

Top Ten Legal Assistance Tips

By Rudy Wartella

After 17 years of helping people with their legal problems, and after writing several preventive law articles, it still comes down to 10 basic legal tips:

1. Comply with all court orders, child custody orders, and child support orders.
2. Create an estate plan and review it annually.
3. Prepare an accurate tax return, file your income taxes on time and keep a complete copy for your records.
4. Note all damaged or missing property from your household goods shipment at the time of delivery, or notify the claims office within 70 days of items not noted at the time of delivery. Properly secure all outside items during typhoon season.
5. Inventory your off-post apartment before you move in and give notice to your housing agency, as required in your lease, before moving out.
6. Obey Traffic Laws and Don't Drink and Drive -- Especially not on Okinawa.
7. Give a Special Power of Attorney when that is all that is needed. Only give a General Power of Attorney to someone you completely trust and only after fully understanding its uses and potential abuses. Limit your General Power of Attorney to not more than one year.
8. If you have a legal problem or concern, seek legal help immediately.
9. Obey all lawful orders.
10. Put important agreements in writing and then Read, Understand, and Agree with all contracts before you sign them.

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