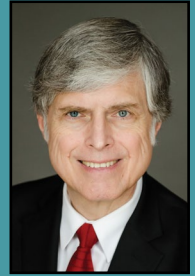


# The CMA (AAMA) Credential

## Important Legal and Ethical Guidelines



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**T**he CMA (AAMA)<sup>®</sup> credential is a recognizable sign of commitment to excellence in patient care. Therefore, it is essential to understand the importance of correct and consistent use of this highly sought-after designation. Because there are several medical assisting credentials other than the Certified Medical Assistant (AAMA) [CMA (AAMA)], CMAs (AAMA) must understand the legal and prohibited uses of the CMA (AAMA) designation.

### Who Can Use the CMA (AAMA) Designation?

Only individuals who hold a current CMA (AAMA) are permitted to use this designation/initialism in connection with employment, including seeking employment. An individual whose CMA (AAMA) is not current, or whose credential has been revoked by the Certifying Board (CB) of the American Association of Medical Assistants<sup>®</sup> (AAMA), may not use the designation “CMA (AAMA)” or “CMA” in connection with employment.

### Not Generic

The phrase “certified medical assistant,” and the initialisms “CMA (AAMA)” and “CMA,” are not generic references to medical assistants. The proper generic reference to medical assistants is “medical assistants.”

### The AAMA’s Intellectual Property Interests

The AAMA has enforceable intellectual property interests in the phrase “certified medical assistant” and the initialisms “CMA (AAMA)” and “CMA.” This means that, in certain instances, the AAMA may sue parties (e.g., individuals or legal entities such as corporations, partnerships, or limited liability companies) for infringing on the AAMA’s intellectual property interests.

### Confusion in the Marketplace

There is confusion in the marketplace for medical assisting credentials. Some people think that all medical assistants are certified medical assistants. Some employers, providers, and managers believe that the kind of credential a medical assistant holds does not matter, as long as the medical assistant holds *some* form of medical assisting credential. *For these reasons, CMAs (AAMA) should use their credentials as frequently and prominently as possible.*

### CB Policies on the Use of “CMA (AAMA)”

The following policies dictate the use of the CMA (AAMA) designation, as adopted by the CB.

The CMA (AAMA) initialism should be used after the signature on all professional documents. Signature requirements for patient record charting are at

the discretion of the employer.

**Signatures:** CMAs (AAMA) may use the credential for signature and professional designations, such as on badges, résumés, letters, and email signatures.

**Pins:** CMAs (AAMA) may wear the CMA (AAMA) pin. They should never wear any other type of “CMA” pin from another source. Such pins differ in appearance, which dilutes the mark and weakens the brand. Wearing such pins violates CB policy.

### Reporting Misuse of the CMA (AAMA) Credential

To reiterate, a medical assistant who does not have a current CMA (AAMA) credential is not permitted to use the designation. Violations should be reported to the AAMA Certification Department via the “Credential Violations Report Form,” which is available on the AAMA website (by searching “Credential Violations Report Form” or within an FAQ on the “Certification” webpage). This is a fillable form that can be completed and submitted electronically. ♦

*Questions may be directed to CEO and Legal Counsel Donald A. Balasa, JD, MBA, at [DBalasa@aama-ntl.org](mailto:DBalasa@aama-ntl.org).*