

Public Accountants Society of Colorado

Fact Sheet

The PA (Public Accountant) Designation

Updated 10-26-2021

Is the PA designation legal in Colorado?

Yes, under a 1960 Colorado Supreme Court Case (People v. Freedman), a 1975 Colorado Supreme Court Case (Hamrick v. State Board of Accountancy), and a 1988 Denver District Court Case upheld by the Colorado Court of Appeals (Alan H. Cartwright, James J. Clarke, and Public Accountants' Society of Colorado v. The State Board of Accountancy) non-licensed accountants may use the term Public Accountant so long as they do not in any way hold themselves out to be licensed by the State of Colorado.

What are the requirements for the PA designation?

In Colorado there are no statutory requirements for practicing as a Public Accountant.

Do you have to be a PA to be a member of PASC?

Members of the Public Accountants Society of Colorado are not required to hold themselves out as a Public Accountant. Many are CPAs or EAs, for example. Active members of PASC must abide by the associations Code of Ethics, complete 72 hours of Continuing Professional Education every three years, have at least three years of public accounting and/or taxation experience, and work in Colorado.

What is the difference between a CPA and a PA?

A Certified Public Accountant is licensed by the State of Colorado and is subject to oversight by the Colorado Board of Accountancy and may perform Financial Audits. A Public Accountant is **not** licensed by the State of Colorado and is not generally subject to oversight by the Colorado Board of Accountancy except for disciplinary actions if holding out as C.P.A. (C.R.S. 12-100-120(f)).

What is the difference between an EA and a PA?

According to the Internal Revenue Service an enrolled agent is a person who has earned the privilege of representing taxpayers before the Internal Revenue Service by either passing a three-part comprehensive IRS test covering individual and business tax returns, or through experience as a former IRS employee. Enrolled agent status is the highest credential the IRS awards. Individuals who obtain this elite status must adhere to ethical standards and complete 72 hours of continuing education courses every three years.

How do I contact the Public Accountants Society of Colorado?

Visit our website at www.coloradoaccountant.org for membership information, upcoming seminars, and other resources. We can be reached at 303-452-8227 or by emailing executivedirector@coloradoaccountant.org.