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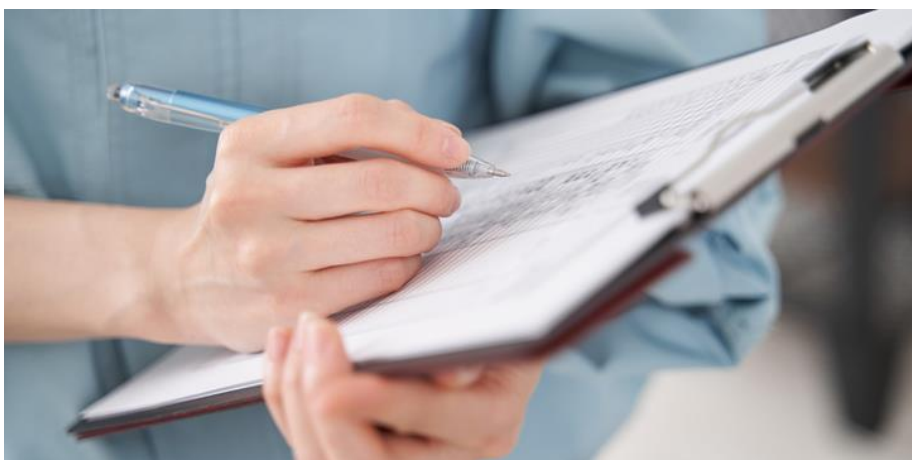
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## What You Need to Know About Conducting a Walkthrough

By: **Kaycee Miller** | June 23, 2023

[www.rentecdirect.com](http://www.rentecdirect.com)



As a landlord, you want to protect your properties as best as you can, and do everything in your power to make sure your tenants do the same. Conducting a thorough walkthrough together with your tenant before their lease begins and after the lease is up, will help both of you assess the property for any existing damages. With a proper inspection, you'll be able to identify any issues, and record the current condition of the unit. This way, if there are any problems during the tenancy period, both the landlord and the tenant will know who's responsible.

To protect yourself, your tenant, and your property it's crucial to check everything. And often having a rental checklist can help you remember what to look out for during the walkthrough. We'll walk you through everything you need to know about conducting one — from how to prepare, pointers, and what to include on your checklist.

*continued on page 8*

## Webinars

### Dealing w/ Volatile Tenants

Presented By: Violet Wilson

July 17<sup>th</sup> from 4 - 6pm

### Trial Prep

Presented By: Tia Politi

July 18<sup>th</sup> from 4 - 6pm

- Members: \$20ea
- w/ 2 CE Credits: \$50ea
- \* Register online at [www.roa-swo.com/events](http://www.roa-swo.com/events)

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**Oregon Rental Housing**  
KEY PAC



**RENTAL OWNERS  
ASSOCIATION OF  
SOUTHWESTERN  
OREGON**

## Who is the ROA?

Rental Owners Association of Southwestern Oregon is an organization that's been around for over 30 years and consists of landlords who care about practical, legal and profitable land lording practices. Through the association, they share problems, solutions, and ideas with other landlords and find information that comes from similar organizations in Oregon and around the country.



Our Association is currently comprised of over 200 landlords!

## Advertise Your Business in the ROA Newsletter!

The monthly newsletter reaches over 200 landlords who need your products/services to manage their rentals.

- Landscaping
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- Insurance
- Painting
- Legal Aid
- Maintenance
- Carpet Cleaning
- Housekeeping
- Appliance Repair
- and much more...

### Contact us at:

PO Box 1712  
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**Book your spot today! Space is limited.**

## Half Page Ad

7.5" W x 4.5" H = \$60

Outside Back Cover = \$100

## Quarter Page Ad

3.5" W x 4.5" H = \$35

## Full Page Ad

7.5" W x 10" H = \$100

(example not shown)

## Business Card Ad

3.5" W x 2" H = \$20

# DIY Reference Check: Questions to Ask Former Landlords

By: Krista Reuther | June 16, 2023

[www.turbotenant.com](http://www.turbotenant.com)

A good tenant screening process illuminates your applicant's ability to pay rent and how they'll treat your rental property. History is typically a good indicator of future behavior, so contacting an applicant's previous landlord should be a part of your screening process. But what are you allowed to ask – and what questions can cost you up to \$16,000 for breaking the rules?

