

AI Reliability Checklist for Law Firms

Eight practical checks for data control, model portability, record citations, human review, tested fallbacks, and continuity.

08 CHECKS

ONE CONTINUITY CHAIN

BEFORE ADOPTION

IN PRODUCTION



ACCOUNTABILITY STAYS ATTACHED

What this guide protects against

An AI tool can look reliable while one vendor, one model, or one undocumented workflow remains load-bearing. This guide turns reliability into eight questions a firm can answer before adoption and revisit during routine review.

Before adoption

Know what becomes load-bearing.

01 *Data location*

Document where prompts, testimony, files, and outputs go.

02 *Model portability*

Confirm the workflow can survive a model or vendor change.

03 *Method portability*

Keep prompts and procedures usable outside one product.

04 *Record citations*

Require page-and-line support or a clear not-in-the-record result.

In production

Keep accountability and continuity visible.

05 *Human review*

A qualified professional reviews consequential output before release.

06 *Tested fallback*

A second workable path has been exercised, not merely named.

07 *Manual path*

The critical task can still be completed without the AI system.

08 *Written continuity plan*

Owners, steps, and escalation paths are documented.

How to use it

- 01 Assign an owner for every item.
- 02 Record the answer, not merely a checkmark.
- 03 Test the fallback and manual path under realistic conditions.
- 04 Revisit the guide when a vendor, model, retention policy, or critical workflow changes.

The visual is designed to print cleanly. Use Print / save PDF to create a one-page office copy, then keep the documented answers with the firm's technology and continuity procedures.

The operating standard

AI should support accountable legal work without becoming an unexplained single point of failure. Critical claims stay traceable to the record, consequential output receives professional review, and the firm retains a way to keep working when the primary tool is unavailable.

A backup, a documented process, and accountable human review stay attached to every critical AI workflow.

Reference context

Basis and limits. ABA Formal Opinion 512 addresses competence, confidentiality, and review under the ABA Model Rules. NIST AI 600-1, GOVERN 6.2, recommends documented fallbacks and rehearsed incident response. These eight checks are my continuity framework, not a complete ethics checklist or a certification of any tool. Apply the rules of your jurisdiction.

For additional context, the worked review example shows how a real citation can still fail to support a proposed summary, using a short synthetic record.

REFERENCES

ABA FORMAL OPINION 512

https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/professional_responsibility/ethics-opinions/aba-formal-opinion-512.pdf

NIST AI 600-1 <https://nvlpubs.nist.gov/nistpubs/ai/NIST.AI.600-1.pdf>

WORKED REVIEW EXAMPLE </blog/ai-reliability-checklist-law-firms/#a-worked-review-example>