

Why Should You Use a Certified Civil or Criminal Attorney?

Q. What is a “Certified Trial Attorney?”

A. “Certified Trial Attorney” is a designation granted by the New Jersey Supreme Court to attorneys who are able to demonstrate sufficient levels of experience, education, knowledge and skill in criminal and/or civil trial practice. The Supreme Court, through its Board on Attorney Certification, designates only those lawyers who apply for certification and who are able to meet the standards set by the Board and approved by the Court.

Q. What are the requirements for Board Certification?

A. An attorney must meet the following requirements to become Board Certified:

- Must be a member in good standing of the New Jersey bar for at least 5 years.
- In the 3 years prior to filing an application, must have taken continuing legal education courses.
- Must show a substantial involvement in preparation of litigated matters and demonstrate primary responsibility for a specific number of completed trials in New Jersey Superior Court.
- Must demonstrate an unblemished reputation by submitting a list of attorneys and judges who will attest to the applicant’s character and ability
- Must pass written examination covering various aspects of trial practice.

Q. Why does New Jersey have a program for Certification in trial law?

A. The certification program helps consumers find attorneys who have a recognized level of competence in specialized fields of the law. Certification also helps lawyers by giving them a way to make their experience known to the public and to other lawyers.

Q. How many attorneys are certified in New Jersey?

A. As of December 31, 1997, out of approximately 65,150 lawyers in New Jersey, 1,300 were Board certified.

Q. How does the consumer know if an attorney is Board certified?

A. Although many practicing trial attorneys now advertise in newspapers, on television and in the Yellow Pages, only attorneys certified by the New Jersey Supreme Court are entitled to use either the designation “Certified Civil Trial Attorney” or “Certified Criminal Trial Attorney” on their letterhead, business cards, Yellow Pages listings or in their advertisements.

Q. What if I have more questions or need to find out more about Certification?

A. Anyone in need of more information regarding the certification program should address his/her questions to:

Board on Attorney
Certification
P.O. Box 970
Trenton, NJ 08625
1-609-984-3077