

NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATION

The National Board of Trial Advocacy (NBTA) is a non-profit organization located in Boston, Massachusetts. Founded in 1977, NBTA is dedicated to bettering the quality of trial advocacy in our nation's courtrooms and assisting the consumer of legal services in finding experienced and highly qualified trial lawyers

Most of us would like assurances that we are receiving quality representation when the need for a lawyer arises. Since most people can't tell whether or not the lawyer they hire is competent and experienced, attorney credentialing organizations such as the National Board of Trial Advocacy exist to ensure the quality of providers for you. . When lawyers graduate law school and pass the bar examination in their respective states, they are free to accept any case that crosses the threshold of their office. They are likewise free to claim any expertise they choose regardless of whether they have experience. Accrediting agencies such as the National Board of Trial Advocacy exist to help consumers make informed choices about legal representation.

The standards set forth by the Board of Directors are challenging and meaningful. NBTA is a voluntary certification. It is not a requirement to practice law and, therefore, any lawyer who has taken the extra time and effort to achieve this credential can be justifiably proud. A consumer of legal services who chooses an NBTA member can be sure of obtaining a highly experienced trial law practitioner.

The standards are as follows:

Good Standing: Applicants must be a member of the bar in good standing.

All applicants submit a comprehensive history of professional conduct and disclose any disciplinary action, past or pending.

Concentration in the Specialty of Trial Advocacy: A minimum of 30% concentration in the field in which the attorney seeks certification for at least the three years immediately preceding application.

Writing Sample: Submission of a writing sample in the form of a trial brief, prepared by the applicant, and submitted to a court of law within the three years immediately preceding application for certification.

Continuing Legal Education: Participation in at least 45 hours of continuing legal education in the three years immediately preceding application. The educational seminars must pertain to trial advocacy in the field in which the attorney seeks certification.

Judicial and Attorney Peer Review: Provision of three judges and three attorneys familiar with the applicant's courtroom abilities.

Trials: Lead counsel in a number of trials to verdict or judgment and a sampling of other trial and courtroom skills that are documented in checklist form.

Lead Counsel in Contested Matters: In addition to the trials, all applicants

must document lead counsel in 40 contested matters involving the taking of evidence, such as hearings, motions or depositions.

Examination: Applicants must successfully pass the NBTA examination which is an all essay, trial techniques, evidence and ethics exam lasting six hours. The exam is written and graded by trial lawyers and law professors. The exam process is overseen by the NBTA Examination Committee and Board of Examiners. The Chair is Yale Law School Professor, Stephen Wizner.