

Real Estate Law

1. What is *real estate law*? What does it cover?

Law in general can be divided into transactional and litigation. Litigation deals with dispute, transactions deals with business transactions. Transactional real estate law covers the contracts and rights of any kind of the purchase of real estate for the buyer and the seller. The litigation side of real estate law covers disputes regarding the rights of real estate include easements (the right to use the real estate of another – cable lines, rights of municipalities to do landscaping on your property, crossing your property to get to theirs), boundary disputes, etc., disputes about the use of your property if someone is using your property, disputes about fences, disputes about neighbor's trees hanging over your property, the rights you have versus your neighbors, the rights for support of your property, zoning rights, land use issues. Real estate law also involves the rights to extract minerals from the property, and your responsibilities as a property owner (for example, if someone gets hurt on your land). It also covers water rights.

2. What does an attorney do who works in *real estate law*?

An attorney who works in real estate law assists in real property transactions and advises clients regarding their rights and responsibilities in real estate transactions, represents a property owner in court and in law suits related to property rights including boundary disputes, transactions, imminent domain and inverse condemnation.

3. What is an average day like for an attorney who practices *real estate law*?

A typical day for a real estate lawyer would include consulting with clients and experts, experts in land use development, attending informal settlement meetings, and maybe make appearances in court about the progress of litigation. An average day involves meeting with clients and experts and potential adversaries in attempts to resolve cases and going to court. Average day on the transactional side is in the office on the phone, email, on the computer, review doc, talking to clients, talking to title companies, talking to other attorneys.

4. What is the average salary for an attorney who practices *real estate law*?

Salaries are comparable to those of attorneys in other fields. It depends on where you are, but the range is from \$100,000-250,000 a year. Real estate attorneys are paid by the hour and can make anywhere from \$150-400 per hour.

5. Is there currently a demand for *real estate law* attorneys?

Yes, the amount of real estate that exists is a finite amount, the demands on real estate increase and the population demands, so there always seems to be a demand for real estate attorneys.

6. Is there more of a demand for *real estate law* attorneys in one area of the country over another?

There is more demand for transactional real estate law where the real estate market is moving and transactions are being made.

7. How difficult is it for students right out of law school to get a job in *real estate law*?

It's no more difficult than any other area of law.

8. In what type of a work situation can an attorney practice *real estate law*? Big firm? Small firm?

Government work?

All across the board. Starting out it's better to go with a large firm. It would be hard to go out on your own at the start. There is a demand for real estate attorneys in all three arenas.

9. What are the most rewarding things about practicing *real estate law*?

Well, the most rewarding thing is that you're able to help clients achieve their goals and objectives in real estate and assisting in important projects. You help create solutions in the development. You can see projects from beginning to end; you feel a sense of accomplishment.

10. What are the most difficult things about practicing *real estate law*?

There's always conflict in real estate and one of the most difficult things is dealing with the conflicting rights and some of the complicated issues involved in real estate.

11. For students who are interested in practicing *real estate law*, are there certain undergraduate classes they should take? Majors that are better? Minors that are better?

Taking courses in geology, geography, or engineering will be helpful. Civil engineering is an excellent major and your ability to practice real estate law will be enhanced.

12. For students who are interested in practicing *real estate law*, would it be better to go to a school that holds itself out as having a real estate law in *real estate law* or just the best ranked law school the student can get into?

Try to get into the best ranked law school you can get into.

13. For students who are interested in practicing *real estate law*, are there certain law school classes they should take?

The core curriculum will require your study of real estate law, that's one of the core courses. Take all the real estate related courses that you can aside from the core course that you're required to take. Tax classes would be beneficial just to give you some familiarity with the tax laws. You don't have to be a tax attorney, but it's helpful be sensitive to the issues.

14. For students who are interested in practicing *real estate law* is there anything else they should do to prepare themselves for that field of law?

Consider taking courses to be licensed to sell real estate, that way you can learn the fundamentals and get a summer job as an agent where they can work in new development areas. Working in that type of environment or places where they lease out properties you would learn how to do a lease.

15. Other Comments.

One nice thing about real estate is that it's not quite as adversarial as other fields of law. This is typical with transactional side of law, but more so with real estate law. It's not as confrontational. You feel it's more of a cooperative effort with your clients.

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