

The Two-Week Vacation Test — Attorney Edition

If you disappeared for two weeks tomorrow — no phone, no email — could another competent attorney protect your clients and understand what needs attention?

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| 1. | Could someone at your firm list your active matters within one hour? | YES | NO |
| 2. | Does every active matter have a colleague who generally knows it? | YES | NO |
| 3. | Could someone identify which of your matters has the next critical deadline? | YES | NO |
| 4. | Would a covering lawyer know the current posture of your three most active cases? | YES | NO |
| 5. | Could anyone find your notes on what happened last in each matter? | YES | NO |
| 6. | Would your assistant know which clients need a call this week — and why? | YES | NO |
| 7. | Could someone tell which of your matters involve client funds needing attention? | YES | NO |
| 8. | Does anyone else know where the complete file lives for every matter? | YES | NO |
| 9. | Could a colleague cover your next hearing using only your materials? | YES | NO |
| 10. | Would anyone know which opposing counsel are waiting on responses from you? | YES | NO |

BEFORE PAGE TWO

Courts and bars across the country are moving on this: several states now require lawyers to name a backup or certify a plan, and in many jurisdictions, when a lawyer dies or becomes unable to practice without a continuity plan in place, a court may appoint another lawyer to protect clients and address the practice. The point of this test isn't your state's rule — it's your clients.

Part two — the practice around the cases

11.	Does someone know how to reach your malpractice carrier?	YES	NO
12.	Could the right person access your calendaring/docket system responsibilities?	YES	NO
13.	Does a trusted person know WHERE trust-account records are kept?	YES	NO
14.	Is there a written arrangement with a backup or successor attorney?	YES	NO
15.	Would your staff know who is in charge of decisions while you're gone?	YES	NO
16.	Could someone find your engagement letters to see what you've promised clients?	YES	NO
17.	Does anyone know your recurring obligations (dues, CLE, leases)?	YES	NO
18.	Could your bookkeeper run payroll and pay the essential bills without you?	YES	NO
19.	Would your family know which colleague to call about the practice?	YES	NO
20.	If you never came back, does a written plan exist that protects your clients?	YES	NO

■ YOUR SCORE — COUNT THE NOS

0–3 NOS: Keep it current. Your clients are protected by a system; your only risk is letting it go stale. Put a review date on the calendar.

4–9 NOS: Protected by your presence, not by a plan. Nothing here is unusual — and nothing here is safe. The NOS you just marked are the table of contents of the plan you haven't written yet.

10+ NOS: The practice lives in your head. That's common — and fixable in hours, not months. Start with your three most active matters and one colleague's name.

■ THREE FIRST MOVES

1. Complete an Active Matter Continuity Record for your three most active matters (the first takes ~20 minutes; updates take a few).
2. Ask one colleague to be your named backup — and tell your assistant where these records live.
3. Read your state bar's succession-planning resources, and put a date on your calendar to finish the rest.

The Attorney Continuity Codex — coming from The Lasting Codex Professional — turns this test into a finished, finishable system. Educational and organizational only; not legal or ethics advice; your state's rules govern.