

MICHAEL J. PETERSON, ATTORNEY AT LAW
("The Law Firm")

NEW CLIENT INFORMATION SHEET

Name: _____
Mailing Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ Work _____ Home _____

Social Security No: _____

NC Driver's License No: _____

Date of Birth: _____

How Did You Hear About Our Firm? _____ Referred By: _____

_____ Yellow Page Ad

_____ Direct Mailer

_____ Other: _____

Nature Of Your Problem/Area Of Concern: _____

By signing below, I acknowledge and agree to the following:

1) It is the policy of the Law Firm not to charge for initial consultations, not to exceed 15 minutes. Any initial consultation which exceeds 15 minutes may result in a fee being charged to me, which will be due and payable at the end of my initial consultation unless I make other arrangements satisfactory to the Law Firm. This does NOT apply to personal injury cases, in which there is no fee charged to me unless/until the Law Firm recovers money for me.

2) At the end of my initial consultation, if I agree to hire the Law Firm and the Law Firm agrees to perform further legal services for me, I will be asked to sign a Fee Agreement. This Fee Agreement will set forth exactly what legal services will be provided to me, and what I will be charged for such services. Unless I sign such a Fee Agreement, no additional legal services will be provided to me by the Law Firm, and I will not be billed any additional charges.

3) I have received a brochure explaining to me alternatives to going to court ("Alternative Dispute Resolution"). See back of this form. During my initial consultation, I may ask any questions that I may have about this subject.

Client: _____ Date: _____

**ALTERNATIVES TO LITIGATION:
ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION("ADR")**

A client who has a problem with another individual or business may decide to have that problem resolved by filing a lawsuit with the Court. However, there are other ways to resolve problems short of-or instead of-involving the Court system. A summary of the most common alternatives to litigation follows:

1) Personal Discussions With The Individual/Business. If you haven't tried talking to the person or business with whom you have a dispute, you should probably do so. It is often the fastest, and most economical, means of resolving disputes. You may chose to do this before you seek the services of an attorney, or after you have learned what your rights are by discussing your dispute with an attorney. You may, also, have an attorney assist you-or even act for you- in contacting the "other side" to discuss your claim and try to resolve it.

2) Mediation. If you have tried talking to the person or business with whom you have a dispute, either with or without an attorney, you might also consider mediation. Mediation is when you and the "other side" sit down and try to resolve your dispute with the assistance of a neutral, third party Mediator. Both sides have to agree to mediation (i.e., no one can be forced to mediate), and there is a cost involved. However, many cases resolve through the mechanism of mediation and, next to resolving the dispute through personal discussions, mediation is often the fastest and most economical means of resolving disputes. You are entitled to have an attorney represent you in the mediation process if you decide you want one, or you might attempt it on your own: nothing said in mediation can be later utilized in any court proceeding; the Mediator generally cannot be later called as a witness if the matter does not settle; the process remains voluntary so that you can stop at any time; and the results of the mediation only become binding on the parties if they are satisfied with and want to be bound by the agreement reached.

3) Binding Arbitration. Like mediation, both parties have to agree to binding arbitration; however, unlike mediation, arbitration is binding on the parties (i.e, the decision of the Arbitrator is final, unless you have grounds to appeal it). You may actually engage in a formal presentation of your dispute similar to a trial to Court, but the Arbitrator by agreement can offer alternatives generally not available through the Court system. Benefits include, generally, faster resolution and cheaper cost than a conventional Court case, but you may not have all of the procedural safeguards that are in place in the judicial system. Like mediation, there is a cost involved in arbitration and, like mediation, you are entitled to have an attorney represent you.

4) Other ADR Alternatives. There are other Alternative Dispute Resolution alternatives, but the above are by far the most common. Ask your attorney if you wish additional information on what may available in your particular situation.