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Frequently Asked Questions

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✓ How do I file a name change?

Name changes must be filed by affidavit with the Attorney Services of the Supreme Judicial Court Clerk's Office for the County of Suffolk, which will notify the Board of Bar Overseers of the change. More information about the process, as well as the required affidavit, can be found at this link: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/attorney-name-change>.

(Please note the Board of Bar Overseers will not process a name change until notified by the Supreme Judicial Court Clerk's Office.)

✓ How do I obtain a Certificate of Admission and Good Standing?

Certificates of Admission and Good Standing are issued by the SJC Clerk's Office for the County of Suffolk. Please click this link to directly access this information at the Attorney Services of the Supreme Judicial Court Clerk's Office for the County of Suffolk: <http://www.mass.gov/courts/court-info/sjc/about/clerk-suffolk-county/certificate-of-admission-and-good-standing.html> (<http://www.mass.gov/courts/court-info/sjc/about/clerk-suffolk-county/certificate-of-admission-and-good-standing.html>) (<http://www.mass.gov/courts/court-info/sjc/about/clerk-suffolk-county/certificate-of-admission-and-good-standing.html>).

✓ How do I request a disciplinary history letter or a grievance letter?

To obtain a letter of grievance or a letter of disciplinary history, please email your request to registrationdept@massbbo.org (<mailto:registrationdept@massbbo.org>) (<mailto:registrationdept@massbbo.org>) or mail to the following address:

Registration Department
Board of Bar Overseers
1 Beacon Street
Floor 10
Boston, MA 02108

Please include the following in your request:

1. The jurisdiction or state to which you are applying for admission.
2. The address of the jurisdiction for which you are applying for admission. If you are applying in New York, please specify the judicial department.

3. If you are requesting a letter for any reason other than admission, please state the address of the organization which requested the above letter (e.g. prospective employer, university, etc.)

✓ How do I request a replacement bar card?

To obtain a replacement bar card, please email your request to registrationdept@massbbo.org (<mailto:registrationdept@massbbo.org>) (<mailto:registrationdept@massbbo.org>) or mail to the following address:

Registration Department
Board of Bar Overseers
1 Beacon Street
Floor 10
Boston, MA 02108

There is a \$10.00 charge for each replacement bar card. Payment may be made by check or money order, payable to the Board of Bar Overseers.

✓ What is the Board of Bar Overseers W-9 information?

[Board of Bar Overseers W-9](https://www.massbbo.org/Files?fileName=2024_BBO_W9.pdf) (https://www.massbbo.org/Files?fileName=2024_BBO_W9.pdf).

✓ How do I get advice on a matter of professional ethics?

The Office of the Bar Counsel will answer ethical questions Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays between the hours of 2:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. Please call the Office of the Bar Counsel at [617-728-8750](tel:617-728-8750) ().

You may also visit the Ethics Helpline page for additional information [here](https://www.massbbo.org/s/ethics-helpline) (<https://www.massbbo.org/s/ethics-helpline>).

✓ How do I become licensed to practice in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts?

Detailed information about procedures can be obtained from Supreme Judicial Court Clerk's Office by clicking this link: <http://www.mass.gov/courts/court-info/sjc/about/clerks-suffolk-county> (<http://www.mass.gov/courts/court-info/sjc/about/clerks-suffolk-county>) (<http://www.mass.gov/courts/court-info/sjc/about/clerks-suffolk-county>) or by calling 617-557-1050.

For inquiries regarding the bar admission exam, you may call the Board of Bar Examiners at [617-482-4466](tel:617-482-4466) or click this link to visit their website:

<http://www.mass.gov/courts/court-info/sjc/attorneys-bar-applicants/bbe> (<http://www.mass.gov/courts/court-info/sjc/attorneys-bar-applicants/bbe>) (<http://www.mass.gov/courts/court-info/sjc/attorneys-bar-applicants/bbe>).

Admissions are governed by S.J.C. Rule 3:01.

✓ What are the different attorney statuses and fees?

Attorneys eligible to practice law in Massachusetts may choose one of six statuses: Active, Inactive, Retired, Clerk, Judicial, or Pro Bono. Please click [this link for S.J.C. Rule 4:02](http://www.mass.gov/supreme-judicial-court-rules/supreme-judicial-court-rule-402-periodic-registration-of-attorneys) (<http://www.mass.gov/supreme-judicial-court-rules/supreme-judicial-court-rule-402-periodic-registration-of-attorneys>).

Attorneys choosing "Active" status are allowed to practice law within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. They will be issued bar cards.

Attorneys choosing "Inactive", "Retired", "Clerk", "Judicial" or "Foreign Legal Consultant" status are not allowed to practice law within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. They will not be issued bar cards.