Let's walk through appropriate questions to ask your applicant's former landlord and pitfalls to consider when having this crucial conversation.

## Questions to Ask Former Landlords

Before we dive in, it's only fair to point out that not every landlord will tell the truth about their former tenant. That's why the questions below should serve as a portion of your tenant screening process, not the only factor. Exaggerated figures, refusing to take ownership of issues, and grandiose statements should be weighed against your interactions with the applicant. Additionally, check your local landlord-tenant laws before chatting with your applicant's former landlord.

That said, here are questions to ask your prospective tenant's former landlord:

- **How long did the tenant rent from you?** The answer will provide context for the rest of their feedback. A landlord who's rented to your applicant for a decade but swears that they're the worst tenant alive might not be telling the truth about their experience.
- **What condition was the unit in post-move out?** Most landlords fear the state their rental will be in once their tenant says goodbye, so eliminate the dread by asking this question.
- **Did the tenant have any animals?** Emotional support animals are top of mind for many rental property owners. The answer to this question may inspire follow-up questions for your applicant.



- **Were there any issues between the tenant and their neighbors/other tenants?** If something pops up that you weren't expecting, ask your applicant for their perspective.
- **Can you rate their communication on a scale of 1-5, 5 being fantastic?** A good communicator often shares maintenance concerns earlier, along with maintaining a positive landlord-tenant relationship.
- **Would you rent to them again?** The answer to this question summarizes the applicant's relationship with their former landlord.
- **Questions that apply to your property type.** For example, if your vacancy is in a multi-family property, ask if they have insight into the applicant's experience with shared utilities.

Beyond checking your applicant's landlord reference(s), an ideal tenant screening process\* includes reviewing their:

- Criminal background check
- Eviction report
- Credit score
- Lines of credit
- Credit inquiries
- Debt in collections



# NEW MEMBERSHIP ★★★★★ RATES

To keep up with rising costs, our state sponsor, the Oregon Rental Housing Association, has increased their local association dues as of July 1st. We have had to adjust in kind. As a courtesy to our members, our new rates are effective on September 1st. The new membership rates will be as follows:

Level 1: 1-6 units	\$120
Level 2: 7-24 units	\$138
Level 3: 25-59 units	\$163
Level 4: 60-99 units	\$195
Level 5: 100-249 units	\$233
Level 6: 250-499 units	\$277
Level 7: 500+ units	\$328



We appreciate your continued support and value your membership to our association!

ROA

**Helpline**  
(541) 435-1492

- Need help?
- Have a question about landlord/tenant law?
- Looking for advice on how to deal with a tenant?

Call the Helpline! Speak to a Property Manager who knows the law inside and out and who can speak from personal experience. FREE to all ROA members of the Southwestern Oregon Chapter.



RENTAL OWNERS  
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Calls are returned within one business day between the hours of 7am and 8pm. Helpline is closed weekends and Holidays.

## Tips to Make the Most of Your Landlord Reference Call

If possible, have a phone call or face-to-face meeting with the previous landlord. Hearing their tone of voice or seeing the expression on their face can contextualize the answers they give you. To increase your chances of connecting, reach out via email or text message first to schedule a call. Explain who you are and why you're contacting them, along with a request to chat.

