsibilities, they remain personally accountable for their professional conduct. If, however, an attorney receives written advice on an ethical matter after full disclosure of all relevant facts and reasonably relies on such advice, no adverse action under