

CHAPTER 7
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTING FIRMS
[Prior to 5/1/02, see 193A—Chapter 8]

193A—7.1(542) When licensure is required.

7.1(1) Except as provided in subrule 7.1(6), a sole proprietorship, corporation, partnership, limited liability company, or any other form of organization shall apply for a permit to practice as a firm of certified public accountants prior to:

- a.* Performing or offering to perform audit, review or other attest services in Iowa or for a client with a home office in Iowa; or
- b.* Establishing an office in Iowa at which the firm uses the title “CPAs,” “CPA firm,” “certified public accountants,” or “certified public accounting firm.”

7.1(2) A firm which is not subject to subrule 7.1(1) may practice public accounting in Iowa or for a client with a home office in Iowa without a permit issued by the board in conformance with Iowa Code section 542.20 and 193A—Chapter 21.

7.1(3) Unless individual Iowa licensure is required by the auditor of state, the department of agriculture and land stewardship, other governmental official or body, or a client, the public accounting services provided by a CPA firm holding an Iowa permit to practice may be performed in Iowa or for a client with a home office in Iowa by Iowa CPAs or wholly by persons exercising a practice privilege under Iowa Code section 542.20.

7.1(4) If a CPA firm that is issued a permit to practice by the board has one or more offices in Iowa, the public accounting services performed at each such office must be supervised by an Iowa CPA with an unexpired certificate issued under Iowa Code section 542.6 or 542.19.

7.1(5) A CPA firm issued a permit to practice by the board is accountable to the board and subject to discipline by the board for the acts of its owners or other agents, pursuant to 193A—subrule 14.2(4), whether or not such persons are individually licensed by the board. In order to ensure public accountability, all CPA firms issued a permit to practice under Iowa Code section 542.7 shall:

- a.* Designate an Iowa CPA or a nonlicensee owner who is responsible for the proper licensure of the firm and the firm’s compliance with all applicable laws and rules of the state;
- b.* Designate an Iowa CPA or Iowa CPAs who are responsible for the proper registration of each Iowa office and each office’s compliance with all applicable laws and rules of this state;
- c.* Designate an Iowa CPA or person with a practice privilege under Iowa Code section 542.20 who is responsible for supervising attest services or who will sign or authorize someone to sign the accountant’s report on behalf of the firm, as such attest services will be performed in Iowa or for a client with a home office in Iowa; and
- d.* Designate an Iowa CPA or LPA or person with a practice privilege under Iowa Code section 542.20 who is responsible for supervising compilation services or who will sign or authorize someone to sign the accountant’s compilation report on financial statements, as such compilation services will be performed in Iowa or for a client with a home office in Iowa.

7.1(6) An out-of-state CPA firm exercising a practice privilege may perform attest services in Iowa or for a client with a home office in Iowa without first obtaining a firm permit to practice in Iowa as long as the firm is validly licensed in the state of its principal place of business, complies with Iowa Code sections 542.20(5) and 542.20(6) and associated rules, and complies with the peer review and ownership provisions of Iowa Code section 542.7.

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193A—7.2(542) Application process.

7.2(1) All applications shall be submitted through the board’s online application process. The board shall only process fully completed applications accompanied by the proper fee. A nonrefundable application fee shall be charged.

7.2(2) Fraud or deceit, by commission or omission, in obtaining a firm permit to practice is a ground for discipline, including permanent revocation of the firm's permit to practice, the individual certificate of an Iowa CPA, or an individual's practice privilege, as applicable to the entity or persons responsible.

7.2(3) An initial or renewal application for a firm permit to practice may be denied:

a. Upon any ground that would form a basis for discipline against the firm pursuant to Iowa Code section 542.10 or 193A—Chapter 14; or

b. Based on the firm's failure to comply with the requirements of Iowa Code section 542.7 including, but not limited to, a failure to make the designations described in subrule 7.1(5) or a failure to sustain the simple majority of ownership required by Iowa Code section 542.7(3); or

c. Based on a regulatory or disciplinary action or criminal conviction described in subrules 7.3(14) and 7.3(15) against any of the firm's licensed or unlicensed owners.

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193A—7.3(542) Application contents. Applicants for a firm permit to practice shall provide such information as the board may require, including:

7.3(1) The lawful name of the firm.

7.3(2) The legal form and jurisdiction of the firm's organization.

7.3(3) Contact information for the principal place of business of the firm and each Iowa office.

7.3(4) All jurisdictions in which the firm is licensed or has applied for licensure.

7.3(5) The names, licensure, and contact information for all persons described in subrule 7.1(5).

7.3(6) The highest level of public accounting services offered by the firm, such as compilation or attest.

7.3(7) Evidence of satisfactory completion of the last firm peer review, when applicable.

7.3(8) Sufficient information from which the board can determine that a simple majority of owners hold a CPA certificate under Iowa Code section 542.6 or 542.19 or hold a CPA certificate in another state and are eligible to exercise a practice privilege under Iowa Code section 542.20. The board reserves the right to require at any time a full list of owners, or a targeted sublist, such as a list of those persons who perform services from an Iowa office or those who perform attest or compilation services in Iowa or for a client with a home office in Iowa.

7.3(9) The affirmation described in 193A—paragraph 6.3(3) "c."

7.3(10) Affirmation that all CPAs who are responsible for supervising attest services for the CPA firm or who sign or authorize someone to sign the accountant's report on behalf of the CPA firm satisfy the experience or competency requirements established by nationally recognized professional standards that are applicable to the attest services performed in Iowa or for clients with a home office in Iowa.

7.3(11) Affirmation that all CPAs or LPAs who are responsible for supervising compilation services or who sign or authorize someone to sign the accountant's compilation report on behalf of the firm comply with nationally recognized professional standards that are applicable to the compilation services performed in Iowa or for a client with a home office in Iowa.

