

# CMA (AAMA) Logo and Branding Usage Guide

## Protected by Law

The CMA (AAMA) designation, initialism, and logo are the property of the American Association of Medical Assistants (AAMA) and cannot be used in any way by any party other than the Certifying Board of the AAMA and its grantees, with the exception of limited use by the AAMA.

The predecessor credential to the CMA (AAMA) was the CMA. Because of the decades of use of the CMA initialism in interstate commerce, the AAMA has common law rights in the “CMA” designation. Consequently, using the phrase “Certified Medical Assistant®,” or the initialisms “CMA (AAMA)®” or “CMA,” to describe a medical assistant who has not been awarded or has not maintained currency of the CMA (AAMA) credential from the Certifying Board of the AAMA is both incorrect and a matter of intellectual property law. Anyone who does so may be in jeopardy of legal sanctions.

For more information, read “[Letters and the law: Misuse of ‘CMA \(AAMA\)’ and ‘CMA’ can have legal consequences](#)” by AAMA CEO and Legal Counsel Donald A. Balasa, JD, MBA.

Permission by the AAMA to use the CMA (AAMA) designation, initialism, and/or logo may be granted only to the following persons/entities, to use in the following ways.

## CMA (AAMA)

Open permission is granted only to medical assistants who have been certified by the Certifying Board of the AAMA by sitting for and passing the CMA (AAMA) Certification/Recertification Examination to use the CMA (AAMA) designation and initialism and wear the CMA (AAMA) pin. All CMA (AAMA) must have current status in order to use the CMA (AAMA) credential.

## State society and local chapter affiliates

The Certifying Board of the AAMA must remain ever watchful for the abuses of the CMA (AAMA) logo to ensure that an image of the highest professional standards is maintained. Therefore, state

and chapter affiliates may not use the CMA (AAMA) logo for any purpose. State society and local chapter affiliates may not use the CMA (AAMA) designation, initialism, and/or logo on display and/or on fundraising items.

## Publishers

Publishers of reputable medical assisting textbooks (or other legitimate educational materials) may use the CMA (AAMA) designation, initialism, logo, and/or photo of the CMA (AAMA) pin if specifically granted written permission by the AAMA. The CMA (AAMA) designation, initialism, logo, and/or pin photo may be used only if it is printed for the purpose of, and in the context of, educating and informing the reader about the CMA (AAMA). The CMA (AAMA) designation, initialism, logo, and/or pin photo may not be used on the cover of the textbook, nor any place on or in the textbook, in a manner that could imply that the book is an AAMA publication, or that the AAMA is endorsing or approving the book or the materials for CMA (AAMA) certification.

The CMA (AAMA) designation, initialism, logo, and/or pin photo may be used as one allied health association designation, initialism, logo, and/or pin photo among many such designations, initialisms, logos, and/or pin photos arranged as a montage on the cover of, or on a page of, a reputable medical assisting textbook (or other legitimate educational materials) in a manner that does not imply that the book is an AAMA publication or that the AAMA is endorsing or approving the book or the materials for CMA (AAMA) certification.

*Decisions about acceptable uses of the CMA (AAMA) designation, initialism, logo, and/or pin photo in textbooks shall be made by the AAMA Certification Director, the CEO and Legal Counsel, and the Marketing and Communications Director. The Certifying Board of the AAMA and outside legal counsel may be consulted if deemed necessary by the AAMA CEO.*

## Rights reserved

Because the AAMA holds the rights to the CMA (AAMA) designation, initialism, logo, and pin, the AAMA reserves the right to withdraw permission for the use of the CMA (AAMA) designation, initialism, logo, and pin at any time by written notice for any reason or for no reason at all.

# Credential violations

Misuse of the credential abounds, including unauthorized use of the following:

- CMA (AAMA)<sup>®</sup>
- CMA
- Certified Medical Assistant<sup>®</sup>

## Why should you care?

If you've worked hard to achieve your CMA (AAMA), you should care very much. When individuals, including medical assistants who are not CMA (AAMA) certified, represent themselves as holding a valid CMA (AAMA) credential, that puts your certification at risk. It offers a way for those who are not CMAs (AAMA) to misrepresent themselves as CMAs (AAMA)—and, by extension, to damage public and workplace perception of the education and training achieved by true CMAs (AAMA).

