

THE LAW SOCIETY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

IN THE MATTER OF THE *LEGAL PROFESSION ACT*, SBC 1998, C. 9

AND

MICHAEL ANDREW CHRIST

(a member of the Law Society of British Columbia)

RULE 3-7.1 CONSENT AGREEMENT SUMMARY

1. On August 26, 2025, the Chair of the Discipline Committee approved a consent agreement proposal submitted by Michael Andrew Christ (the “Lawyer”) under Rule 3-7.1 of the Law Society Rules (“Rules”).
2. Under the proposal, the Lawyer admitted that he committed the following misconduct, and that it constitutes professional misconduct pursuant to s. 38(4) of the *Legal Profession Act*:
 - (a) Between February 2021 and May 2022, in relation to six client files, he improperly withdrew \$2,594.60 in client funds by authorizing the withdrawal of the funds from his law firm’s trust account and authorizing the deposit of the funds to his law firm’s general account in seven instances, when his law firm was not entitled to the funds and had not delivered a bill to its clients, contrary to Rules 3-64(1) and 3-65(2) of the Law Society Rules and section 69(1) of the *Legal Profession Act*.
 - (b) On or about June 22, 2022, in relation to one client file, he improperly withdrew \$1,186.80 in client funds by authorizing the withdrawal of the funds from his law firm’s trust account and authorizing the deposit of the funds to his law firm’s general account in one instance, when his law firm was not entitled to the funds and had not prepared or delivered a bill to its client, contrary to Rules 3-64(1) and 3-65(2) of the Law Society Rules and section 69(1) of the *Legal Profession Act*.

3. Under the proposal, the Lawyer agreed to be suspended from the practice of law for a period of one month commencing on September 1, 2025.
4. In making its decision, the Chair of the Discipline Committee considered an Agreed Statement of Facts dated August 8, 2025, and a letter to the Chair of the Discipline Committee.
5. This consent agreement will now form part of the Lawyer's professional conduct record.
6. Pursuant to Rule 3-7.1(5) of the Rules, and subject to Rule 3-7.2 of the Rules, the Law Society is bound by an effective consent agreement, and no further action may be taken on the complaint that gave rise to the agreement.
7. The admitted facts set out in the Agreed Statement of Facts have been summarized below.

Summary of Facts

Member Background

8. The Lawyer was called and admitted as a member of the Law Society of British Columbia on May 10, 1984. He practises law primarily in the areas of residential real estate, and wills and estates.
9. Since April 13, 2009, the Lawyer has practised at a law firm in Surrey, British Columbia (the "Firm").

Background Facts

10. In November and December 2022, the Law Society conducted a compliance audit of the Firm for the period October 1, 2021 to November 13, 2022 (the "Audit"). The auditor identified six client matters that were either concluded or inactive, where residual funds remaining in trust for the client were cleared or "zeroed out" by the Lawyer (the "Client Matters").
11. In each of the Client Matters, the following pattern of activity occurred:
 - (a) at the conclusion of the file, the Firm attempted to return the remaining trust funds owed to the clients or to third parties by preparing and delivering trust cheques to the clients or to third parties;
 - (b) the trust cheques were not cashed and the funds remained in the Firm's trust account for a period of time;

- (c) the Firm eventually reversed or voided the trust cheques;
 - (d) the Firm prepared invoices with new or additional charges for legal fees, services, or disbursements in the Client Matters that had not been properly incurred and did not reflect true and accurate fees for further legal services performed by the Firm;
 - (e) the Firm prepared trust cheques to pay some or all of the remaining funds held in trust in the Client Matters to the Firm; and
 - (f) the Firm deposited the trust cheques to its general account.
12. In one instance, the Firm prepared an additional trust cheque to pay the remaining funds held in trust to the Firm and did not prepare or deliver an invoice to the client.
13. The Firm was not entitled to receive the residual trust balances in the Client Matters.
14. During the Law Society's investigation, the Firm's former bookkeeper admitted that she took the initiative to clear out the residual trust balances in the Client Matters, absent any instructions from the Lawyer.

Mitigating Factors

15. The misconduct described above was unintentional and unknown to the Lawyer during the relevant period. The Lawyer signed the invoices and cheques presented to him by the bookkeeper in good faith reliance on the information contained therein. The Lawyer believed the invoices would be delivered to the clients by his staff as was the Firm's usual practice.
16. Following the conclusion of the Audit and during the investigation, the Lawyer either returned the trust funds in the Client Matters to the clients, paid the trust funds that were owed to third parties, or paid the trust funds to the Law Society as unclaimed trust money.
17. Despite the mitigating factors noted above, the Lawyer accepts full responsibility for the bookkeeper's actions and the Firm's accounting practices.
18. In approving the consent agreement proposal, the Chair of the Discipline Committee also considered that the proposed suspension was consistent with the outcome in prior, similar matters.