Attorneys choosing Pro bono Retired" or Pro bono Inactive status are allowed to provide pro bono publico legal services under the auspices of approved legal service organizations, but are not allowed to perform legal services for any other person or

entity. They will be issued bar cards. For additional information on pro bono status, please go to the following link: [S.J.C. 4:02 \(8\)\(a\) \(http://www.mass.gov/supreme-judicial-court-rules/supreme-judicial-court-rule-402-periodic-registration-of-attorneys#-8-pro-bono-status\)](http://www.mass.gov/supreme-judicial-court-rules/supreme-judicial-court-rule-402-periodic-registration-of-attorneys#-8-pro-bono-status).

If you are changing to a status other than "active," and you are considering applying for reciprocal admission in another jurisdiction, the Board recommends that you contact the other jurisdiction before requesting the status change. The jurisdiction to which you are applying may require that you be registered under active status for a set period in another jurisdiction before approving your request.

Fees include a \$51 voluntary Access to Justice fee. If you choose to opt-out of Access to Justice fee, please pay the amount listed in parenthesis.

| Status | Active Status | Inactive Status |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Admitted for 5 or fewer years | \$ 271.00 (\$ 220.00) | \$ 161.00 (\$ 110.00) |
| Admitted for more than 5 and fewer than 50 years | \$ 351.00 (\$ 300.00) | \$ 201.00 (\$ 150.00) |
| Admitted for more than fifty years | \$ 71.00 (\$ 20.00) | \$ 61.00 (\$ 10.00) |
| Late fee | \$ 50.00 | |
| Reinstatement fee (after suspension) | \$ 100.00 | |
| Returned check charge | \$ 25.00 | |
| Replacement fee for lost or additional bar card | \$ 10.00 | |

✓ What is the Access to Justice Fee?

The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court amended Rule 4:03 on June 29, 2010, with an effective date of September 1, 2010. The amendment adds a voluntary annual fee of fifty-one dollars (\$51.00) to be used "in the administration of justice and provision of civil legal services to those who cannot afford them."

Attorneys can opt-out of the additional fee and the decision to opt-out shall be confidential. For additional information, please call the IOLTA Committee at (617) 723-9093 or visit <http://www.mass.gov/courts/court-info/court-management/plan-initiatives/access-to-justice-gen.html> (<http://www.mass.gov/courts/court-info/court-management/plan-initiatives/access-to-justice-gen.html>) (<http://www.mass.gov/courts/court-info/court-management/plan-initiatives/access-to-justice-gen.html>).

✓ How do I file for a pro hac vice appearance?

The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court enacted a rule requiring payment of a fee and completion of a registration form before petitions for admission pro hac vice are moved. Click [here](https://www.massbbo.org/Files?fileName=prohacvicefaq.pdf) (<https://www.massbbo.org/Files?fileName=prohacvicefaq.pdf>) for FAQ and click [here](https://www.mass.gov/supreme-judicial-court-rules/supreme-judicial-court-rule-315-pro-hac-vice-registration-fee-0) (<https://www.mass.gov/supreme-judicial-court-rules/supreme-judicial-court-rule-315-pro-hac-vice-registration-fee-0>) for S.J.C. Rule 3:15.

Click [here for the required form](https://www.massbbo.org/Files?fileName=prohacvice.pdf) (<https://www.massbbo.org/Files?fileName=prohacvice.pdf>) to accompany your pro-hac vice fee.

✓ How do I request reinstatement from administrative suspension for non-registration?

1. A suspended attorney, who is seeking reinstatement from administrative suspension for failure to register, pursuant to S.J.C. Rule 4:03 (3) is required to do the following: Complete and sign the following required forms and email the executed forms to registrationdept@massbbo.org (<mailto:registrationdept@massbbo.org>) (<mailto:registrationdept@massbbo.org?subject=Reinstatement%20from%20administrative%20suspension>):
 - a. Annual Attorney Registration Statement. Click [here](https://www.massbbo.org/Files?fileName=reg-form-admin-susp.pdf) (<https://www.massbbo.org/Files?fileName=reg-form-admin-susp.pdf>) to obtain

the form

- b. Affidavit in Support of Request for Reinstatement. Click [here](http://www.massbbo.org/Files?fileName=reinstatement-affidavit.pdf) (<http://www.massbbo.org/Files?fileName=reinstatement-affidavit.pdf>) to obtain the form.

2. Upon receipt of the completed and signed forms, the Registration Department will send you an email itemizing the fees due.
3. Mail your payment with a copy of the itemized fees sent by the Registration Department to:

Registration Department
Board of Bar Overseers
1 Beacon Street
Floor 10
Boston, MA 02108

Upon receipt of your payment and review of the required forms, your request for reinstatement will be forwarded to the Supreme Judicial Court for the Court's consideration. Please allow up to 21 business days for the processing of your reinstatement application.

