

Ethics & Compliance Checklist

FOR LAW FIRM AI ADOPTION

Pre-Adoption Assessment

COMPETENCE

ABA Model Rule 1.1

Have you assessed your current understanding of AI capabilities and limitations?

Have you completed CLE or training specifically on legal AI tools?

(Note: ABA Formal Opinion 512 states you cannot bill clients for learning time)

Can you identify the data sources the AI platform uses?

Do you understand the specific risks of “hallucinations” with the AI platform you’re considering?

DUE DILIGENCE ON AI VENDORS

Have you reviewed the vendor’s terms of service and privacy policy?

Does the vendor have SOC 2 Type II and/or ISO 27001 certification?

Does the vendor have a zero data retention agreement with LLM providers?

Is the AI tool specifically designed for legal work (vs. general-purpose AI)?

Have you reviewed independent testing or benchmarking results for the tool?

STATE-SPECIFIC RESEARCH

Have you reviewed your state bar’s ethics opinions on AI?

Are you licensed in multiple states?

↳ If yes, have you reviewed ethics guidance in all jurisdictions?

Have you checked for any court-specific rules on AI use in your jurisdiction?



Confidentiality & Security

ABA Model Rule 1.6

CLIENT INFORMATION PROTECTION

If you will input client confidential information into the AI platform, does it have adequate security and confidentiality protections?

Does the AI vendor train its models on user inputs? (If yes, this may violate confidentiality)

Have you obtained client consent before using AI with their confidential information?

(Note: Most states don't require this if proper safeguards exist)

Have you documented your security assessment of the AI tool?

Do you have a process for anonymizing or redacting sensitive information before AI use when appropriate?

DATA BREACH RESPONSE

Do you have a plan for what to do if the AI vendor experiences a data breach?

Have you reviewed your malpractice insurance coverage for AI-related incidents?

Do you know your obligations under state data breach notification laws?

Verification & Accuracy

ABA Model Rules 1.1, 3.3

OUTPUT REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

Have you established a protocol for verifying all AI-generated citations, including verifying that all cited cases are real and accurately cited, checking that legal principals are accurate, and confirming factual assertions are correct?

Do you personally review all AI outputs before using them in client matters?

Are you reviewing AI outputs for potential bias?

Are you checking documents for spelling, grammar, and formatting issues?

CANDOR TO THE TRIBUNAL

Rule 3.3

If using AI for legal research or brief writing, have you independently verified all authorities cited?

If a court in your jurisdiction requires disclosure of AI use, have you complied?

Are you prepared to truthfully answer questions about your use of AI in preparing court filings?



Billing & Fees

ABA Model Rule 1.5

REASONABLE FEE ANALYSIS

If billing hourly, are you billing only for actual time spent (note time that would have been spent without AI)?

Have you clearly communicated your AI-related fees and expenses to clients?

Have you considered alternative fee arrangements that better reflect value vs. time?

Are you billing clients only for actual time spent and not for time spent learning the AI tool?
(This is generally not permitted per ABA Formal Opinion 512)

Communication & Disclosure

ABA Model Rule 1.4

CLIENT CONSENT & COMMUNICATION

Have you informed clients about your use of AI tools?

Have you explained the benefits and risks of AI to your clients?

Have you obtained informed consent where required by your jurisdiction?

If using AI chatbots for client intake, do prospects know they're communicating with AI? (not a lawyer)

MARKETING & ADVERTISING

ABA Model Rule 7.1

If advertising AI capabilities, are your statements truthful and not misleading or exaggerated?

If using AI chatbots on your website, is it clearly disclosed?

Do your AI-powered marketing materials comply with lawyer advertising rules?



Supervision & Governance

ABA Model Rules 5.1, 5.3

MANAGERIAL LAWYER RESPONSIBILITIES

Have you established written policies governing firm AI use?

Have you created training programs on ethical AI use?

Have you designated someone responsible for monitoring AI compliance?

Do you have systems to ensure all lawyers and staff understand and follow AI policies?

Have you established protocols for reporting AI-related issues or errors?

SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES

Are you supervising the work of lawyers and nonlawyers who use AI?

Have you made reasonable efforts to ensure subordinates comply with ethics rules when using AI?

If you're a subordinate lawyer, do you understand that you remain responsible for complying with ethics rules even if directed to use AI?

THIRD-PARTY SERVICE PROVIDERS

Are you treating AI vendors like other third-party service providers per ABA Formal Opinion 08-451?

Have you conducted due diligence on the competence and ethics of AI vendors?

Do you have contracts in place that address confidentiality and data security?

Conflict of Interest Considerations

ABA Model Rules 1.7, 1.8, 1.9

MULTI-CLIENT AI USE

If using AI across multiple client matters, have you assessed whether this could create conflicts?

Does the AI platform's architecture prevent cross-contamination between matters?

Have you assessed whether AI use could compromise your duty of loyalty to any client?



Ongoing Monitoring & Updates

REGULAR COMPLIANCE REVIEW

Have you scheduled regular reviews of your AI ethics compliance?

Are you monitoring for updates to ABA guidance and state ethics opinions?

Are you tracking AI vendor updates and changes to terms of service?

Have you established a process for updating your AI policies as technology and rules evolve?

Are you documenting your AI use decisions and compliance efforts?

INCIDENT RESPONSE

Do you have a protocol for addressing AI errors or ethics violations?

Have you established a process for reporting issues to clients when necessary?

Do you know when you'd need to report AI-related issues to your state bar?

Building a Culture of Ethical AI Use

AI is transforming legal practice in ways that seemed impossible just years ago. From research that once took days now completed in minutes to document analysis surfacing insights human reviewers might miss, the efficiency gains are undeniable. But while technology changes fast, ethical obligations remain the same—competence, confidentiality, candor, supervision, and reasonable fees.

Vincent by Clio was designed with these principles in mind. From SOC 2 Type II certification and ISO 27001 compliance to zero data retention agreements and verified citations linked to authoritative sources, Vincent helps your firm leverage AI's power while maintaining ethical standards your clients and the profession demand.

AI Ethics Resources

[ABA Formal Opinion 512](#)
[ABA Model Rule 1.1 \(Competence\)](#)
[ABA Model Rule 1.4 \(Communications\)](#)
[ABA Model Rule 1.5 \(Fees\)](#)
[ABA Model Rule 1.6 \(Confidentiality of Information\)](#)
[ABA Model Rule 1.7 \(Conflict of Interest: Current Clients\)](#)
[ABA Model Rule 1.8 \(Conflict of Interest: Current Clients: Specific Rules\)](#)
[ABA Model Rule 1.9 \(Duties to Former Clients\)](#)
[ABA Model Rule 3.3 \(Candor toward the Tribunal\)](#)
[ABA Model Rule 5.1 \(Responsibilities of Partners, Managers, and Supervisory Lawyers\)](#)
[ABA Model Rule 5.3 \(Responsibilities Regarding Nonlawyer Assistance\)](#)
[ABA Model Rule 7.1 \(Communications Concerning a Lawyer's Services\)](#)
[Vincent Knowledge Base](#)

Ready to see how AI and ethics work together?

Request your personalized demo of Vincent by Clio and discover how the right legal AI platform supports both your productivity and your professional responsibilities.