

# National Association of Legal Assistants

## Instructions Use of the certification marks



### Introduction

The following is intended to familiarize paralegals with the rules and regulations governing use of the certification marks of NALA for use by paralegals. The rules are based on federal law, which dictates certain restrictions on the use of all registered marks, and are intended to protect the integrity of the marks. Please consult this guide when promotional literature, business cards, letterhead and any other communication which may use this mark are being prepared for you.

The mark was developed to provide you with a recognizable visual symbol with which to gain differentiation in the marketplace. If the mark is used in a way that denotes generic use (to describe a broad group of individuals or services) it could eventually lose its certification mark status. Your full support and cooperation is necessary for the certification marks' effective implementation and the public's ultimate recognition of the high professional qualities for which the mark stands.

CLA® is a certification mark duly registered with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (Regis. No. 1131999). Any unauthorized use is strictly forbidden.

CP® is a certification mark duly registered with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (Regis. No. 2864940). Any unauthorized use is strictly forbidden.



CP® is a certification mark duly registered with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (Regis. No. 3048617). Any unauthorized use is strictly forbidden.

### A word about firm letterhead, business and promotional material

The content and, to some extent, the design of firm letterhead, business cards, and promotional literature is governed by the rules and regulations governing attorneys in your state, as well as the firm's management team. The recommendations in these guidelines may or may not apply in your particular instance, please check with your firm administrator before changing your signature line or any other item on letterhead or a document that carries the firm name.

In certain states there have been specific ethics opinions regarding the use of the designation "CLA" on firm letterhead and/or the designation of paralegals as nationally certified. Most recently, the Iowa Supreme Court Board of Professional Ethics and Conduct stated it concurs that it is "desirable for legal assistants to achieve certification by the National Association of Legal Assistants and that they be able to indicate such certification. . . . It is therefore the opinion of the Board that a legal assistant to an Iowa lawyer or law firm who has met the certification requirements of the National Association of Legal Assistants may add "Certified Legal Assistant" where his or her name properly appears." The terms "legal assistant" and "paralegal" are defined as synonymous terms.

Similar rules have been adopted by the state bar associations of New York:

Opinion 695, 8/25/97 we conclude that an attorney may include on letterhead and other materials the identification of a non-legal employee as a "Certified Legal Assistant" provided that term is accompanied by the statement that the certification is afforded by the National Association of Legal Assistants ("NALA"), and provided further that the attorney has satisfied himself or herself that NALA is a bona fide organization that provides such certification to all who meet objective and consistently applied standards relevant to the work of legal assistants.

And Mississippi:

Mississippi Bar Ethics Opinion 223 1/19/95 The Ethics Committee is of the opinion that it is proper for an attorney's paralegal to use the initials CLA or CLAS so long as the paralegal has actually been certified by the National Association of Legal Assistants and so long as the designation is accompanied by language indicating that the paralegal is not a lawyer.

### Use of the Certification Marks

The certification mark is a distinctive visual symbol that indicates an individual is qualified to provide paralegal services by virtue of having 1) completed the education, and examination requirements for certification by the National Association of Legal Assistants; 2) agreed to adhere to the Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibility of the National Association of Legal Assistants; and 3) agreed to continuing education requirements to maintain the national certification. The certification marks cannot be used by individuals who have not met these requirements and its use may be revoked for failure to comply with ethical standards and recertification requirements.

**CP® Description.** The design of this mark was chosen because of its intended use in law firm promotional literature and letterhead. Its simple design is meant to be distinctive and noticeable but not to detract from other designs of the firm or corporation. It consists of block letters c and p in bold, black.



**CP® Description.** The design of this mark was chosen because of its intended use on promotional literature and letterhead of individuals who are self-employed and may offer their paralegal services on a contract basis to law firms and other businesses.

**Use.** The marks may not be altered, modified, hand-drawn or typeset. The mark may not be reproduced electronically scanned in such poor quality as to distort or significantly alter its appearance. All reproduction of the certification mark must be made from original reproduction artwork provided by NALA Headquarters, and with these guidelines.

Always specify in a tag line at the end of an article, at the bottom of an advertisement, or at the bottom of the first page of a brochure or promotional literature that this certification mark belongs to the National Association of Legal Assistants. "**CP®** (or **CLA®**) is a certification mark of the National Association of Legal Assistants."

With the mark, **CP®** it is permissible to add (certified paralegal or certified legal assistant) after the mark itself so that your non-lawyer status is clearly indicated on firm promotional literature

and other documents that may carry the mark. With the mark **CLA**<sup>®</sup> it is permissible to add (certified legal assistant or certified paralegal). Any combination of letters (CLA or CP) and titles (legal assistant or paralegal) may be used. However, your non-lawyer status must be clearly stated at the outset of any communications.

The certification mark may not be used as part of, incorporated in, the name of a firm or firm logo or imply that the firm is entitled to use the marks. This rule applies even in those cases where one or more firm members is authorized to use the marks in association with his or her own name. (This rule is most applicable to offices and businesses owned by paralegals that offer paralegal services to law firms.)

The mark must not be used on promotional items such as coffee mugs, t-shirts, jewelry, etc.

The mark cannot be used in a way that it appears to be part of an individual's title or degree. It must always be used in connection with services provided by the individual who is entitled to use the mark.

## Samples of Proper Use of the Mark

### In firm brochures, firm resumes, or biographical information



Ms. Doe obtained her paralegal certificate from Anyschool, City, State. She is qualified by the National Association of Legal Assistants to provide **CP**<sup>®</sup>( certified paralegal) services.

Ms. Doe obtained her paralegal certificate from Anyschool, City, State. She is qualified by the National Association of Legal Assistants to provide **CLA**<sup>®</sup>( certified legal assistant) services

**On business cards** (mark cannot be used as a title). This language "**CP**<sup>®</sup> is a certification mark of the National Association of Legal Assistants. Its use is permitted only by those who have met and maintained national certification standards" may appear on the back of the business card if there is not enough room. Any combination of letters (CLA or CP) and titles (legal assistant or paralegal) may be used.

Firm logo City state
Sally Smith, CP Certified Paralegal Litigation
Providing <b>CP</b> <sup>®</sup> Paralegal services
<b>CP</b> <sup>®</sup> is a registered certification mark of the National Association of Legal Assistants. Its use is permitted only by those who have met and maintained national certification standards.

**For companies** owned by paralegals that provide paralegal services to lawyers (mark cannot be part of the company name). Please include this language on the face or back of the card, as shown on the next page.

Paralegal Services, Inc.	Address Address
Sally Smith, CLA, President Certified Paralegal	
	® Providing Paralegal Services to Attorneys throughout the state
	® is a certification mark of the National Association of Legal Assistants. Its use is permitted only by those who have met and maintained national certification standards.

**Display advertisements (including web sites).**

A firm or company may use display advertising and may use the certification mark following the rules set forth throughout these guidelines, provided that the advertisement is not false or misleading and permitted by state rules.

<p>Law firm Name Providing legal services in greater any city and or state</p> <p>Firm name Partner listing</p> <p>Paralegals: Sally Smith, CP, Certified Paralegal Jane Smith</p> <p>Providing <b>CP</b>® Paralegal services</p> <p><b>CP</b>® is a registered certification mark of the National Association of Legal Assistants. Its use is permitted only by those who have met and maintained rigorous, national certification standards.</p>
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**Questions? Please contact:**  
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