

Florida Bar Advertising Regulation and Information

Quick Reference Checklist: Lawyer or Law Firm Websites, Social Media Pages, and Video Sharing Channels

The following quick reference checklist is intended to assist advertising lawyers in developing advertisements that comply with the lawyer advertising rules. A lawyer's own website, social media pages, and video sharing channels are not required to be filed with The Florida Bar for review unless the posts or videos are sponsored, "boosted," or promoted. However, they are required to comply with the substantive lawyer advertising rules in Rules 4-7.12 through 4-7.17 and 4-7.21. A specific aspect of a website (such as a specific page, provision, statement, illustration, or photograph) or an individual social media post or video sharing channel post may be filed with The Florida Bar for review on a voluntary basis under Rule 4-7.19(d) with a filing fee of \$150. A filing of an entire website, social media account, or video sharing channel will not be accepted by The Florida Bar. *Id.* Even if all the questions are answered NO, it does not mean the advertisement complies with the lawyer advertising rules.

If the answer to any of the following questions is YES, the advertisement does not comply with the lawyer advertising rules, subchapter 4-7, Rules Regulating The Florida Bar.

- Does the advertisement fail to contain the name of at least one lawyer, the law firm or qualifying provider (lawyer referral service, matching service, group or pooled advertising program, directory, or tips or leads generator) responsible for the advertisement? Is the name illegible or inconspicuous? Rules 4-7.12(a)(1) and 4-7.12(d)
- Does the advertisement fail to disclose the city, town or county of at least one bona fide office location of the advertising lawyer? Is the geographic disclosure illegible or inconspicuous? Rules 4-7.12(a)(2) and 4-7.12(d)
- Does the advertisement fail to disclose that the case or matter will be referred to another lawyer or law firm if that is the case? Rule 4-7.12(b) Is

this disclosure illegible or inconspicuous? Rule 4-7.12(d) If the advertisement appears in a language other than English, does the disclosure fail to appear in that language? Rule 4-7.12(c)

- Does the advertisement contain any aspect that is misleading or deceptive? Rule 4-7.13(a)
- Does the advertisement contain any material statements that are factually or legally inaccurate? Rule 4-7.13(a)(1)
- Does the advertisement omit any information necessary to prevent it from misleading consumers? Rule 4-7.13(a)(2)
- Does the advertisement contain any information that can reasonably be interpreted as a prediction or guaranty of success or specific results? Rule 4-7.13(b)(1)
- Does the advertisement contain any references to past results that are not objectively verifiable, that omit material information or that are “literally accurate, but could reasonably mislead a prospective client regarding a material fact?” Rules 4-7.13(a)(2) and (b)(2) and Rule 4-7.14(a)(2)
- Does the advertisement contain any statements that compare or characterize the lawyer or law firm’s skills, experience, reputation, or record that are not objectively verifiable? Rule 4-7.13(b)(3)
- Does the lawyer advertise for legal employment in an area of practice in which the lawyer does not currently practice? Rule 4-7.13(b)(4)
- Does the advertisement include the voice or image of a person appearing to be a member or employee of the law firm, if the person is not, without a clear and conspicuous disclaimer that the person is not an employee or member of the firm? Rule 4-7.13(b)(5) Is the disclosure illegible or inaudible or inconspicuous? Rule 4-7.12(d) Does the disclosure fail to appear in the same language used in the advertisement? Rule 4-7.12(c)
- Does the advertisement include a dramatization of a real or fictitious event that a reasonable viewer would not know is a dramatization without a clear and conspicuous disclaimer that it is a dramatization of a real or fictitious event? Rule 4-7.13(b)(6) Is the disclosure illegible or inaudible or inconspicuous? Rule 4-7.12(d) Does the disclosure fail to appear in the same language used in the advertisement? Rule 4-7.12(c)
- Does the advertisement include an actor portraying a person in a specific profession or occupation that a reasonable viewer would not know is a fictitious portrayal without a clear and conspicuous disclaimer that the advertisement is using an actor to portray a person in the occupation or profession? Rule 4-7.13(b)(7) Is the disclosure illegible or inaudible or inconspicuous? Rule 4-7.12(d) Does the disclosure fail to appear in the same language used in the advertisement? Rule 4-7.12(c)

