

Anonymization Audit: Student Information Packet

Exercise Overview

In this exercise, you will receive a simulated client email containing sensitive employment-related facts. Your task is to decide what information should not be included in a prompt submitted to a generic AI tool.

The goal is not to create a perfect redaction. The goal is to practice the professional judgment required before using AI with client-related information. You will need to preserve enough legal substance for the AI tool to be useful while removing or generalizing information that could identify the client, the employer, other people involved, or the specific workplace dispute.

For this exercise, assume the AI tool is a public-facing or consumer-style tool that does not have appropriate data security protections, confidentiality guarantees, or institutional approval for client information.

Do not paste the original, unredacted email into a generic AI tool.

Learning Goals

By completing this exercise, you should be able to:

- Distinguish direct identifiers from sensitive facts and re-identification risks.
- Explain why public or generic AI tools require a different confidentiality analysis than approved enterprise, institutional, or legal-specific tools.
- Recognize that anonymization is a judgment exercise, not a mechanical deletion task.
- Preserve enough legal substance for initial issue-spotting while reducing unnecessary client-data exposure.
- Identify when a fact is legally useful now, when it can wait until later, and when it should not be shared with a generic AI tool at all.
- Connect client-data handling choices to professional responsibility duties, including confidentiality, competence, supervision, and verification.

Scenario

You are working in a law firm. A potential client has sent the email below seeking legal guidance. You want to use a generic AI tool to help with initial issue-spotting and to generate a list of possible follow-up questions.

Before doing so, you must sanitize the email.

Your task is to remove or replace information that could:

- Identify the client or their business.
- Identify the employer or other parties involved.

- Identify employees, witnesses, investors, insurers, agencies, or other related people or entities.
- Reveal competitively sensitive or workplace-sensitive information.
- Be traced back to a real person, company, or dispute.
- Violate client confidentiality if disclosed.
- Expose sensitive personal information that is not necessary for the limited AI-assisted task.

As you work, keep asking:

- What does the AI tool actually need in order to help with initial issue-spotting?
- Could this fact, alone or in combination with other facts, be traced back to the client?
- Am I including this detail because it is legally necessary, or just because it appeared in the original email?

Simulated Client Email

From: laylachristinamihuti@veryrealperson.com

To: you@alawfirm.com

Subject: Concerns about workplace harassment and my separation from employment

Hello,

I am reaching out because I was advised that I should speak with an attorney as soon as possible. My name is Layla Cristina Mihuti. I live in Indianapolis and worked as a Laboratory Assistant I at Mid America Clinical Laboratories, LLC. I began my employment in early April 2024, and my employment ended in early April 2025 under circumstances that I believe were unfair and harmful. Since leaving the position, I have been dealing with ongoing anxiety, difficulty sleeping, and a sense of embarrassment about how everything unfolded, and I am unsure what options I may have.

Not long after I started working in the lab, I began to feel isolated from my coworkers. I am a woman working in a department that is largely male, and I was often treated as though I did not fully belong. Coworkers regularly excluded me from informal lunches and breaks, even when plans were openly discussed in front of me. I was not invited to collaborate on larger or more complex projects that were routinely offered to male employees with similar experience, and I was instead assigned repetitive or less visible tasks. During meetings, my input was frequently ignored or spoken over, and when I raised concerns or asked questions, I was sometimes met with dismissive comments or jokes that made me feel embarrassed and undermined. Over time, this behavior escalated into persistent belittling and a work environment where I felt constantly on edge and unwelcome.

I reported these issues to management multiple times, including specific complaints in February and March 2025. I explained that the exclusion, comments, and unequal treatment were affecting my ability to do my job and my mental health. Despite these reports, no meaningful investigation or corrective action occurred. I was often told that the lab was a "high-pressure environment," that I needed to be less sensitive, or that these issues were simply part of workplace dynamics. As the months went on, I began to dread coming into work, avoided shared spaces when possible, and felt increasingly isolated from my team.

By the beginning of April 2025, the situation had become emotionally overwhelming. I no longer felt comfortable or supported in the lab and did not see a realistic path for improvement. On April 3, 2025, I submitted a resignation because I felt I had no other

choice. The following day, April 4, 2025, I was informed that the company was treating my separation as a discharge based on my resignation. This felt confusing and humiliating, especially given that I had tried to raise concerns and resolve the situation internally. I later filed a charge with the EEOC and received a dismissal and notice of rights dated in late 2025. Although the agency stated it could not conclude that a violation occurred, I was issued a right-to-sue notice. I believe I was subjected to a hostile work environment based on my gender and that the emotional impact has been significant. I am seeking guidance on whether I have legal options and what steps I should consider next.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Layla

Part 1: Confidentiality and Re-Identification Audit

Before writing your AI prompt, review the client email and answer the questions below.

