



## Board Certification for Lawyers: What Does It Mean?

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

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### **7 percent of eligible Florida Bar members, approximately 4,500 lawyers, are board certified.**

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. 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 has the potential to be transformative in our profession. Florida Bar board certification is synonymous with the terms 'specialist' and 'expert' because of its high standards for professional excellence. Our board certification program is one of the finest in the country, and helps the public identify lawyers who have been evaluated by their peers for experience, competence and integrity. As a board certified business litigation lawyer, I am personally committed and encourage others to take this important professional step."*

*~ Florida Bar President Scott G. Hawkins*

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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