

Complaints against Probate Judges

If you disagree with a probate judge's **decision**, you have the right to appeal that decision to the superior court. In most cases, the appeal must be taken within 30 days of the date of the probate decree, but there are important exceptions to this rule. The booklets published by the Office of the Probate Court Administrator, which are available on this Web site, contain general information about the period for appeals in various matters, but they are not a substitute for competent professional advice. You should consult legal counsel for more specific information about the appeals process.

If you have a complaint about a probate judge's ethical or professional **conduct**, you may wish to file a complaint with the Council on Probate Judicial Conduct. Please note that the Council is not a court of law. The state legislature created this special tribunal in 1975 to investigate complaints against probate judges.

Procedures for Filing a Complaint with the Council on Probate Judicial Conduct provides complete information about the Council and the complaint procedure. There is also a Complaint Form, PC-41, which must be signed under the penalty of false statement. The booklet and the complaint form are both available on this Web site.

Some brief information about the Council on Probate Judicial Conduct appears below.

- The Council has five members who serve four-year terms. The probate judges elect one probate judge to serve on the Council; the Chief Justice appoints a retired state referee; and the Governor makes three appointments: one attorney and two persons who are not attorneys.
- Attorney Richard Banbury is the Executive Director of the Council on Probate Judicial Conduct. He can be contacted by mail in care of Rome, McGuigan, P.C., One State Street, Hartford, CT 06103 or by telephone at 860-549-1000. The names of the Council members are as follows:

Chairman, Hon. William L. Wollenberg, Trial Referee,
Hartford
Hon. Andre D. Dorval, Probate Judge, Region #19 Probate
District
Anne S. Evans, Hebron
Atty. Sharon Holland Purtill, Glastonbury
Janet M. Wildman, Washington
Alternate, Hon. Michael F. Magistrali, Probate Judge,
Torrington Area Probate District

- Complaints must be in writing, and the law specifies the types of complaints the Council may consider. These include complaints about a judge's violation of the law or a canon of ethics or the failure to properly perform the duties of office.