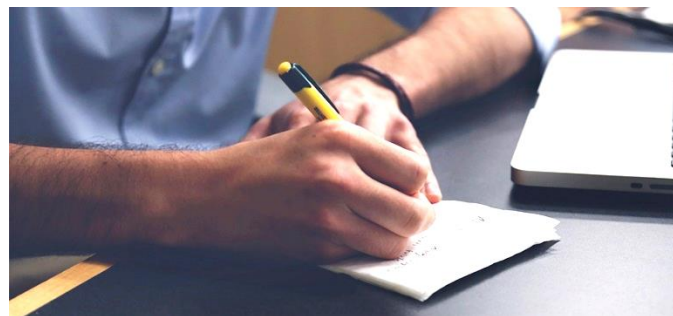
Need some help writing your message? Copy the landlord reference call template below, swapping in the relevant details:

*Hi [Landlord's name]! I'm reviewing an application from [lead's name], and I would love to ask you some questions. Are you free at [date and time you're free] for a [type of meeting: phone call, Zoom call, coffee, etc.]?*

Once you start talking, be cordial and professional. If your applicant explained why they're moving out, don't bring it up with their previous landlord. Remember that your goal is to assess how the applicant might treat your rental property – not to meddle in interpersonal drama.

Take notes while the previous landlord answers your questions. Thank them for their time, and ask for permission to follow up with additional questions as needed.

Now that you know what you can ask former landlords and prospective tenants, it's time to chat about what you can't ask: namely, anything that violates the Fair Housing Act.



## Questions Not to Ask Prospective Tenants: Don't Break the Law

The Fair Housing Act is the only protection tenants currently have at a national level (though the White House's proposed Renters Bill of Rights may shake things up). Specifically, the Fair Housing Law forbids landlords from discriminating against tenants due to their:

- Race
- Color
- National Origin
- Religion
- Sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation)
- Familial Status
- Disability

That means you cannot ask questions relating to the protected classes listed above – not of the tenant, and certainly not of their previous landlord.

Avoid asking questions like:

- **Does the tenant have kids?:** (discrimination based on familial status)
- **Do you think the tenant is Deaf?:** (discrimination based on disability)
- **Is the tenant a Christian?:** (discrimination based on religion)
- **What gender is the tenant?** (discrimination based on gender)
- **Where is the tenant really from?:** (discrimination based on national origin)
- **What credit score did the tenant tell you they had?:** (nonconsensual credit check)

Your tenant screening process should be multifaceted to give you the best picture of each applicant. Touching base with a previous landlord or two helps you understand how their tenant might treat your property. Make the most of your conversation by using our questions, taking notes, being cordial, and steering clear of Fair Housing Act violations.

## Form of the Month



## INFORMATION RELEASE CONSENT

S1

## INFORMATION REQUESTED BY:

Owner/Agent/Company: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_ P.O. Box # \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

## INFORMATION REQUESTED FOR:

Applicant Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_  
 Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile Number: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_

## INFORMATION RELEASE AUTHORIZATION

I certify the above information is correct and complete and hereby authorize the Owner/Agent to make any inquiries the Owner/Agent feels necessary to evaluate my tenancy and credit standing (including but not limited to credit reports). If Owner/Agent is requiring payment of an Applicant Screening Charge, I acknowledge receiving a copy of and/or reading Owner/Agent's Application Screening Guidelines.

I understand that I have the right to dispute the accuracy of any information provided to the Owner/Agent by a screening service, credit reporting agency, financial institution, previous employer, personal reference nor other third party information resource.

Applicant Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Employer questionnaire included

☐ Rental history questionnaire included

## INFORMATION PROVIDED BY:

Company (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_





**What gets sent to a reference contact for verification:  
Page 4 of the form (Information Release Consent)**

20. Fill in the name of the Owner/Agent or the name of the company, if any.
21. Fill in the contact name of the Company Representative.
22. Fill in the address where the information requested should be sent.
23. Fill in the Owner/Agent's phone number and e-mail address on this line.
24. Fill in the Applicant's name and phone number on this line.
25. Fill in the Applicant's e-mail address and mobile phone number on this line.
26. Have the Applicant print their name, date and sign the Release Form here.
27. If you are including an Employer or Rental History Questionnaire along with the Release Form, check the appropriate box and attach the additional questions. Complimentary Employer and Rental History Questionnaire templates may be downloaded for free at <https://www.oregonrentalhousing.com> or <https://store.oregonrentalhousing.com>.
28. Fill in the person or company information for the Reference Contact providing the information being requested here and send it to them along with any additional questions. The Reference Contact can sign the bottom of this form and return with the answers to the Owner/Agent at the top of this page.



