

Continuing education rule changes might make things easier for you

If you pay any amount of attention to the Board's enforcement program, you'll know one thing for sure: of all the things people get in trouble for, continuing education (CE) is the most common. We write what we think are helpful, useful continuing education articles in nearly every issue of this newsletter, and we talk about CE in almost every presentation or class we give. Recently, the Board went even further to help every TBAE registrant comply with CE regulations. Read on to learn what changed and how it might just make compliance noticeably easier for you.

In February of 2021, the Board amended its CE rules. Here's a summary of the highest-profile change, and how it might help you out of a sticky continuing education situation.

The rule change is a solution for when you are about to renew your registration, but then realize you lack some number of CE hours for the previous calendar year. For instance, let's say you were born in October. You know that before you renew by the end of October, 2021 (your renewal deadline is the end of your birth month) you will need to certify that you completed 12 CE hours the previous calendar year—2020. So you check your records, your transcript, etc. and realize: Oh no—I only did nine hours in calendar year 2020! I can't go back in time, so what do I do now???

With the amended CE rule, it's a little bit like you CAN go back in time and apply CE credits to a previous calendar year that's already come and gone. If you ever realize after the fact that you're short some hours for the previous calendar year, simply follow these steps before renewing:

1. Do NOT renew your registration until you are compliant with CE requirements, as follows.
2. Complete qualifying CE credits to cover any deficiency for the previous calendar year.
3. IN ADDITION to covering the deficiency for the previous calendar year, complete the full 12-hour requirement for the current calendar year. Your total for the current and past calendar year now should be 24 CE hours.
4. Renew your registration and safely certify that you have completed the required hours.

Additional CE tips, tricks, and hints to make your life easier

- The basics, which haven't changed since 2012: Each calendar year, from January 1 through December 31, a registrant shall earn 12 hours of CE directly relating to health, safety, and welfare. One of them must be in accessibility/ADA/barrier-free, and one must be in sustainable or energy-efficient design.
- At least eight of your 12 hours each calendar year must be "structured" courses, also known as classroom courses. How can you tell whether a course is structured? A structured course may be delivered by direct, in-person contact or through distance learning methods, but it must result in the issuance of a certificate or other record of attendance by the provider. Note that some course providers work with transcript services (e.g. AIA, LACES, or IDCEC)

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and provide a certificate directly to the transcript service itself. It is acceptable to use a transcript as a record of attendance in lieu of a certificate. If you attend a virtual webinar or lunch and learn, please ask for a certificate of attendance

or e-mail from the sponsor verifying you were in attendance. An e-mail invitation or copy of your calendar will not count.

- Maintaining documentation of your CE activities is critical—keep those course completion certificates and/or transcripts updated and available for at least five years after the end of the calendar year for which credit is claimed.