

542.13 Unlawful acts.

1. Only a certified public accountant may issue a report on financial statements of a person, firm, organization, or governmental unit, or offer to render or render any attest service. Only a certified public accountant or licensed public accountant may render compilation services. This restriction does not prohibit such acts by a public official or public employee in the performance of that person's duties; or prohibit the performance by any nonlicensee of other services involving the use of accounting skills, including the preparation of tax returns, management advisory services, and the preparation of financial statements without the issuance of reports on such financial statements. A nonlicensee may prepare financial statements and issue nonattest transmittals or information on such statements or transmittals which do not purport to be in compliance with the statements on standards for accounting and review services.

2. A licensee performing attest or compilation services must provide those services consistent with professional standards.

3. A person not holding a certificate shall not use or assume the title "certified public accountant" or the abbreviation "CPA" or any other title, designation, words, letters, abbreviation, sign, card, or device tending to indicate that such person is a certified public accountant.

4. A firm shall not provide attest services or assume or use the title "certified public accountants" or the abbreviation "CPAs" or any other title, designation, words, letters, abbreviation, sign, card, or device tending to indicate that such firm is a certified public accounting firm unless the firm holds a permit issued under section 542.7 and ownership of the firm satisfies the requirements of this chapter and rules adopted by the board.

5. A person shall not assume or use the title "licensed public accountant" or the abbreviation "LPA" or any other title, designation, words, letters, abbreviation, sign, card, or device tending to indicate that such person is a licensed public accountant unless that person holds a license issued under section 542.8.

6. A firm not holding a permit issued under section 542.8 shall not assume or use the title "licensed public accountants", the abbreviation "LPAs", or any other title, designation, words, letters, abbreviation, sign, card, or device tending to indicate that such firm is composed of licensed public accountants.

7. A person or firm not holding a certificate, permit, or license issued under section 542.6, 542.7, 542.8, or 542.19 shall not assume or use the title "certified accountant", "chartered accountant", "enrolled accountant", "licensed accountant", "registered accountant", "accredited accountant", or any other title or designation likely to be confused with the title "certified public accountant" or "licensed public accountant", or use any of the abbreviations "CA", "LA", "RA", "AA", or similar abbreviation likely to be confused with the abbreviation "CPA" or "LPA". The title "enrolled agent" or "EA" may be used by individuals so designated by the internal revenue service. Nothing in this section shall restrict truthful advertising of a bona fide credential or title which in context is not deceptive or misleading to the public.

8. A nonlicensee shall not use language in any statement relating to the financial affairs of a person or entity which is conventionally used by licensees in reports on financial statements. The board shall develop and issue language which nonlicensees may use in connection with such financial information.

9. A person or firm not holding a certificate, permit, or license issued under section 542.6, 542.7, 542.8, or 542.19 shall not assume or use any title or designation that includes the word "accountant", "auditor", or "accounting" in connection with any other language that implies that such person or firm holds such a certificate, permit, or license or has special competence as an accountant or auditor. However, this subsection does not prohibit an officer, partner, member, manager, or employee of a firm or organization from affixing that person's own signature to a statement in reference to the financial affairs of such firm or organization with wording which designates the position, title, or office that the person holds, or prohibit any act of a public official or employee in the performance of such person's duties. This subsection does not otherwise prohibit the use of the title or designation "accountant" by persons other than those holding a certificate or license under this chapter.

10. A person holding a certificate or license or firm holding a permit under this chapter

shall not use a professional or firm name or designation that is misleading about the legal form of the firm, or about the persons who are partners, officers, members, managers, or shareholders of the firm, or about any other matter. However, the name of one or more former partners, members, managers, or shareholders may be included in the name of a firm or its successor.

