

Mandatory Continuing Legal Education Requirements for New Jersey Lawyers

All attorneys maintaining a plenary or limited license to practice New Jersey law must participate in a program of continuing legal education (CLE) in accordance with Rule 1:42 and the Regulations of the Board on Continuing Legal Education (BCLE or Board). Rule 1:42, the Board's Regulations, and additional information can be found at <http://www.judiciary.state.nj.us/cle/index.htm>. Unless an attorney has been exempted or obtained a waiver in New Jersey from the CLE requirement pursuant to BCLE Reg. 202:1(a) and 202:2, a licensed attorney in good standing must comply with the CLE requirement, regardless of whether the attorney practices law within the state of New Jersey.

Generally, an attorney must complete 24 credit hours of qualifying CLE every 2 years. Four of those 24 hours of credit must be in the subject areas of ethics and/or professionalism. Unless an attorney neither lives nor works in New Jersey or another mandatory CLE jurisdiction, no less than ½ of the required credits per compliance period must be taken live with an instructor in the room; the balance may be in alternative verifiable learning formats. (See BCLE Reg. 201:8). An attorney who lives, works, and is licensed in a mandatory CLE jurisdiction that allows for 100% alternative verifiable learning formats may, through reciprocity, apply those 100% alternative format courses towards compliance in New Jersey. Alternative verifiable learning format courses include videotape, audiotape, on-line internet computer presentations, satellite simulcasts, teleconferencing, videoconferencing, internet computer self-study, or other type of remote learning format authorized by the Board. Attorneys may carry over no more than 12 extra credits from the preceding compliance period into the next.

A compliance period begins on January 1 of a year and ends 24 months later on December 31 of the following year, except for newly admitted attorneys under a transitional reporting period. (See Page 2 for information on requirements for newly admitted attorneys.) Attorneys must notify the Board of the completion of the CLE requirement as of December 31 by certifying to their compliance in the annual attorney registration and billing process or in a manner determined by the Board. New Jersey is a self-reporting state; therefore, attorneys must maintain all necessary records and documentation to demonstrate compliance in accordance with the Board's Regulations. Random audits of individual attorneys will be performed to ensure the overall compliance of attorneys. If randomly audited, an attorney will be required to submit all certificates of course attendance obtained during a compliance period as proof of compliance with the CLE requirement.

For reporting compliance, an attorney whose birthday is between January 1 and June 30 is in Compliance Group 1. An attorney whose birthday is between July 1 and December 31 is in Compliance Group 2. Those in Group 1 will report the completion of the required credits taken during the compliance period in the annual attorney registration and billing process in even-numbered years; for example, an attorney born in February would report compliance in 2014, 2016, 2018, etc. Those in Compliance Group 2 will report compliance in odd numbered years in the annual attorney registration and billing process; for example, an attorney born in July would report compliance in 2015, 2017, 2019, etc. Attorneys are encouraged to register and report CLE compliance on line, rather than through the paper billing process.

A \$50 CLE noncompliance fee will be assessed against attorneys who report they did not complete the required courses by the deadline for course completion. An additional \$50 (for a total of \$100) will be assessed against attorneys who fail to complete their CLE courses within the afforded grace period or who fail to report regarding CLE compliance at all. In addition, attorneys who remain noncompliant are subject to being declared administratively ineligible to practice law in New Jersey.

Additional Information for Newly Admitted New Jersey Lawyers

A “newly admitted lawyer” is defined by the BCLE as a lawyer who becomes an active member of the New Jersey bar for the first time. The first compliance reporting period for newly admitted lawyers begins January 1 of the year immediately following admission to the New Jersey Bar. For a lawyer who was admitted to the New Jersey bar in 2012, the CLE requirement began on January 1, 2013. For a lawyer who was admitted in 2013, the CLE requirement began on January 1, 2014. For a lawyer admitted in 2014, the CLE requirement will begin on January 1, 2015. Newly admitted lawyers will automatically be assigned to a compliance group based on their respective birthdays. Each year, one compliance group of newly admitted lawyers will have a one-year/ twelve credit transitional CLE reporting requirement (See chart below).

Newly admitted lawyers holding a plenary law license in New Jersey must meet a specific coursework requirement in their first full (two-year) compliance period. Of the 24 credits of continuing legal education required, at least 4 credits must be in ethics and/or professionalism and 15 credit hours must be in any 5 of the 9 subject areas found in BCLE Reg. 201:2. In the first compliance period only, a newly admitted attorney may receive credit for approved CLE courses taken after his or her graduation from law school but before admission to the New Jersey bar, provided those courses were not taken more than 12 months prior to the lawyer’s date of admission to the New Jersey bar.

Newly admitted attorneys holding a plenary license in New Jersey may refer to the chart below for assistance in determining the CLE requirement based on the date of admission and the Compliance Group. Newly admitted attorneys with a limited license can also follow this chart; however, they are not required to take the 15-credit new-admit coursework.

Year Admitted	Requirement Begins	Compliance Group 1	Compliance Group 2
2012	January 1, 2013	12 credits by 12/31/2013, incl. 2 credits ethics. Report in 2014.	24 credits by 12/31/2014, incl. 15 credits in new-admit areas and 4 credits ethics. Report in 2015.
2013	January 1, 2014	24 credits by 12/31/2015, incl. 15 credits in new- admit areas and 4 credits ethics. Report in 2016.	12 credits by 12/31/2014, incl. 2 credits ethics. Report in 2015.
2014	January 1, 2015	12 credits by 12/31/2015, incl. 2 credits ethics Report in 2016.	24 credits by 12/31/2016, incl. 15 credits in new-admit areas and 4 credits ethics. Report in 2017.
2015	January 1, 2016	24 credits by 12/31/2017, incl. 15 credits in new- admit areas and 4 credits ethics. Report in 2018	12 credits by 12/31/2016, incl. 2 credits ethics. Report in 2017.
2016	January 1, 2017	12 credits by 12/31/2017, incl. 2 credits ethics. Report in 2018.	24 credits by 12/31/2018, incl. 15 credits in new-admit areas and 4 credits ethics. Report in 2019.