- Does the advertisement include any feature that states or implies that the lawyer will engage in conduct or tactics prohibited by law, court rule, or the Rules of Professional Conduct? Rule 4-7.13(b)(8)
- Does the advertisement contain any testimonials or endorsements that the person offering the testimonial is not qualified to make, that is not the actual experience of the person, that the person has received something of value for giving, that is not representative of the general experience of that lawyer or firm's clients, that the lawyer has written or drafted, or that does not include a disclaimer that prospective clients may not receive the same or similar results? Rule 4-7.13(b)(9) Is the disclosure illegible or inconspicuous? Rule 4-7.12(d) Does the disclosure fail to appear in the same language used in the testimonial? Rule 4-7.12(c)
- Does the advertisement state or imply that the advertisement, the advertising lawyer, or the advertising qualifying provider (lawyer referral service, matching service, group or pooled advertising program, directory, or tips or leads generator) is approved by The Florida Bar? Rule 4-7.13(b)(10)
- Does the advertisement include the name of a former judge preceded by the title judge (e.g., Judge Smith, retired)? Rule 4-7.13(b)(11)
- Does the advertisement include the name of a former executive official preceded by the executive title (e.g., Governor Smith, former)? Rule 4-7.13(b)(11)
- Does the advertisement include the name of a former legislator preceded by the legislative title (e.g., Sen. Smith, 2008-2012)? Rule 4-7.13(b)(11)
- Does the advertisement state or imply that another lawyer or law firm is part of, associated with, or affiliated with the advertising lawyer or law firm when that is not the case? Rule 4-7.13(b)(12)
- Does the advertisement include any reference to membership or recognition by an entity that is not generally recognized within the legal profession as a bona fide organization that bases selection on objective and uniformly applied criteria? Rule 4-7.14(a)(3)
- Only lawyers who are board certified in a particular area of the law can claim to be certified or board certified. Lawyers who are board certified can make that claim only in the area(s) of law in which they are certified. A law firm cannot claim certification. A board certified lawyer must include the certifying organization and area of certification in an advertisement in which the lawyer is claiming certification. A lawyer may claim specialization, expertise, or other variations of those terms only if the lawyer can objectively verify the claim either by board certification or by the lawyer's education, training, experience, or substantial involvement in the area of practice for which the claim is made. A law firm may claim specialization, expertise, or other variations

of those terms only if the law firm can objectively verify that claim for at least 1 lawyer in the firm; if not all lawyers in the firm meet that criteria, the advertisement must contain a clear and conspicuous disclaimer that not all lawyers in the firm specialize or have expertise in that area.

- Does the advertising lawyer who is not board certified claim certification in an area of law? Rule 4-7.14(a)(4)
 - Does the advertising lawyer who is board certified claim a certification in an area of law other than that in which he or she is board certified? Rules 4-7.14(a)(4) and 6-3.9(a)
 - Does the advertising law firm claim a certification? Rules 6-3.4(c), 6-3.9(b), and 4-7.14(a)(4)
 - Does the advertisement fail to include the name of the certifying organization and area of certification? Rule 4-7.14(a)(4)
 - Does the advertisement include a claim of specialization, expertise, or variations of those terms that cannot be objectively verified? Rule 4-7.14(a)(5-6)
- If the advertisement quotes a fee, does it fail to disclose whether the client will be responsible for any costs or expenses in addition to the advertised fee? Rule 4-7.14(a)(7) Is the cost disclosure illegible or not reasonably prominent? Rule 4-7.12(d) If the advertisement appears in a language other than English, does the cost disclosure fail to appear in that language? Rule 4-7.12(c)
 - If the advertisement states that the lawyer will not receive a fee unless a recovery is obtained, does the advertisement fail to disclose whether or not the client will be responsible for costs or expenses in the absence of a recovery? Rule 4-7.14(a)(7) Is the cost disclosure illegible or inconspicuous? Rule 4-7.12(d) If the information about fees appears in a language other than English, does the cost disclosure fail to appear in the same language? Rule 4-7.12(c)
 - Does the advertisement include any image, sound, video, or dramatization that solicits legal employment by appealing to a prospective client's emotions rather than to a rational evaluation of a lawyer's suitability to represent the prospective client? Rule 4-7.15(a)
 - Does the advertisement use a judge or an actor portraying a judge to endorse or act as a spokesperson for the lawyer or law firm? Rule 4-7.15(b)
 - Does the advertisement use a law enforcement officer or an actor portraying a law enforcement officer to endorse or act as a spokesperson for the lawyer or law firm? Rule 4-7.15(b)
 - Does the advertisement contain the voice or image of a celebrity? Rule 4-7.15(c)

- Does the advertisement offer an economic incentive such as a give-away to hire the lawyer or review the advertisement? Rule 4-7.15(d)
- Has the advertisement been paid for by another lawyer who is not in the same firm as the advertising lawyer? Rule 4-7.17(a)
- Has the advertisement been paid for by a nonlawyer? Rule 4-7.17(c)
- If the advertising law firm employs a fictitious or trade name, does the fictitious or trade name fail to appear on all the firm's advertising, letterhead, business cards, office sign, pleadings, and other firm documents? Rule 4-7.21(c)

Revised August 21, 2023