

FAQs - Use of the CPA Designation by Firms

Q. How do I know if my firm is a public accounting services firm or an other regulated services firm?

The definition of “public accounting” has changed. It is now known as “public accounting service” (PAS) and is defined in Bylaw 101 to include audit and review engagements; assurance engagements performed in conjunction with an audit or review; and compilation engagements.

A new category of firm, an “other regulated services” (ORS) firm, has also been defined by Bylaw 801(2) to include:

- providing advice, counsel or interpretation with respect to the preparation of a tax return; or
- a forensic accounting, financial investigation or financial litigation support service.

The bylaws are available at <https://cpamb.ca/docs/default-source/protecting-the-public/chartered-professional-accountants-of-manitoba-bylaws.pdf>.

Both PAS and ORS firms are required to register with CPA Manitoba. A PAS firm that also provides ORS is still considered to be a PAS firm. A firm that only provides ORS is an ORS firm. There are some differences in how a PAS firm or an ORS firm may use the designation:

- **PAS firms:** After March 31, 2017, PAS firms **are required** by Bylaw 803 to use “Chartered Professional Accountant(s)” as part of their firm name or descriptive style when providing public accounting services. PAS firms may use the designation starting September 1, 2015. A legacy designation may NOT be “tagged” to the new designation as part of a firm name or descriptive style.
- **ORS firms:** After September 1, 2015, ORS firms **may** use “Chartered Professional Accountant(s)” as part of their firm name or descriptive style when providing any other regulated service, **with one exception**. An ORS firm that is incorporated **may not** use “Chartered Professional Accountant” as part of its corporate name.

Q. How should a firm use the Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA) designation in their firm name?

Effective September 1, 2015, **public accounting services** firms may begin using “Chartered Professional Accountant(s)” in place of the legacy firm designation in their firm name or as a descriptive style. After March 31, 2017, public accounting services firms **MUST** use “Chartered Professional Accountant(s)” in place of the legacy firm designation in their firm name or as a descriptive style.

Effective September 1, 2015, **other regulated services** firms may begin using “Chartered Professional Accountant(s)” in place of the legacy firm designation in their firm name or as a descriptive style. Other regulated services firms **MAY NOT** use “Chartered Professional Accountant(s)” in their firm name or descriptive style if they are providing services in corporate form.

You may not use both “Chartered Professional Accountant(s)” and a legacy designation as part of your firm name or as a descriptive style at any time. You **MUST** use your registered firm name only to sign audit reports, review engagement reports, compilation engagement reports and other material and correspondence that relates to the provision of public accounting or other regulated services, such as engagement letters, invoices, management letters and responses to requests for proposals. For example, if John Smith Certified General Accountant has changed his firm name to John Smith Chartered Professional Accountant, he will sign audit reports as “John Smith Chartered Professional Accountant”

even though the firm's letterhead, signage, business cards and other promotional materials may not yet have been updated from the former firm name.

In order to assist firms with costs associated with transition to the new designation, existing legacy business cards, letterhead, signage and other promotional material may be used until March 31, 2017. However, because this may create an inconsistency if a firm is using legacy letterhead but signing a report as a Chartered Professional Accountant, updating such material as soon as possible is strongly encouraged.

Q. I am a sole practitioner and my firm's name includes my name. How should I present my firm name together with my name as an individual?

Your firm must change its name in accordance with the timelines noted above, but you may use the "CPA, CA"; "CPA, CGA"; "CPA, CMA" designation following your name starting July 15, 2015. Your personal designation need not be exactly the same as your firm name.

Example: Jane Doe has a public accounting services firm registered as "Jane Doe Chartered Accountant". Jane has opted to use "CPA" with her personal name, so she must use "CPA, CA" but she has not yet changed her firm name. She **MUST** change the name of her public accounting services firm by March 31, 2017, but until her firm name has been changed, her business card may appear as:

Jane Doe Chartered Accountant
Address, Contact information

Jane Doe, CPA, CA

Jane would continue to sign reports as "Jane Doe Chartered Accountant" until she changes her firm name, since a firm must use its registered name when signing audit reports, review engagement reports, compilation engagement reports and other material and correspondence that relates to the provision of public accounting or other regulated services, such as engagement letters, invoices, management letters and responses to requests for proposals.

Q. I am a partner in a firm. How would I present the firm name and show my CPA designation as an individual?

Similar to the response above for a sole practitioner, a firm must use the registered firm name when signing audit reports, review engagement reports, compilation engagement reports and other material and correspondence that relates to the provision of public accounting or other regulated services, such as engagement letters, invoices, management letters and responses to requests for proposals. However, each partner of the firm who is a member may show, as an individual, the CPA designation tagged with the member's legacy designation, even if the report continues to be issued on the firm's legacy letterhead during the transition period.

Q. What do I need to do to change my firm name?

You must apply to CPA Manitoba in order to change the name of your firm to replace the legacy designation with the CPA designation. Forms and instructions on how to change your firm name are as follows:

Professional Corporations - <https://cpamb.ca/docs/default-source/protecting-the-public/2015-07-20-pc-name-change-instructions.pdf>

Limited Liability Partnerships - <https://cpamb.ca/docs/default-source/protecting-the-public/2015-07-20-llp-name-change-instructions.pdf>

Sole Proprietorships of Partnerships - <https://cpamb.ca/docs/default-source/protecting-the-public/2015-07-20-sp-pship-name-change-instructions.pdf>

If you have a Professional Corporation (PC) or a Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) registered, you must also change its name with the Companies Office. That information is included in the links above.

Q. When am I permitted to use the plural version: “Chartered Professional Accountants”?

Where a firm has more than one designated professional in the firm (either owner or staff), the firm can use the plural version. However, a sole practitioner with a designated staff member should be cautious in using the plural version if there is a risk that the designated staff member will leave the firm and therefore put the firm in breach of the rules until the firm name and/or descriptive style is changed back to the singular.

Q. How long do I have to change my firm name?

We encourage you to do this as soon as possible, however, you are not required to finalize the name change until March 31, 2017.

If your firm is a corporation that provides only other regulated services, you should change its name immediately and you may not use a legacy designation as part of your corporation’s name or descriptive style past March 31, 2017.