11. This section does not apply to a person or firm holding a certification, designation, degree, or license granted in a foreign country entitling the holder to engage in the practice of public accountancy or its equivalent in such country, whose activities in this state are limited to providing professional services to a person or firm who is a resident of, government of, or business entity of the country in which the person holds such entitlement, who does not perform attest or compilation services, and who does not issue reports with respect to the financial statements of any other person, firm, or governmental unit in this state, and who does not use in this state any title or designation other than the one under which the person practices in such country, followed by a translation of such title or designation into the English language, if it is in a different language, and by the name of such country.

12. A holder of a certificate issued under section 542.6 or 542.19 shall not perform attest services in a firm that does not hold a permit issued under section 542.7.

13. An individual licensee shall not issue a report in standard form upon a compilation of financial information through any form of business that does not hold a permit issued under section 542.7 or 542.8 unless the report discloses the name of the business through which the individual is issuing the report and the individual licensee does all of the following:

a. Signs the compilation report identifying the individual as a certified public accountant or licensed public accountant.

b. Meets competency requirements provided in applicable standards.

c. Undergoes, no less frequently than once every three years, a peer review conducted in a manner as specified by the board. The review shall include verification that such individual has met the competency requirements set out in professional standards for such services.

14. This section does not prohibit a practicing attorney from preparing or presenting records or documents customarily prepared by an attorney in connection with the attorney's professional work in the practice of law.

15. a. (1) A licensee shall not for a commission recommend or refer a client to any product or service, or for a commission recommend or refer another person to any product or service to be supplied by a client, or receive a commission, when the licensee also performs for that client any of the following:

(a) An audit or review of a financial statement.

(b) A compilation of a financial statement when the licensee expects, or reasonably might expect, that a third party will use the financial statement and the licensee's compilation report does not disclose a lack of independence.

(c) An examination of prospective financial information.

(2) The prohibitions under this paragraph "a" apply during the period in which the licensee is engaged to perform any of the services identified in subparagraph (1), subparagraph divisions (a) through (c), and the period covered by any historical financial statements involved in such services.

b. A licensee who is not prohibited by this section from performing services for or receiving a commission and who is paid or expects to be paid a commission shall disclose that fact to any person or entity to whom the licensee recommends or refers a product or service to which the commission relates.

c. A licensee who accepts a referral fee for recommending a service of a licensee or referring a licensee to any person or entity or who pays a referral fee to obtain a client shall disclose such acceptance or payment to the client.

16. a. A licensee shall not do any of the following:

(1) Perform professional services for a contingent fee, or receive such fee from a client for whom the licensee or the licensee's firm performs any of the following:

(a) An audit or review of a financial statement.

(b) A compilation of a financial statement when the licensee expects, or reasonably might

expect, that a third party will use the financial statement and the licensee's compilation report does not disclose a lack of independence.

(c) An examination of prospective financial information.

(2) Prepare for a client an original or amended tax return or claim for a tax refund for a contingent fee.

b. Paragraph "a" applies during the period in which the licensee is engaged to perform any of the listed services and the period covered by any historical financial statements involved in such listed services.

c. For purposes of this subsection, a contingent fee is a fee established for the performance of a service pursuant to an arrangement in which a fee will not be charged unless a specified finding or result is attained, or in which the amount of the fee is otherwise dependent upon the finding or result of such service. A fee shall not be considered as being a contingent fee if fixed by a court or other public authority, or, in a tax matter, if determined based on the results of a judicial proceeding or the findings of a governmental agency. A licensee's fee may vary depending on the complexity of the services rendered.

17. Nothing contained in this chapter shall be construed to authorize any person engaged in the practice as a certified public accountant or licensed public accountant or any member or employee of such firm to engage in the practice of law individually or within entities licensed under this chapter.

18. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit the practice of public accounting and lawful use of titles by persons or firms exercising a practice privilege in conformance with section 542.20.

2001 Acts, ch 55, §13, 38; 2002 Acts, ch 1119, §113; 2003 Acts, ch 44, §93; 2008 Acts, ch 1106, §12, 15; 2010 Acts, ch 1055, §2

Referred to in §542.10, 542.14, 542.15