**Older editions:**

- The only edition is “Rev. 1/22”

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### NEED FORMS?



#### ORHA Forms are Available Online!

#### Oregon Rental Housing Forms are just a click away!

- 1 [www.oregonrentalhousing.com](http://www.oregonrentalhousing.com)
- 2 Click (top right): "Click to Get ORHA Forms Online"
- 3 Input your local association code in the field labeled "Enter Your Member ID" to receive ORHA forms 1/2 PRICE
- 4 Choose a form
- 5 Click on the form
- 6 Input your information
- 7 Click "Generate PDF"
- 8 Click "Check Out" – This will direct you to PayPal
- 9 Follow payment directions. Once complete, PayPal will return to the ORHA Forms page to "Print Link." This link will also be sent to your email address.

#### Forms Are Also Available to Pick Up!

Two convenient locations. Stop by and purchase updated forms.

2707 Broadway Ave.  
North Bend, OR 97459

- OR -

161 Central Ave.  
Coos Bay, OR 97420

## What You Need to Know About Conducting a Walkthrough

*continued from page 1*

### PREPARING TO DO A WALKTHROUGH

You'll want to start by scheduling a time with your tenant to do the walkthrough. Once you have, here are some things you can do ahead of time to be more prepared:

#### PRINT A CHECKLIST

Don't rely on your tenants to bring a checklist with them. Chances are they won't, so be prepared to print one out ahead of time. In case your tenant does bring one, it's best to use one copy so all information remains in one place.

#### PERFORM YOUR OWN INSPECTION PRIOR TO DOING IT WITH THE TENANT

Since it's your responsibility as a landlord to make sure the rental is habitable and functional, it's in your best interest to inspect it in advance for any obvious safety issues or maintenance needs while it's still vacant.

Be sure to check:

- HVAC systems
- Air conditioner
- Heaters
- All other appliances
- Taps
- The shower
- Toilets
- Door locks
- Windows

Doing a quick lookover will help you document all conditions which stand out as less-than-normal and give you time to fix anything before your tenant joins you on the walkthrough.

#### SIMPLIFY THE PROCESS

Make the inspection process as simple as possible. When you do, tenants are less likely to have second thoughts



about renting from you. While your checklist should include all necessary items to be reviewed and double-checked, don't intimidate your tenants by making your list excessively long. If there are portions of the checklist you can fill out before, this can save you both time and also make the process less time-consuming. Aim to keep the entire walkthrough under a half hour.

#### POINTERS FOR YOUR WALKTHROUGH INSPECT EVERY ROOM

To make sure the walkthrough is thorough, it's important to inspect certain items in every room, regardless of which one you're in. While most of these areas may suffer from normal wear and tear, it's still important to take note of any significant issues, such as a hole in the wall from a heavy mirror that needs fixing.

#### TAKE PICTURES AND VIDEOS

This can be done before your tenant joins you in the walkthrough together. It's best to take pictures and videos of everything. With complete documentation, it acts as evidence in case a situation comes up later on.

#### GIVE TENANTS TIME TO ASSESS ADDITIONAL ISSUES

Provide a grace period for your tenants to assess the rental unit for any issues that may have been missed during the initial inspection. Allotting three days for this purpose is a reasonable amount of time. Encourage your tenants to report any issues they find and record their findings with photos or videos. By being open-minded and responsive to their concerns, you are demonstrating goodwill and fostering a positive landlord-tenant relationship.



## FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH STATE LANDLORD-TENANT REGULATIONS

If you don't already know your state's landlord-tenant regulations, it's time to learn them. These regulations specify the maximum deposit amount you can request, under what circumstances a landlord can withhold a portion of the security deposit, and the time frame for returning the deposit.

If there's a dispute over the security deposit, the landlord-tenant regulations may also determine which repairs are the tenant's responsibility and which are the landlord's. The lease terms may also impose additional obligations.

