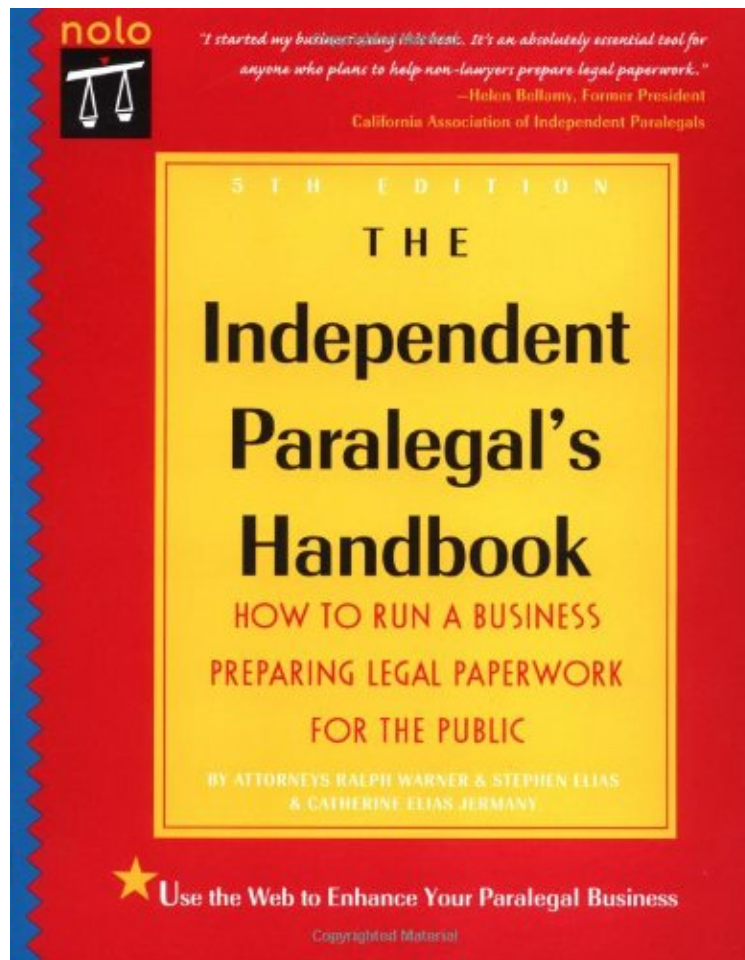


(Mobile book) The Independent Paralegal's Handbook: Everything You Need to Run a Business Preparing Legal Paperwork for the Public

# The Independent Paralegal's Handbook: Everything You Need to Run a Business Preparing Legal Paperwork for the Public

Ralph E. Warner, Stephen R. Elias, Catherine Elias Jermany

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**Ralph E. Warner, Stephen R. Elias, Catherine Elias Jermany : The Independent Paralegal's Handbook: Everything You Need to Run a Business Preparing Legal Paperwork for the Public** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Independent Paralegal's Handbook: Everything You Need to Run a Business Preparing Legal Paperwork for the Public:

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oneself without the protection of an overseeing lawyer. The author cites numerous examples of independent paralegals who engaged in such mediocre practices as typing up wills and then being arrested without being charged with any offense and refused jury trials and forced to pay hefty fines and to spend time in jail. Other than these cautionary tales, very little real advice is given on how to open a practice. After I read my copy, I immediately donated it to the nearby library to help warn other paralegals of the dangers of opening their own practices. It appears that the economy is swamped with lawyers with no work and so they are targeting paralegals to get rid of the competition. The bottom line of this book seems to be: don't practice independently unless you want to find out what prison food is like.

Every day more and more people are turning to independent paralegals for help with routine legal paperwork. This long-proven definitive reference provides crucial legal and business advice for all those considering a career in this growing field. Interviews with prominent independent paralegals bring the text to life.

.com Now in its fifth edition, Ralph Warner's *The Independent Paralegal's Handbook* is billed as a how-to guide for people who want to take the law into their own hands. This is a good road map for a profession that has grown quickly in recent decades, as motivated consumers seek to avoid intermediaries (lawyers) and handle their own legal matters in areas such as bankruptcy, personal injury settlements, and divorce, all with the help of paralegals. This is not, however, the book to read if you need to learn the ins and outs and daily responsibilities of a paralegal. The book assumes you received training elsewhere--either through schooling or working as a legal secretary--and instead focuses on the challenges, triumphs and pitfalls of starting your own paralegal business. Those pitfalls, the authors point out quickly and frequently, usually involve harassment from bar associations and lawyers who fear that their monopoly over legal information is slipping away. Many pages, in fact, are devoted to reminding paralegals that they cannot give legal advice and that they must constantly remind their "customers" (not clients) that they are not licensed to practice law. The book covers which types of legal paperwork an independent paralegal can safely and profitably prepare; how to let customers know you are not a lawyer; how to minimize the chance of harassment by the bar; how to get the necessary training to work as an independent paralegal; what to call your business; how to get a business license and buy equipment; and how much to charge for your services. (Paralegals, the authors suggest, can significantly undercut a lawyer's fees--by as much as 70 percent--and still make an "excellent living.") The authors also make a strong argument for the virtues of being a paralegal, noting that there is an underlying goal to empower people. "The prospect of helping people with very little money," explains Jolene Jacobs, one of 12 paralegals interviewed for the book's appendix, "and sometimes without much education, put their own decisions on paper, file their papers at court and represent themselves before a judge was truly exciting." --John Russell