

# AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF MEDICAL ASSISTANTS

# Editorial Standards

## *Usage guidelines for the profession and the credential*

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Because editorial standards reflect the professionalism of an organization, please follow these simple guidelines to solidify the image of the AAMA, the profession, and the credential.

### **CMA (AAMA) usage**

The CMA (AAMA) represents only those medical assistants who have passed the CMA (AAMA) Certification/Recertification Examination offered by the Certifying Board of the American Association of Medical Assistants and who have kept their CMA (AAMA) credential current through recertification.

### **Generic versus credential**

Use “medical assistant” or “medical assisting” when referring to a person working in the field or when referring to the profession. Use “CMA (AAMA)” only when referring to a medical assistant who has been certified by the Certifying Board of the American Association of Medical Assistants and has maintained currency.

### **Singular versus plural**

When possible, use the singular sense of CMA (AAMA). Avoid awkward he/she constructions. If the plural form must be used, CMAs (AAMA) is acceptable.

**Avoid:** The CMA (AAMA) must recertify his or her credential every five years in order to use his or her credential.

**Avoid:** CMAs (AAMA) must recertify their credential every five years in order to use their credential.

**Preferred:** The CMA (AAMA) must recertify every five years in order to use the credential.

*Note: Possessive forms carry an apostrophe, not plural forms; however avoid cumbersome possessives with the credential whenever possible:*

**Incorrect:** The clinic employs five CMA’s (AAMA).

**Correct:** The clinic employs five CMAs (AAMA).

**Avoid:** That is the CMA’s (AAMA) pin.

**Preferred:** That pin belongs to the CMA (AAMA).

### **First mention**

When the credential is first mentioned in a document, it should be immediately followed by an explanatory statement to clarify what the CMA and AAMA initialisms stand for.

**Example:** In the specialized world of health care, one versatile professional stands out—the CMA (AAMA). This credential represents a medical assistant who has been certified by the Certifying Board of the American Association of Medical Assistants (AAMA).

*Note: Do not spell out CMA followed by “(AAMA),” because readers expect the item in parentheses to spell out the preceding initialism.*

**Incorrect:** Certified Medical Assistant (AAMA) or Certified Medical Assistants (AAMA)

**Correct:** CMA (AAMA) or CMAs (AAMA)

*Note: Because a parenthesized item within a parenthesized item must be bracketed, avoid such awkward constructions.*

**Avoid:** In the specialized world of health care, one versatile professional stands out—the medical assistant who has been certified by the American Association of Medical Assistants (i.e., the CMA [AAMA]).

**Preferred:** In the specialized world of health care, one versatile professional stands out—the CMA (AAMA). This credential represents a medical assistant who has been certified by the Certifying Board of the American Association of Medical Assistants (AAMA).

## Second mention

Once the meaning of CMA (AAMA) has been established, the credential may be used; however remember to use “medical assistant” when the context is in the generic sense:

**Example**—*generic sense, specific to noncertified medical assistants*: Medical assistants have a great amount of variety in their jobs.

**Example**—*specific to medical assistants certified by the AAMA*: Many health care employers insist that their medical assistants have achieved the CMA (AAMA) credential.

## Multiple mentions

In some cases the CMA (AAMA) professional or credential is mentioned multiple times in one paragraph, so variations can be used to avoid redundancies.

**Example**: The CMA (AAMA) enjoys increased respect and recognition. Employers recognize the value of the credential. And, the CMA (AAMA) credential is valid wherever the medical assistant goes.

## Credentials with names

Use commas around the CMA (AAMA) credential.

**Example**: The illustrious Jane Doe, CMA (AAMA), will be our guest speaker for the banquet.

*Note: The credential “MA” stands for Master of Arts, not medical assistant; therefore noncertified medical assistants should not use “MA” after their names unless*

*they’ve also earned their Master of Arts. Referring to a medical assistant as an “MA” may lead to further confusion, so it’s best to always spell out “medical assistant” or say it in full.*

## Exam title

CMA (AAMA) Certification/Recertification Examination

## Magazine title

The magazine maintains the title *CMA Today*. When referring to the magazine, follow these guidelines:

- Italicize the title.
- “Today” should *always* be spoken and written as part of the title to legally distinguish the title from the credential.
- Capitalize the “t” in “Today.” (*Though the title on the cover is spelled with a lowercase “t” in “today,” that handling is considered display text and carries artistic license. For all other references to the title, the “t” should be in upper case.*)
- Refer to the magazine by its title only, without preceding it with the word “the.”

**Incorrect**: Continuing education articles are published in the *CMA*.

**Incorrect**: Continuing education articles are published in the *CMA today*.

**Correct**: Continuing education articles are published in *CMA Today*.



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