Understanding the law and knowing when it's appropriate to withhold the security deposit is critical. To avoid making costly mistakes, consider working with a property management company.

## INSIST THAT YOU AND YOUR TENANT SIGN THE WALKTHROUGH CHECKLIST

After you feel confident you've both inspected the unit thoroughly, sign and date the checklist. This way, both parties are on the same page about the property's condition upon the start of the lease and the end of it. Make sure to also give your tenant a copy of the signed checklist. This can be done by emailing it, or using a PDF scanning app on the spot, allowing you to do it immediately. Once that is done, you can hand over the keys.

## WHAT TO INCLUDE ON YOUR WALKTHROUGH CHECKLIST

When conducting a walkthrough of a rental property, it's important to have a comprehensive checklist that covers all areas of the unit. A detailed checklist can also identify areas that may need upgrades or modifications. Here are some essential items to include:

- **Flooring:** Check for missing tiles, peeled-up corners, or broken floorboards in each room and repair them right away to prevent further damage.
- **Windows:** Make sure all windows open and close properly and have secure locks on them.
- **Smoke Detectors:** Check smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, make sure they are placed throughout the unit, and test the alarms to ensure they are working.
- **Heating & Air Systems:** Review the heating and air units throughout the rental property and make sure they work as they should. Double-check with a professional if unsure about anything.
- **Entryway:** Double-check that all stairs have properly installed railings and that all paths or outdoor areas are well-lit when needed.
- **Walls:** Keep tabs on the status of walls and repaint rental units between tenants to fix any scratches and keep the unit looking fresh and clean.
- **Kitchen Appliances:** Check that all appliances are working properly, including vents and lights.
- **Doors & Locks:** Double-check all doors and locks with tenants to ensure everything is working as it should.
- **Light Fixtures:** Turn on and off all lights to determine if each fixture is working properly.
- **Plumbing:** Check that the toilets flush properly and all taps operate as they should.

## THE FACTS: WALKTHROUGHS MATTER

There's no doubt about it. Walkthrough rental inspections are beneficial for both you as the landlord and your tenants. It gives you peace of mind that the property is well-maintained, and it makes your tenant more comfortable knowing that the condition of the rental was properly evaluated. By using our above checklist, you can set yourself up for success and ultimately protect your investment and all parties involved.

# Welcome New and Returning ROA Members!

Katie Brooks, & Karl and Karen Jernstedt

## Your ROA Board of Directors

**President:** Cindy Colter  
coltercindy@gmail.com (541) 404-8609

**Vice President:** Regina Gabbard  
regina@eledwardsrealty.com (541) 756-0347

**Secretary:** Jessica Webber  
jessica@advancedpropertymgmt.biz

**Treasurer:** Dahla Allen  
dahlaallen@icloud.com

**Past President:** Regina Gabbard  
regina@eledwardsrealty.com (541) 756-0347

**Position #1:** Maria Menguita  
malumeng@gmail.com

**Position #2:** Rebecca Jennings  
parksidevillagecoosbay@gmail.com

**Position #3:** Joan Mahaffy  
mahaffyje12@yahoo.com (541) 269-6562

**Position #4:** Danielle Eastwood-Swanner  
danielleswanner94@gmail.com

**Position #5:** Michelle Cantrell  
michelle@orbpm.com (541) 808-9040

**Position #6:** Vacant

Ever wonder what goes on at ROA Board meetings? Have any suggestions to share? Interested in joining the board? Bring your thoughts and/or ideas. Or just listen in and see what we're all about.

The ROA Board of Directors meets every month. Meetings are always open to members. Contact us for more information.



**roa-swo.com**

### Contact us at:

PO Box 1712  
Coos Bay OR 97420

info@roa-swo.com  
(541) 756-0347

This publication is designed to provide informative material to its readers. It is distributed with the understanding that it does not constitute legal, accounting, or other professional advice. Although the material is intended to be accurate, neither we nor any other party assume liability for loss or damage as a result of reliance on this material. Appropriate legal or accounting advice or other expert assistance should be sought from a professional.