A. Direct Identifiers

List all direct identifiers that should be removed or replaced before using a generic AI tool. Consider names, email addresses, employer names, locations, job titles, exact dates, and any other details that directly identify a person, organization, or matter.

B. Sensitive or Traceable Details

List facts that may not directly identify the client but could still create confidentiality or re-identification risk. Consider emotional details, mental-health details, workplace dynamics, timing, agency filings, job role, industry, sequence of events, and unique combinations of facts.

C. Legally Useful Facts

Which facts are necessary for initial issue-spotting? Identify the facts the AI tool would need to provide useful preliminary guidance about possible legal issues, research questions, or follow-up questions. You do not need to include every fact from the email.

D. Facts That Can Wait

Which facts should not be shared with a generic AI tool at this stage, even if they might become relevant later in the representation?

Part 2: Sanitized Prompt

Write the prompt you would actually enter into a generic AI tool. Your prompt should remove or generalize identifying and sensitive information while preserving enough legal substance for the tool to help with initial issue-spotting.

Do not include names, email addresses, exact employer names, precise dates, unnecessary procedural specifics, or unnecessary sensitive personal details.

Part 3: Tool Use Record

After you have prepared your sanitized prompt, use a generic AI tool as instructed by your professor. Complete the fields below.

1. The generic AI tool I used

2. The prompt I entered

3. The output I received

4. Non-Anonymized Comparison Question

Do not enter the original, unredacted email into a generic AI tool.

Instead, answer this question: What additional information was present in the original email that you did not include in your sanitized prompt, and how might leaving that information out affect the AI tool's response?

Part 4: Evaluation Questions

After reviewing the AI output, answer the following questions.

A. Usefulness

Was the AI output useful for initial issue-spotting? Why or why not?

B. Missing or Flattened Facts

Did your anonymization choices make the legal problem too generic? Did removing details change the nature of the issue, reduce important context, or flatten facts that may matter to the legal analysis?

C. Remaining Confidentiality Risks

Even after sanitizing the prompt, what confidentiality or re-identification risks remained?

D. Legal Accuracy and Verification

Did the AI output make any legal claims, suggest any causes of action, mention deadlines, or describe legal standards? If so, what would you need to verify before relying on the output?

E. Follow-Up Research

What are three research questions you would investigate next using traditional legal research tools, legal databases, statutes, regulations, agency guidance, or secondary sources?

- ☐ [Research question]
- ☐ [Research question]
- ☐ [Research question]

F. Follow-Up Client Questions

What are three follow-up questions you would ask the client before giving legal advice?

- ☐ [Client question]
- ☐ [Client question]
- ☐ [Client question]

G. Disclosure to a Supervising Attorney

Assume you used the AI tool while working under the supervision of an attorney. How would you disclose your AI use to that attorney? Your answer should identify the tool used, the purpose of the use, what information you excluded from the prompt, what the tool produced, and what still needs to be verified.

H. Final Judgment

Would you rely on this AI output as a starting point for further research? Why or why not?

Submission Checklist

Before submitting, confirm that you have included:

- ☐ Your list of direct identifiers.
- ☐ Your list of sensitive or traceable details.
- ☐ Your sanitized prompt.
- ☐ The name of the generic AI tool used.
- ☐ The AI output generated from the sanitized prompt.
- ☐ Your answer to the non-anonymized comparison question.
- ☐ Your evaluation of the output's usefulness and risks.
- ☐ Your proposed follow-up research questions.
- ☐ Your proposed follow-up client questions.
- ☐ Your disclosure statement to a supervising attorney.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

This exercise is designed to help students experience the tension between confidentiality and usefulness. Students may initially remove obvious identifiers while leaving behind details that still create risk, such as emotional distress, workplace dynamics, timing, job role, procedural posture, or the sequence of resignation and discharge.

During debrief, emphasize that the purpose of the prompt matters. At the initial issue-spotting stage, the AI tool does not need every client fact. More detailed facts can be analyzed later through traditional legal research, lawyer judgment, or an approved tool with appropriate data protections.

The recurring question is: could this be traced back to my client?