

## Lawyers

The legal system affects nearly every aspect of our society, from buying a home to crossing the street. *Lawyers* form the backbone of this system, linking it to society in numerous ways. They hold positions of great responsibility and are obligated to adhere to a strict code of ethics.

Lawyers, also called *attorneys*, act as both advocates and advisors in our society. As advocates, they represent one of the parties in criminal and civil trials by presenting evidence and arguing in court to support their client. As advisors, lawyers counsel their clients about their legal rights and obligations and suggest particular courses of action in business and personal matters. Whether acting as an advocate or an advisor, all attorneys research the intent of laws and judicial decisions and apply the law to the specific circumstances faced by their clients.

The more detailed aspects of a lawyer's job depend upon his or her field of specialization and position. Although all lawyers are licensed to represent parties in court, some appear in court more frequently than others. Trial lawyers spend the majority of their time outside the courtroom, conducting research, interviewing clients and witnesses, and handling other details in preparation for a trial.

Lawyers may specialize in a number of areas, such as bankruptcy, probate, international, elder, or environmental law. Those specializing in, for example, environmental law may represent interest groups, waste disposal companies, or construction firms in their dealings with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and other Federal and State agencies. These lawyers help clients prepare and file for licenses and applications for approval before certain activities are permitted to occur. Some lawyers specialize in the growing field of intellectual property, helping to protect clients' claims to copyrights, artwork under contract, product designs, and computer programs. Other lawyers advise insurance companies about the legality of insurance transactions, guiding the company in writing insurance policies to conform to the law and to protect the companies from unwarranted claims. When claims are filed against insurance companies, these attorneys review the claims and represent the companies in court.

Most lawyers are in private practice, concentrating on criminal or civil law. In criminal law, lawyers represent individuals who have been charged with crimes and argue their cases in courts of law. Attorneys dealing with civil law assist clients with litigation, wills, trusts, contracts, mortgages, titles, and leases. Other lawyers handle only public-interest cases—civil or criminal—concentrating on particular causes and choosing cases that might have an impact on the way law is applied. Lawyers sometimes are employed full time by a single client. If the client is a corporation, the lawyer is known as “house counsel” and usually advises the company concerning legal issues related to its business activities. These issues might involve patents, government regulations, contracts with other companies, property interests, or collective-bargaining agreements with unions.

A significant number of attorneys are employed at the various levels of government. Some work for State attorneys general, prosecutors, and public defenders in criminal courts. At the Federal level, attorneys investigate cases for the U.S. Department of Justice and other agencies. Government lawyers also help develop programs, draft and interpret laws and legislation, establish enforcement procedures, and argue civil and criminal cases on behalf of the government.

Other lawyers work for legal aid societies—private, nonprofit organizations established to serve disadvantaged people. These lawyers generally handle civil, rather than criminal, cases.

Lawyers are increasingly using various forms of technology to perform more efficiently. Although all lawyers continue to use law libraries to prepare cases, most supplement conventional printed sources with computer sources, such as the Internet and legal databases. Software is used to search this legal literature automatically and to identify legal texts relevant to a specific case. In litigation involving many supporting documents, lawyers may use computers to organize and index materials. Lawyers must be geographically mobile and able to reach their clients in a timely matter, so they might use electronic filing, Web and videoconferencing, mobile electronic devices, and voice-recognition technology to share information more effectively.

<http://www.bls.gov/oco/Ocos053.htm>

## Judges

*Judges, magistrates, and other judicial* workers apply the law and oversee the legal process in courts. They preside over cases concerning every aspect of society, from traffic offenses, to disputes over the management of professional sports, to issues concerning the rights of huge corporations. All judicial workers must ensure that trials and hearings are conducted fairly and that the court safeguards the legal rights of all parties involved.

The most visible responsibility of judges is presiding over trials or hearings and listening as attorneys represent their clients. Judges rule on the admissibility of evidence and the methods of conducting testimony, and they may be called on to settle disputes between opposing attorneys. Also, they ensure that rules and procedures are followed, and if unusual circumstances arise for which standard procedures have not been established, judges interpret the law to determine how the trial will proceed.

Judges often hold pretrial hearings for cases. They listen to allegations and determine whether the evidence presented merits a trial. In criminal cases, judges may decide that people charged with crimes should be held in jail pending trial, or they may set conditions for their release. In civil cases, judges and magistrates occasionally impose restrictions on the parties until a trial is held.

In many trials, juries are selected to decide guilt or innocence in criminal cases, or liability and compensation in civil cases. Judges instruct juries on applicable laws, direct them to deduce the facts from the evidence presented, and hear their verdict. When the law does not require a jury trial or when the parties waive their right to a jury, judges decide cases. In such instances, the judge determines guilt in criminal cases and imposes sentences on the guilty; in civil cases, the judge awards relief—such as compensation for damages—to the winning parties to the lawsuit.

Many State court judges hear only certain types of cases. A variety of titles are assigned to these judges; among the most common are *municipal court judge*, *county court judge*, *magistrate*, and *justice of the peace*. Traffic violations, misdemeanors, small-claims cases, and pretrial hearings constitute the bulk of the work of these judges, but some States allow

them to handle cases involving domestic relations, probate, contracts, and other selected areas of the law.

*Administrative law judges*, sometimes called *hearing officers* or *adjudicators*, are employed by government agencies to make determinations for administrative agencies. These judges make decisions on, for example, (1) a person's eligibility for various Social Security or workers' compensation benefits, (2) protection of the environment, (3) the enforcement of health and safety regulations, (4) employment discrimination, and (5) compliance with economic regulatory requirements.