## In Case You Missed It: The Small Claims Process & Lease Violations and How to Enforce Them

June 6<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023



On June 6th, Tia Politi guided our members through the daunting process of small claims court. Although the process can be quite technical, Tia expertly covered everything from paperwork to evidence to personal composure. After attending this webinar, we left the class feeling confident and prepared. Thank you, Tia, for always knowing exactly how to break it down and show us the way!



On June 15th, Christian Bryant went over tenant lease violations and how to navigate through even the toughest of situations. With so many fast-paced changes to the legislature, it is hard to know the right path to take with our tenants when in violation. Christian not only helped us through multiple types of violations, but also informed us on which forms would be best to utilize in each unique situation. After this two-hour webinar, we felt confident to address most any situation that may arise. Thank you Christian!

## Code of Ethics

Excerpt from the Bylaws of the Rental Owners Association of Southwestern Oregon

The objectives of this Association shall be:

- A. To unite, for their mutual good, rental housing owners, managers and/or their agents in the Southwestern Oregon area.
- B. To strive to maintain those standards of the residential rental industry which are of a high ethical and up-to-date business level.
- C. To stimulate cooperation among rental owners to the end that the best possible service will be rendered to the owners and renters.
- D. To provide appropriate information and educational opportunities on state/federal laws, rules/regulations, policies/procedures and rental housing management.
- E. To cooperate with other organizations having similar goals.

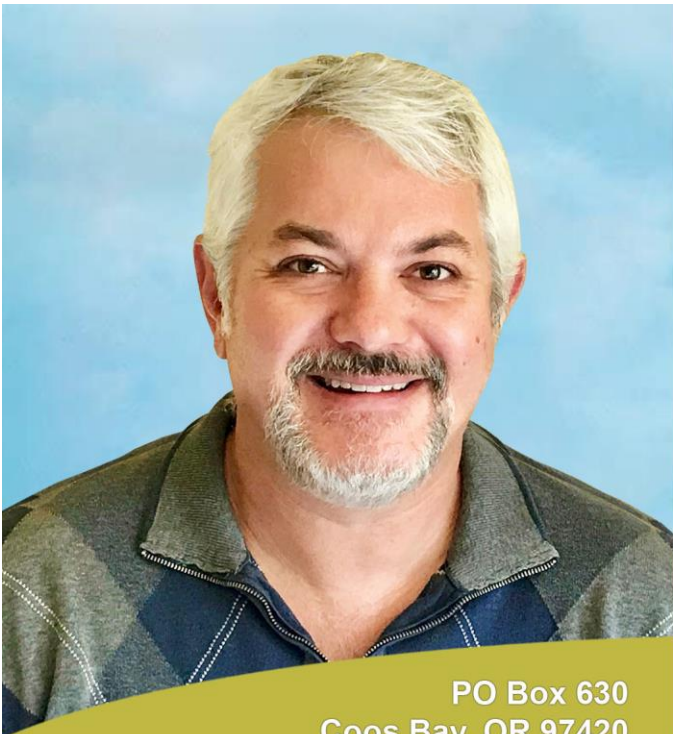




**RENTAL OWNERS  
ASSOCIATION OF  
SOUTHWESTERN  
OREGON**

**PO Box 1712**

**Coos Bay OR 97420**



**PO Box 630  
Coos Bay, OR 97420  
Phone: (541)756-2056  
assistant@pmtlaw.net**

## **Patrick M. Terry Attorney at Law**

**Representing Landlords on the  
Southern Oregon Coast since 2002**

As a landlord of 11 rental units, Patrick understands the needs of his clients and is eager to help.

He specializes in:

- Landlord/Tenant Law   - Real Estate   - Collections  
- Estate Planning       - Business       - Probate

\*Free 1-hr consultation only covers landlord/tenant matters. All other matters are subject to hourly charge. Inquire for details.



ROA SWO's attorney on retainer.  
Current members receive a **FREE**  
1-hour consultation annually, plus  
discounted rates for representation.