

The Sykes Law Office

An informative brochure providing information about legal help and when it is helpful, desirable or necessary.

Do You Need a Lawyer?

There are many types of legal problems.

You may consider hiring a lawyer if you are buying or selling your home or other real estate, if you are accused of committing a crime, if you are involved in or are contemplating a lawsuit, or if you have been involved in an auto accident. Although



lawyers can help with legal problems after they arise, perhaps the best time to consult a lawyer is before a legal problem arises. Early consultations with a lawyer can prevent serious problems. Common situations where legal advice is helpful include:

- The sale or purchase of a home, real estate, or a business.
- The formation a business.
- The drafting of a will, trust, or estate plan.
- A domestic or martial problem.
- A tax problem.
- An accident involving personal injury or property damage.
- An arrest or questioning by law enforcement officials concerning your conduct

All of these situations typically require the assistance of a lawyer. Someone who understands all of the issues can help you resolve most problems readily. Many problems can be anticipated by a legal professional and can be addressed simply, by letter or through negotiation. Some may require assistance from government agencies or consumer assistance organizations. And of course, legal self-help materials may offer the tools you need to handle some or all of the dispute on your own.

You may also want to consider hiring an attorney to review your papers or legal plan rather than seeking full representation.

Alternatively, you may be able to resolve a legal dispute in a small claims court if the dispute has a value less than or equal to a certain amount (perhaps \$2,500). Be sure to check with your local court for applicable limits. Small claims court can often resolve a dispute that doesn't involve a large amount of money. It's inexpensive and there are no rules of evidence that the participants must comply with.

Some legal issues can be handled by alternative means. For example, alternative dispute resolution (ADR) programs can help resolve your legal problem through mediation or arbitration.