



Board Certification for Lawyers: What Does It Mean?

For more information call (850) 561-5842
or visit FloridaBar.org/certification

Board certification recognizes attorneys' **special knowledge, skills and proficiency** in various areas of law and **professionalism and ethics** in practice.

Certification is the **highest level of evaluation** by The Florida Bar of the competency and experience of attorneys in the 24 areas of law approved for certification by the Supreme Court of Florida.

Established in 1982 by the Florida Supreme Court, board certification helps consumers identify specialists in various areas of law.

Board certified Florida Bar members are the only Florida attorneys allowed to identify themselves as "**Board Certified**," "**Specialist**," "**Expert**" or to use the letters "**B.C.S.**" for Board Certified Specialist on business cards or letterhead, in legal directories or in advertising.

A lawyer who is a member in good standing of The Florida Bar and who meets the standards prescribed by the state's Supreme Court may become board certified in one or more of the 24 certification fields. **Seven percent of eligible Florida Bar members – about 4,400 lawyers – are board certified.** Minimum requirements for certification are listed below; each area of certification may contain higher or additional standards.

- A minimum of five years in law practice
- A satisfactory showing of substantial involvement in the field of law for which certification is sought
- A passing grade on the examination required of all applicants
- Satisfactory peer review assessment of competence in the specialty field as well as character, ethics and professionalism in the practice of law
- Satisfaction of the certification area's continuing legal education requirements

"Board certification by The Florida Bar demonstrates that lawyer's high level of skill, excellence and a commitment to professionalism. Every new certification enhances our profession, and gives the public a meaningful way to evaluate lawyers."

~ Florida Bar President
Mayanne Downs

Board certification is valid for five years, during which time the attorney must continue to practice law and attend Florida Bar-approved continuing legal education courses. To be recertified, lawyers must meet requirements similar to those for initial certification.

Not all qualified lawyers are certified, but those who are board certified have taken the extra steps to have their competence and experience evaluated.

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