This handbook may be used as a desk reference, a companion piece for each jurisdiction’s lawyer ethics rules, a basic text for a paralegal ethics class, assigned reading as part of a paralegal’s orientation to a law firm or other paralegal employer, or as part of an in-house training program in legal ethics.

Chapter 1 creates the setting for a discussion of legal ethics and professional conduct by addressing these questions: What is the professional role of the paralegal in relation to clients, lawyers, the legal system, and the public? What does professionalism mean for a paralegal?

Chapter 2 answers the following questions: Who created regulations for the conduct of service providers? What is the relative authority of various rules and opinions governing the conduct of legal service providers? What other substantive areas of law govern the professional conduct of lawyers and paralegals? How does the law of agency operate in relationships between lawyers, paralegals, and clients? What are the consequences of violating professional conduct rules?
Chapters 3 through 11 examine rules, guidelines, and legal developments in areas of the law of professional responsibility that particularly impact the paralegal. Each chapter contains a bulleted summary of important concepts from the text.

The book concludes with a glossary of terms and several appendices containing requirements, rules, codes, and guidelines of use to the paralegal.

**A Note of Caution**

This book has been developed as a tool for paralegals throughout the country. Based on the ABA Model Rules for Professional Conduct, it offers general guidance that can be adapted in any jurisdiction. Since specific ethics rules differ from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, it is essential that each reader consult his or her jurisdiction’s rules of professional conduct.