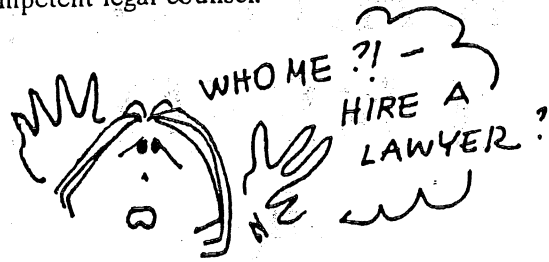


The task of hiring a good attorney can be traumatic. The Idaho Trial Lawyers Association provides this pamphlet to assist people in their efforts to retain competent legal counsel.



Do I Need a Lawyer?

Maybe not. Examples of groups that may be able to provide help to people in need of assistance include:

- Better Business Bureau
(Your Local Phone Book Business Pages)
- Credit Counseling Service
(Your Local Phone Book Business Pages)
- Consumer Protection Unit
Idaho Attorney General's Office
(208) 334-2424 or (800) 432-3545
- Idaho Legal Aid Services, Inc.
(Your Local Phone Book Business Pages)
- Idaho Trial Lawyers Association
(208) 344-1890
- Small Claims Court
(Your Local Phone Book Government Pages
--for information on how to represent yourself)

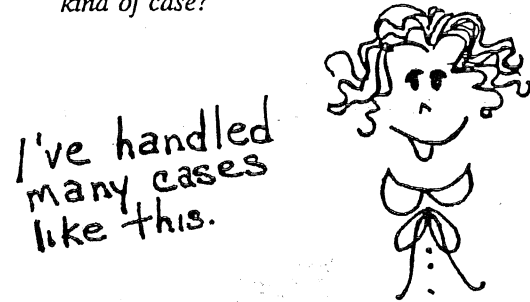
If I Decide to Hire a Lawyer, How Do I Choose the Right One for Me?

Your most important goal is to find a competent lawyer to handle your legal problem. There is no fail safe method for hiring a good lawyer but there are some suggestions that can help:

- Never underestimate the worth of your own common sense.
- Never overestimate your case.
- Seek referrals from people you trust, such as friends, neighbors and associates at work.
- Use the service provided by the Idaho State Bar Referral Program
(208) 342-8958

Ask questions of the lawyers you're thinking about hiring:

How much experience do you have with my kind of case?



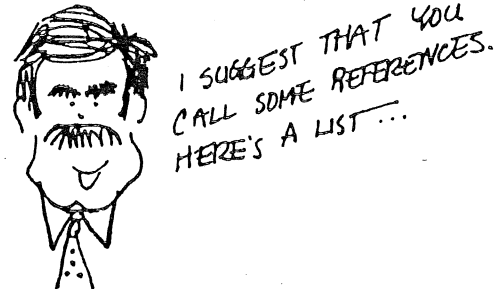
How often should I plan on being in contact with you on a case like this?

How long could a case like this take?

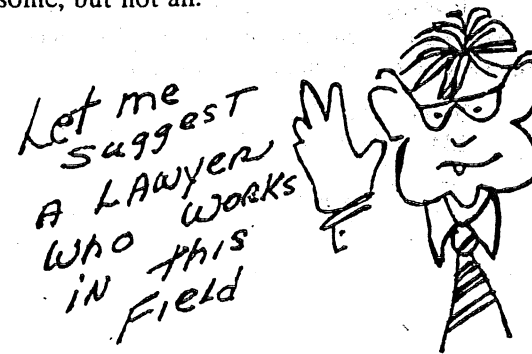
How much might it cost for attorney time and costs?

Will I receive a monthly itemized billing?

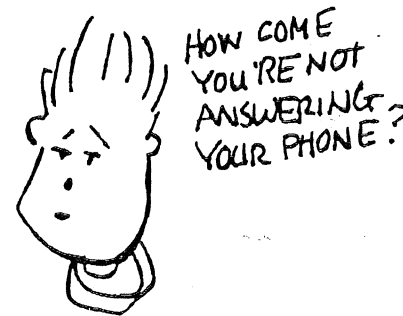
Ask for and check references.



Recognize there are many different areas of law. Individual attorneys are usually experienced in some, but not all.

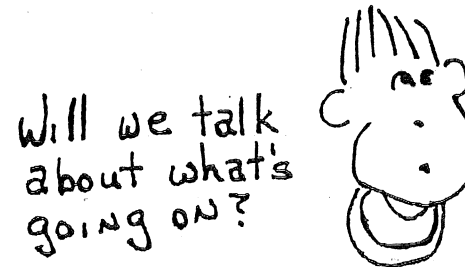


Remember that you are paying the bill. So, after you interview the lawyer, think about these questions:



Are you hard to get hold of?

Is there someone in the office I can talk to if you aren't in?



Ask yourself whether or not you like the lawyer that you're considering.

Observe the law office. Did it seem organized? Was the staff pleasant and responsive?

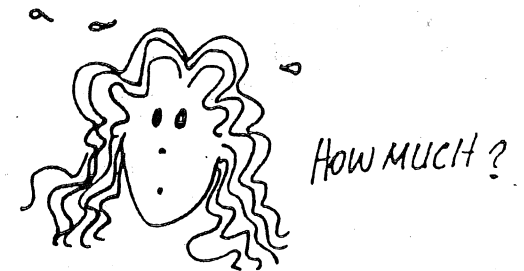
Decide whether the lawyer welcomed your questions and provided thoughtful answers.

Hire the lawyer you are most comfortable with -- it may be a long journey together.



How Much Should I Expect to Pay?

While there is no simple way to know how much legal services will cost, there are ways to avoid surprise bills and fee disputes.



Ask questions about how much the lawyer charges and the methods of charging.

Always request a written fee agreement if one is not offered. Such a document should reflect the scope of representation, the fee arrangement and what costs will be charged to you. The agreement can be referred to if and when questions later arise.

Remember, you often get what you pay for. The "cheapest" lawyer is not necessarily your best deal.