

## Virginia State Bar

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## The Virginia Bar Association

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Free Legal Services Available To Victims of Gulf Coast Hurricanes 1-800-552-7977**

Attorneys from around Virginia are offering FREE legal assistance to victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita who have relocated in the commonwealth.

Beginning Oct. 6, 2005, Gulf Coast evacuees now in Virginia can receive a referral to a volunteer attorney by calling the Virginia State Bar's Lawyer Referral Service at 1-800-552-7977 and identifying themselves as hurricane victims. The Lawyer Referral Service is open every business day from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The attorney can provide telephone advice about issues that arise in Virginia as a result of relocation. Examples include government benefits, landlord-tenant problems, replacement of lost documents, and domestic relations and education matters. Victims should have at hand, where available, documents relating to their questions, such as identification, leases, court orders and school records.

This public service is offered through the Lawyer Referral Service and the Virginia State Bar and The Virginia Bar Association's joint Emergency Legal Response Plan. The emergency plan was established in 1995 by the young lawyers sections of the two bar groups to ensure that the organized legal community responds quickly, effectively and appropriately to assist victims of disasters. In a letter distributed Sept. 12, 2005, Virginia Chief Justice Leroy R. Hassell Sr. and Virginia State Bar President Phillip V. Anderson asked all members of the Virginia bar to volunteer their services through the emergency plan on behalf of storm victims. The letter is posted at [www.vsb.org](http://www.vsb.org).

More information on services available to hurricane evacuees can be found on the Web site of the Virginia Department of Emergency Management, at [www.vaemergency.com](http://www.vaemergency.com).

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