## What are the common misunderstandings?

A variety of individuals and organizations are often misinformed about offering or selling products representing the credential:

- **Sellers of medical staff merchandise.** Many professional merchandisers are aware that they cannot sell products with medical credentialing insignia. Those rights belong to the credentialing body. However, they can sell generic products, such as T-shirts with the term “medical assistant.”
- **Employers.** Employers of medical assistants sometimes believe that if their medical assistants have received a certificate—of any kind—then they can use CMA as a credential or call such staff members Certified Medical Assistants. Not true! Such use is a misrepresentation and a matter of intellectual property law.
- **Students.** Some students who have graduated from a non-accredited medical assisting program or any kind of medical assisting course from which they have earned some sort of certificate of completion believe they can use CMA as a credential or call themselves a Certified Medical Assistant. Not true! Only individuals who have graduated from a CAAHEP- or ABHES-accredited medical assisting program and have achieved the following are entitled to this privilege:
  1. Passed the CMA (AAMA) Certification Examination
  2. Holds a current CMA (AAMA) credential with a certification number issued by the AAMA
- **State societies and local chapters.** Most AAMA state and chapter leaders understand that they cannot use the credential on merchandise or in any way other than what is permitted by the Certifying Board (CB) of the AAMA. But sometimes people misunderstand and may try to sell or give away such products. Doing so is an intellectual property violation. Affiliates do own their state and chapter logos and may use those as they wish, though they should only grant such permissions under the authorization of their governing body. They may also use the

current AAMA Medical Assistants Recognition Week logo but only in connection with MARWeek. Use of past MARWeek logos is a violation and waters down the branding of the annual event.

- **Individual CMAs (AAMA).** Some CMAs (AAMA) erroneously believe that because they have achieved the credential, then they have a right to use it in any way. However, the CB of the AAMA authorizes current CMAs (AAMA) to use the credential in only two ways:
  1. **Signatures:** CMAs (AAMA) may use the credential for signatures and professional designations, such as on badges, résumés, letters, and email signatures.
  2. **Pin:** CMAs (AAMA) may wear the pin provided by the AAMA. They should never wear any other type of CMA pin from another source. Such pins are in violation and vary in appearance, which waters down the mark and weakens the brand.

## How can you help?

You can help to protect the credential by letting us know when you see an instance of abuse. The CB offers a fillable PDF form for reporting. Go to Downloads on the AAMA website to find the Credential Violations Report Form under the Certification/Recertification by Exam section.

## For more information

Any questions regarding the use of the CMA (AAMA) designation, initialism, logo, and/or pin may be directed to the Certification Department of the AAMA at [Certification@aama-ntl.org](mailto:Certification@aama-ntl.org).

## IAS and NCCA Accreditation

The CMA (AAMA) Certification Program is accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies, and the Certifying Board of the AAMA is the only medical assisting certification body that has been accredited under ISO 17024 International Standard through the International Accreditation Service (IAS).

Both agencies require appropriate use of professional credentials and logos. In fact, ISO 17024 specifically prohibits not only the use of the certification in such a manner as to bring the certification body into disrepute but any statement regarding the certification that the certification body considers misleading or unauthorized. Further, in terms of the credential and the logo, the Certifying Board must document the conditions for use and shall appropriately manage the rights for usage and representation.

Therefore, the Certifying Board established policies concerning the use of the CMA (AAMA) designation, initialism, and logo to ensure that your valuable certification is never compromised.



**CMA (AAMA)<sup>®</sup>**  
SETS THE BAR FOR EXCELLENCE IN MEDICAL ASSISTING



**AMERICAN ASSOCIATION  
OF MEDICAL ASSISTANTS<sup>®</sup>**