

21 NCAC 08N .0307 CPA FIRM NAMES

(a) Registration of Firm Names. A business may not use a CPA firm name unless that name has been registered with the Board.

(b) Misleading Names Prohibited. A CPA firm shall not trade upon the CPA title through use of any name that is misleading. A misleading CPA firm name is one which:

- (1) Implies the existence of a partnership or registered limited liability partnership or a professional corporation or professional limited liability company if the firm is not, in fact, one of those entities;
- (2) Includes the name of an individual who is not a CPA if the words "certified public accountants" or "CPAs" are included in the firm name;
- (3) Includes information about or indicates an association with persons who are not current or former members of the firm, unless the name is that of a firm network;
- (4) Includes the terms "& Company", "& Associates", or "Group", but the firm does not include, in addition to the named partner, shareholder, owner, or member, at least one other unnamed partner, shareholder, owner, member, or staff employee;
- (5) Contains any representation that would be likely to cause a reasonable person to have a false or unjustified expectation of favorable results or capabilities, including names indicating qualitative superiority or pricing differences;
- (6) Claims or implies the ability to influence a regulatory body or official; or
- (7) Includes the name of an owner whose license has been revoked for disciplinary reasons by the Board, whereby the licensee has been prohibited from practicing public accountancy or prohibited from using the title CPA or holding themselves out as a Certified Public Accountant.

(c) Permissible Firm Names: The following is a non-exhaustive list of types of CPA firm names that are not in and of themselves misleading and are permissible so long as they do not violate other firm name provisions:

- (1) A firm name that includes the names or initials of one or more former or current owners;
- (2) A firm name that excludes the names of one or more former or current owners;
- (3) A firm name that uses the "CPA" title as part of the firm name when all named individuals are owners of the firm who hold the CPA title or are former owners who held the CPA title at the time they ceased to be owners of the firm; or
- (4) A firm name that includes the name of a non-CPA owner if the words "certified public accountant" or "CPA" title are not a part of the firm name.

(d) Any CPA firm registered in another jurisdiction that provides notification of intent to practice pursuant to G.S. 93-10(c)(3) may practice under the name as registered with that jurisdiction.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 55B-5; 55B-12; 57D-2-02; 93-12(9);
Eff. April 1, 1994;
Amended Eff. February 1, 2011; January 1, 2006; April 1, 1999; August 1, 1995;
Readopted Eff. February 1, 2016;
Amended Eff. September 1, 2023.*