✓ What is a Firm Payment?

A Firm Payment allows a firm administrator, designated by an organization or firm, to log in and submit payment on behalf of registering attorneys. To be eligible for Firm Administrator payments, attorneys must: have completed an online registration form, be in good standing, have a balance due, and have selected "Firm Payment" as their payment method. Firm Administrators cannot alter information on an attorney's registration form; they are only able to pay eligible registration fees.

In order to participate in Firm Payments, a firm or organization must have an activated Firm Administrator account with the BBO.

For more information about Firm Payments, visit the [FAQs](https://www.massbbo.org/s/faq?category=Firm_Payments) (https://www.massbbo.org/s/faq?category=Firm_Payments).

✓ If a Firm Administrator does not pay or misses the payment deadline, is there a consequence for the attorney?

Yes, the attorney is ultimately responsible for paying registration fees by the registration deadline, or they will receive a late fee and subsequent administrative suspension for non-registration. If an attorney chooses to elect the Firm Administrator to pay on their behalf, they are still responsible for making sure the payment is received on their behalf by the registration deadline.

✓ Do I qualify for SJC Rule 4:02's "Active-Duty Military" status?

In accordance with SJC Rule 4:02 (12), "*Any attorney admitted to practice law in the Commonwealth who is currently on active duty in any branch of the United States Armed Forces but who is not serving as an attorney in the military may advise the Board in writing and under oath of the attorney's status in the military. Upon the filing of such notice, the attorney will be placed on active-duty military status and will be relieved from the payment of fees imposed pursuant to Rule 4:03 for any registration cycle during which, in whole or in part, the attorney maintains such status.*"

✓ How do I notify the Board of Bar Overseers that I qualify under the Active-Duty Military status?

Please click [here](https://www.massbbo.org/Files?fileName=BBO-Attorney-Registration-for-Active-Duty-Military-Status.pdf) (<https://www.massbbo.org/Files?fileName=BBO-Attorney-Registration-for-Active-Duty-Military-Status.pdf>) to obtain the registration form for Active-Duty Military status. Upon completion, please submit the form by email at registrationdept@massbbo.org (<mailto:registrationdept@massbbo.org>) (<mailto:registrationdept@massbbo.org>) or by mail to the following address:

Registration Department

Board of Bar Overseers

1 Beacon Street

Floor 10

Boston, MA 02108

You will be placed on Active-Duty Military status upon the Registrations Department's receipt and review of the executed Active-Duty Registration Form.

- ✓ Can I change my status to Active-Duty Military status and vice-versa using the online registration system?

No, at the present time you cannot change your status to or from Active-Duty Military online.

To change your status to Active-Duty Military status, please use [this form](https://www.massbbo.org/Files?fileName=BBO-Attorney-Registration-for-Active-Duty-Military-Status.pdf) (<https://www.massbbo.org/Files?fileName=BBO-Attorney-Registration-for-Active-Duty-Military-Status.pdf>).

To change your status from Active-Duty Military status, please use [this form](https://www.massbbo.org/Files?fileName=BBO-Attorney-Registration-Change-from-Active-Duty-Military-Status.pdf) (<https://www.massbbo.org/Files?fileName=BBO-Attorney-Registration-Change-from-Active-Duty-Military-Status.pdf>).

- ✓ What are the registration fees for Active-Duty Military status?

While on active duty, the attorney will be relieved from the payment of fees imposed pursuant to Rule 4:03 for any registration cycle during which, in whole or in part, the attorney maintains such status.

Previously paid registration fees will not be prorated or refunded at the time of registering as Active-Duty Military status. When you change your status from Active-Duty Military status to any other status, you will be relieved of the registration fee for your current registration cycle. You will be required to pay a registration fee for the annual registration cycle following your status change.

- ✓ Can I practice as a civilian attorney under the Active-Duty Military status?

No.

- ✓ Can I retain Active or Inactive status even if I qualify under Active-Duty Military status?

Electing to register under either Active or Inactive status, even if you qualify under Active-Duty Military status, is a personal choice. If you wish to retain Active or Inactive status while you are on active duty, you will be required to pay the corresponding registration fee.

[Employment Opportunities \(../employment\)](#) [Volunteer Opportunities \(../volunteer\)](#) [Calendar \(../events\)](#) [FAQs \(../faq\)](#)

1 Beacon St, 10th Floor, Boston, Massachusetts 02108 (<https://maps.app.goo.gl/kJimptzSQ7AkEqhE7>) (617) 728-8700
(tel:+16177288700) webmaster@massbbo.org (<mailto:webmaster@massbbo.org>)

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