<http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos272.htm>

## Police Officers and Detectives

*Police officers and detectives* protect lives and property. *Law enforcement officer's* duties depend on the size and type of their organizations. Police and detectives pursue and apprehend individuals who break the law and then issue citations or give warnings. Most police officers patrol their jurisdictions and investigate any suspicious activity they notice. They also respond to calls from individuals. Detectives perform investigative duties such as gathering facts and collecting evidence. The daily activities of police and detectives vary with their occupational specialty—such as police officer, *game warden*, or detective—and whether they are working for a local, State, or Federal agency. Police officers and detectives at all levels must write reports and maintain meticulous records that will be needed if they testify in court.

***State and Local Law Enforcement.*** *Uniformed police officers* have general law enforcement duties. They maintain regular patrols and respond to calls for service. Much of their time is spent responding to calls and doing paperwork. They may direct traffic at the scene of an accident, investigate a burglary, or give first aid to an accident victim.

Some police officers specialize in a particular field, such as chemical and microscopic analysis, training and firearms instruction, or handwriting and fingerprint identification. Others work with special units, such as horseback, bicycle, motorcycle, or harbor patrol; canine corps; special weapons and tactics (SWAT); or emergency response teams.

*Sheriffs and deputy sheriffs* enforce the law on the county level. Sheriffs usually are elected to their posts and perform duties similar to those of a local or county police chief. Sheriffs' departments tend to be relatively small, most having fewer than 50 sworn officers. Police and sheriffs' deputies who provide security in city and county courts are sometimes called *bailiffs*.

*State police officers*, sometimes called *State troopers* or *highway patrol officers*, arrest criminals Statewide and patrol highways to enforce motor vehicle laws and regulations. State police officers often issue traffic citations to motorists. At the scene of accidents, they may direct traffic, give first aid, and call for emergency equipment.

Detectives are plainclothes investigators who gather facts and collect evidence for criminal cases. They conduct interviews, examine records, observe the activities of suspects, and participate in raids or arrests.

***Federal Law Enforcement.*** *Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agents* are the Government's principal investigators, responsible for investigating violations of more than 200 categories of Federal law and conducting sensitive national security investigations. Agents may conduct surveillance, monitor court-authorized wiretaps, examine business records, investigate white-collar crime, or participate in sensitive undercover assignments. The FBI investigates organized crime, public corruption, financial crime, bank robbery, kidnapping, terrorism, espionage, drug trafficking, and cybercrime.

The *Department of Homeland Security* also employs numerous law enforcement officers within several different agencies, including Customs and Border Protection, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and the U.S. Secret Service. *U.S. Border Patrol agents* protect more than 8,000 miles of international land and water boundaries. *Immigration inspectors* interview and examine people seeking entry into the United States and its territories.

<http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos160.htm>

## Military

Maintaining a strong national defense requires workers who can do such diverse tasks as run a hospital, command a tank, program a computer system, operate a nuclear reactor, or repair and maintain a helicopter. The military provides training and work experience in these and many other fields for more than 2.4 million people. More than 1.4 million people serve in the active Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force, and more than 1.0 million serve in their Reserve components and the Air and Army National Guard.

***Enlisted occupational groups.*** *Administrative careers* include a wide variety of positions. The military must keep accurate information for planning and managing its operations. *Combat specialty occupations* include enlisted specialties, such as infantry, artillery, and Special Forces. They maneuver against enemy forces and positions, and fire artillery, guns, mortars, and missiles to destroy enemy positions.

*Engineering, science, and technical personnel* in the military require specific knowledge to operate technical equipment, solve complex problems, or provide and interpret information. Personnel normally specialize in one area, such as space operations, information technology, environmental health and safety, or intelligence. *Healthcare personnel* assist medical professionals in treating and providing services for men and women in the military. *Protective service personnel* include those who enforce military laws and regulations and provide emergency responses to natural and human-made disasters. Military police control traffic, prevent crime, and respond to emergencies. Firefighters put out, control, and help prevent fires in buildings, on aircraft, and aboard ships.

*Transportation and material-handling specialists* ensure the safe transport of people and cargo. *Vehicle and machinery mechanics* conduct preventive and corrective maintenance on aircraft, automotive and heavy equipment, heating and cooling systems, marine engines, and powerhouse station equipment.

***Officer occupational groups.*** *Combat specialty officers* plan and direct military operations, oversee combat activities, and serve as combat leaders. This category includes officers in

charge of tanks and other armored assault vehicles, artillery systems, Special Forces, and infantry.

*Engineering, science, and technical officers* perform activities in areas such as space operations, environmental health and safety, and engineering. These officers may direct the operations of communications centers or the development of complex computer systems. *Healthcare officers* provide health services at military facilities on the basis of their area of specialization. Officers who examine, diagnose, and treat patients with illness, injury, or disease include physicians, registered nurses, and dentists.

*Human resource development officers* manage recruitment, placement, and training strategies and programs in the military. *Media and public affairs officers* oversee the development, production, and presentation of information or events for the public. These officers may produce and direct motion pictures, videos, and television and radio broadcasts that are used for training, news, and entertainment. *Protective service officers* are responsible for the safety and protection of individuals and property on military bases and vessels. Emergency management officers plan and prepare for all types of natural and human-made disasters by developing warning, control, and evacuation procedures to be used in the event of a disaster.

<http://www.bls.gov/OCO/ocos249.htm>