

Like many other businesses, law practices are being affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and are taking steps to change work practices to accommodate social distancing. At Lawcover we are always alert to possible risks for lawyers as a result of disruptions in legal practice. This email provides some practical guidance on ways to avoid the risk of professional indemnity claims in these uncertain times.

1. Be Vigilant about Cyber Security

With most firms having some or all staff working remotely, now is the perfect time for cyber criminals to take advantage of disruption. While Lawcover has not yet seen an increase in cyber claims arising as a result of remote working, we have seen these types of claims arise when people are distracted or under pressure. The stress and uncertainty around COVID-19 makes all lawyers more vulnerable to cyber attack.

To protect against online crime, make sure that virus software is up to date, beware of phishing emails and be sure to take the time to properly check all details before transferring money to unknown bank accounts. Whenever you or your client are dealing with funds transfers, phone ahead to verify details.

For more cyber information download:

[Cyber Security Tips](#)

[Email Cyber Fraud](#)

[Multi Factor Authentication](#)

2. Check and Double Check Your Diary

In these disrupted times, it is easy to miss court and filing deadlines, lease renewals or dates to exercise options. Make sure that these details are included in your diary, and detailed to your clients. Missed deadlines make up a significant proportion of claims against lawyers.

With the COVID-19 pandemic forcing people around the country to break their daily routines and cancel plans, the risk that distracted lawyers and staff will overlook a court alert email or forget to put an entry into an electronic diary is high.

With all the other things on their minds, lawyers should make time to double-check that routine diary tasks and email checks are getting done on time and with the same level of attention.

3. Check Your Conflicts System

Conflict checking is essential in all matters, and should not go by the wayside when lawyers are working remotely. Take the time to ensure that conflict checking software is working and is still being used for every new client and every new matter.

Lawcover is also suggesting that solicitors take the extra step of communicating to all staff the expectation that file opening procedures will still apply for remote work. If this is a task routinely assigned to one staff member, consider getting others up to speed on using conflicts systems.

4. Communicate With Clients

Failure to communicate is a prime cause of claims against lawyers. Changed work arrangements may mean that face to face meetings are put on hold for some time, but communication with clients should remain a top priority.

If other options are available - taking instructions remotely instead of face-to-face, for example — lawyers continue to have a duty to provide the proper advice and take careful instructions even where in-person meetings are not possible.

5. Connect With Lawcover

Most lawyers aren't looking for reasons to call Lawcover, but the unknowns of the COVID-19 pandemic and the potential scope of its disruptions make it a good time to tap our risk-management knowledge.

Apart from our online resources, our claims solicitors are also available to provide you with advice or support in situations where a mistake may have been made and a claim appears imminent.

Lawcover is here to support and protect the legal profession in times of crisis, and that has never been more important than now.

[Click here for Lawcover's COVID-19 response updates](#)