



# U.S. ARMY OKINAWA

## ★TORII STATION★



### LEGAL ASSISTANCE

• 652-4332 / 4742 • BUILDING 218, ROOM 220 •

## CONFIDENTIAL ATTENDANCE POLICY

### **The Torii Station Legal Assistance Office will not verify a Client Visit**

On Okinawa, Department of the Army Civilians, and Family Members receive confidential legal advice from Okinawa Law Center's Soldier Family Legal Services Office. Many do not know that the Legal Assistance Office also has a confidential appointment policy. Consequently, we are unable to verify to leaders, spouses, or others who call our office and inquire whether a client has or will visit our office (or kept an appointment).

### **Verifying a Client visit may be considered a violation of the of Attorney Professional Rules**

Although it does not come up often on Okinawa, this issue does arise. Certainly, a legal office may not discuss the representation or the matters discussed. This confidentiality is universally known. However, there is some debate, even within the legal community, about whether or not we should confirm to the command (or inform anyone) that a client or potential client actually visited our office. While some military offices view this as a "mere accountability matter," the Torii Station Legal Assistance Office views it as confidential client information. Revealing attendance or visitation information very likely is a violation of the Attorney Professional Rules of Responsibility and may harm the client who could ultimately be less likely to trust the legal office and may harm other potential clients who may not trust the Legal Assistance office in the future.

### **Sending an escort is permissible**

The Torii Station Soldier Family Legal Services Office is a client-service office and we treat it as such. We maintain the confidentiality of our clients. Commanders or NCOs that want to maintain accountability over a Soldier may send an escort with the Soldier. Of course, the escort cannot sit-in on the confidential meeting with the attorney, but the escort can ensure that a Soldier is where he or she is supposed to be. This is a practice routinely followed for Soldiers sent to appointments with the Trial Defense Service.

### **Clients can make a Legal Assistance Appointment**

Eligible ID card holders can make an appointment at the Torii Station Legal Assistance Office by calling DSN 652-4332.