7.3(12) Affirmation that all nonlicensee owners are active participants in the firm or affiliated entity.

7.3(13) Affirmation that the firm and its licensed or unlicensed owners will comply with all applicable Iowa laws and rules, including rules of professional conduct, when practicing in Iowa or for a client with a home office in Iowa.

7.3(14) Details of any past denial, cancellation, revocation, suspension, refusal to renew, or voluntary surrender of a professional license of any kind, authority to practice, or practice privilege by the board or another state agency in any jurisdiction, a federal agency, or the PCAOB, regarding the firm and the firm's current owners (e.g., partners, shareholders, or members).

7.3(15) Details of any past felony conviction or the conviction of any crime, any element of which is dishonesty or fraud, as provided in Iowa Code section 542.5(2), under the laws of any state or the United States, regarding the firm and the firm's current owners (e.g., partners, shareholders, or members).

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193A—7.4(542) Annual renewal of permit. Permits to practice must be renewed annually and shall expire on June 30 of each year. Applications to renew a permit to practice may be obtained through electronic online renewal. While the board generally sends, by electronic means, a renewal notice in the May preceding permit expiration, neither the board's failure to send a notice nor a permit holder's failure to receive a notice shall excuse the requirement to timely renew and pay the renewal fee.

[ARC 7715B, IAB 4/22/09, effective 7/1/09; ARC 4243C, IAB 1/16/19, effective 2/20/19]

193A—7.5(542) Renewal procedures.

7.5(1) The permit holder shall submit an electronic online renewal by the June 30 deadline each year. Applications shall be deemed filed on the date of electronic renewal.

7.5(2) The permit holder shall list on the renewal application all states in which the applicant has applied for or holds a permit as a certified public accounting firm and list any past denial, revocation, suspension, refusal to renew or voluntary surrender to avoid disciplinary action of a permit to practice or practice privilege. Renewal applications may request such additional information as the board requires, including all of the information described in rule 193A—7.3(542).

7.5(3) Within the meaning of Iowa Code chapters 17A, 272C and 542, a timely and sufficient renewal application shall be:

- a. Received by the board in electronic form on or before the date the permit is set to expire or lapse;
- b. Certified as accurate through the online renewal process;
- c. Fully completed and accompanied with the proper fee. The fee shall be deemed improper if, for instance, the amount is incorrect, the fee was not included with the application, the credit card number provided by the applicant is incorrect, the date of expiration of a credit card is omitted or incorrect, the attempted credit card transaction is rejected, or the applicant's check is returned for insufficient funds or a closed account.

[ARC 7715B, IAB 4/22/09, effective 7/1/09; ARC 4243C, IAB 1/16/19, effective 2/20/19]

193A—7.6(542) Failure to renew permit.

7.6(1) A firm that fails to renew the permit by the expiration date, but does so within 30 days following the expiration date, shall be assessed a penalty as provided in rule 193A—12.1(542).

7.6(2) If the firm fails to renew the permit within the 30-day grace period outlined in subrule 7.6(1), the permit will lapse and the firm shall be required to reinstate in accordance with subrule 7.6(3). The firm is not authorized to practice during the period of time that the permit is lapsed, including the 30-day grace period.

7.6(3) The board may reinstate the permit upon payment of the proper renewal fee and a penalty as provided in rule 193A—12.1(542). The board shall also require a written statement outlining the firm's professional activities during the period of lapsed licensure, including a list of Iowa clients and the services performed.

7.6(4) The board may find probable cause to file charges for unlicensed practice if the firm engaged in any activity that required licensure pursuant to subrule 7.1(1) during the period of lapsed licensure. In addition to the disciplinary sanctions described in rule 193A—16.3(272C,542), firms found to have practiced public accounting in violation of subrule 7.1(1) on a lapsed license will be required to notify clients upon such terms as the board shall order.

[ARC 7715B, IAB 4/22/09, effective 7/1/09; ARC 9482B, IAB 5/4/11, effective 6/8/11]

193A—7.7(542) Notices required. A holder of or applicant for a permit shall notify the board in writing within 30 days after an occurrence of any of the following:

7.7(1) A change in the number or location of offices within this state.

7.7(2) A change in the identity of a person in charge of such offices.

7.7(3) The denial, revocation, suspension, refusal to renew, or voluntary surrender of a permit to practice, other professional license of any kind, authority to practice, or practice privilege by another state, a state agency in any jurisdiction, a federal agency, or the PCAOB, regarding the firm or any of the firm's owners (e.g., partners, shareholders, or members).

7.7(4) A change of physical or mailing address of the primary office of the firm or of any office located in Iowa, or of any person designated by the firm pursuant to subrule 7.1(5).

[ARC 7715B, IAB 4/22/09, effective 7/1/09; ARC 2152C, IAB 9/30/15, effective 11/4/15]

193A—7.8(542) Firms not in compliance with requirements. A firm that, after receiving or renewing a permit, is not in compliance with Iowa Code section 542.7 as a result of a change in firm ownership or personnel shall take corrective action to bring the firm back into compliance as quickly as possible or apply to modify or amend the permit. The board may grant a reasonable period of time, usually 90 days, for a firm to take such corrective action. Failure to comply within a reasonable period as deemed by the board shall result in the suspension or revocation of the firm permit.

[ARC 7715B, IAB 4/22/09, effective 7/1/09]

193A—7.9(542) Peer review required. As a condition of renewal of a permit to practice as a certified public accounting firm, the firm shall undergo, at least once every three years, a peer review conducted under the provisions outlined in 193A—Chapter 11.

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These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code chapters 17A, 272C and 542 and Iowa Code section 546.10.

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