

Overview of MCLE Requirements for Illinois Attorneys

The Supreme Court of Illinois Rules Establishing MCLE

The Supreme Court of Illinois has established minimum continuing legal education (“MCLE”) requirements for Illinois attorneys under Supreme Court Rules 790-798 (“MCLE Rules”). The Court created the MCLE Board to administer its MCLE program. Each attorney should become familiar with the MCLE Rules. Failure to satisfy MCLE requirements can result in removal from the Master Roll of attorneys licensed to practice law in Illinois. Though such removal is not considered a disciplinary action, the attorney must then establish MCLE compliance and pay a fee to be returned to the Master Roll.

Number of MCLE Credits Required

In general, the MCLE Rules require that Illinois attorneys obtain 20 MCLE credit hours, including at least four credit hours in the area of professional responsibility during the attorney’s first two-year reporting period. The initial

two-year reporting period is either July 1, 2006 - June 30, 2008 (for last names beginning A through M) or July 1, 2007 - June 30, 2009 (for last names beginning N through Z). For the second two-year reporting period, the required MCLE credit hours increase to 24 credit hours. Then, for subsequent two-year reporting periods, the required MCLE credit hours increase to 30 credit hours. Attorneys admitted to practice on January 1, 2006 and thereafter must first fulfill the Basic Skills Course requirement within one year of admission to the Illinois bar.

Obtaining Credits by Attending MCLE Courses

In order for a course to qualify for MCLE credit, the course provider must apply to the MCLE Board to accredit the course. At the present time, the MCLE Rules do not allow attorneys to apply for course accreditation. The MCLE Board is accepting applications from providers for Accredited CLE Provider status and for individual course accreditation. Before enrolling in a course for which you plan to claim credit, please confirm with the provider that it has applied or plans to apply to accredit the course with the MCLE Board of the Supreme Court of Illinois.

Recordkeeping by Attorneys

Attorneys need to maintain their own certificates of attendance and other proof of MCLE compliance. At the end of each two year reporting period, attorneys must report to the MCLE Board whether they have complied with the MCLE Rules, have not complied with those Rules, *or* are exempt from those Rules. Please see MCLE Rule 791 for the exemptions.

Individual attorneys seeking to establish MCLE compliance ***should not mail, e-mail or fax certificates of attendance or other documents to the MCLE Board*** unless they are notified by the Board that they are being audited. See MCLE Rule 796 for more information on attorney recordkeeping.

For More Information

This information is an overview of the MCLE requirements for Illinois attorneys. For more details, please refer to the Board’s website that provides answers to frequent questions or contact the MCLE Board of the Supreme Court of Illinois:

Telephone: (312) 924-2420
E-mail: mcle@mcleboard.org
Web: www.mcleboard.org

***Attorneys May Earn CLE Credits
from Activities Other Than Attending
MCLE Courses***

The MCLE program allows many ways to obtain credit, often at little or no cost. Attorneys may obtain MCLE credits by activities other than attending MCLE courses. Those activities include:

- Attendance in bar association or professional association conferences/meetings at which substantive law, matters of practice and professionalism are presented;
- Teaching a course accredited for Illinois MCLE;
- Part-time teaching of a law course at a law school, university or college;
- Writing a law review article or other substantive legal publication; and
- Judging a law school moot court competition.

Providers are required to have a financial hardship policy to assist attorneys who are unable to afford programs.

Please see MCLE Rule 795(d) for more information.

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