**Section 1420.70 Continuing Professional Education**

a) Continuing Professional Education Hour Requirements

1) In order to renew a license as a licensed CPA, a licensed CPA shall complete 120 hours of CPE every 3-year renewal period. Of the 120 hours, at least 4 hours shall be courses covering the subject of professional ethics. A licensed CPA is exempt from CPE requirements for the first renewal following the original issuance of the license. Licensees shall maintain CPE records for not less than 6 years.

2) A registered CPA is exempt from CPE requirements.

3) Each approved CPE course, program or activity shall be measured by program length, with one 50-minute period equal to one CPE credit. One-half CPE credits (equal to 25 minutes) are permitted after the first credit has been earned in a given learning activity. Courses that are part of the curriculum of a university, college or other educational institution shall be awarded CPE course credit at the rate of 15 credit hours for each semester hour, or 10 credit hours for each quarter hour of school credit awarded.

4) CPE credit will be allowed for programs or courses taken toward the satisfaction of CPE requirements in other states.

5) CPE hours earned in excess of the 120-hour requirement during any 3-year renewal period shall not be eligible for use as credit in a subsequent renewal cycle.

b) Approved CPE

1) CPE is professional development activities that are formal and informal learning opportunities contributing directly to a licensee's knowledge, ability or competence to perform professional responsibilities. CPE may be verifiable or nonverifiable, as set forth in subsections (b)(3) and (4).

2) CPE should address a licensee's current and future work environment, current knowledge and skills level, and desired or needed additional competencies to meet future opportunities and/or professional responsibilities. Courses, programs or activities shall include as their subject matter one or more of the following fields of study:

A) Accounting

B) Accounting (Governmental)

C) Auditing

D) Auditing (Governmental)

E) Behavioral Ethics

F) Business Law

G) Business Management & Organization (including practice development)

H) Communications and Marketing

I) Computer Software and Applications

J) Economics

K) Finance

L) Information Technology

M) Management Services

N) Personal Development (e.g., principle-centered leadership, career planning, time management)

O) Personnel/HR

P) Production

Q) Regulatory Ethics

R) Specialized Knowledge

S) Statistics

T) Taxes

3) Verifiable CPE is learning activities that include, but are not limited to, attending, developing, teaching or presenting CPE that can be independently confirmed by a CPE sponsor.

A) Verifiable CPE shall:

i) Be developed and presented by persons with education and/or experience in the subject matter of the CPE to ensure compliance with the standards stated in this Section and Section 1420.72;

ii) Include some mechanism by which the participants evaluate the quality of the program;

iii) Specify the course objectives, level of knowledge necessary for, and prerequisites to, enrollment, if any, course content, any necessary advance preparation, teaching methods to be used, and the number of CPE hours that will be earned;

iv) Provide each participant with a certificate or other proof of attendance that must include the name, address and authorized signature of the approved sponsor, the name and address of the participant, the title of the course, the number of hours actually attended in each topic, and the date the CPE was given. CPE sponsors shall also provide each participant with an outline of the subject matter. If the CPE sponsor is a CPA firm licensed under the Act, and the CPE is given in a CPA firm, the sponsor will not be required to provide certificates of attendance to the employees of the CPA firm attending the CPE, but must maintain an attendance log containing an authorized signature of the CPA firm offering the CPE; and

v) Include the following self-study CPE:

• Interactive self-study CPE using interactive learning methodologies that simulate the classroom learning process by employing computer software, other technology or administrative systems that provide significant, ongoing, interactive feedback to the learner regarding the learning process. Interactive self-study CPE shall qualify for full credit. Internet-based live programs (concurrent simulcasts of group live programs or webcasts) are treated as "live" programs and not interactive self-study CPE.

• Noninteractive self-study CPE that does not employ interactive features. Examples include videos, books and audiotapes for which the participant must complete and submit an examination for grading without knowledge of which questions are answered incorrectly or why. Credit hours for noninteractive self-study CPE shall be allowed on the basis of one-half of the average completion time determined by the sponsor. Noninteractive self-study CPE shall qualify if it meets all other requirements of this Section and Section 1420.72, it indicates average completion time on the course material, and it provides some mechanism or process by which to provide evidence of satisfactory completion by the licensee beyond certification by the licensee. In no case shall credit for noninteractive self-study CPE be given for more than 60 hours during any renewal period. Additionally, not more than 80 hours during any renewal period may consist of a combination of interactive and noninteractive self-study CPE.

B) A licensee who serves as an instructor, speaker or discussion leader of an approved provider will be allowed CPE credit for actual presentation time, plus actual preparation time of up to 2 hours for each hour of presentation. CPE credit shall not be allowed for repeat presentations of the same CPE. In no case shall more than 60 hours of credit be given for presentation or preparation time during any renewal period.

C) CPE credit will be allowed for authorship of published articles and books, provided the subject matter of the article or book complies with this Section and Section 1420.72. CPE credit shall be allowed for actual time spent in writing or researching, but in no case shall more than 30 hours of credit be given during any renewal period.

D) Acceptable evidence of completion of verifiable CPE includes:

i) For live group CPE or real time internet-based CPE (such as webinars), other than in-firm CPE, a certificate or other verification supplied by the CPE sponsor.

ii) For self-study CPE, a certificate supplied by the CPE sponsor after satisfactory completion of an examination.

iii) For instruction credit, a certificate or other verification supplied by the CPE sponsor.

iv) For a university or college course that is successfully completed for credit, a record or transcript of the grade the participant received.

v) For a university or college noncredit course, a certificate of attendance issued by a representative of the university or college.

vi) For published articles, books or development/review of CPE, a copy of the publication (or in the case of a CPE program, course development documentation) that names the writer or author or contributor, a statement from the writer supporting the number of CPE hours claimed, and the name and contact information of the independent reviewers or publisher.

4) Nonverifiable CPE is independent or informal learning activities that may not be independently confirmed by a CPE sponsor.

A) Nonverifiable CPE includes the following:

i) Attendance at CPE coordinated and presented by a person, CPA firm, association, corporation or group, other than a recognized CPE sponsor;

ii) Participation and work on technical committees of an international, national or state professional association or member organization;

iii) Professional reading of published materials that does not provide a certificate of completion or an assessment process; or

iv) Consultation with outside experts or research in a subject area new to the licensee (e.g., how to report discontinued operations) or when regulations or standards have changed (e.g., accounting for leases). Credit may not be claimed for repeat consultations or research in the same subject area when regulations or standards have not changed significantly.

B) Acceptable evidence for completion of nonverifiable CPE shall include all of the following:

i) For CPE coordinated and presented by a person, CPA firm, association, corporation or group, other than a recognized CPE sponsor, acceptable evidence shall include a certificate or other verification if supplied by the program sponsor. Acceptable evidence must include copies of the course agenda, program materials or other documents attributable to the learning activity.

ii) For CPE listed in subsections (b)(4)(A)(ii) through (iv), acceptable evidence must include all of the following:

• The nature of the CPE (e.g., research topic or specific new competency acquired) and the source;

• The dates on which the CPE was undertaken;

• The number of hours attributed to the CPE;

• Details of the relevance of the CPE to the participant's current or future professional development; and

• Copies of consultation memorandums, minutes or other documents attributed to the CPE.

C) Not more than 10 hours shall be claimed for each of the nonverifiable activities listed in subsections (b)(4)(A)(ii) through (iv) during any renewal period. Not more than 60 hours during any renewal period may consist of a combination of all nonverifiable activities defined in subsection (b)(4).

5) Not more than 24 hours during any renewal period may consist of personal development CPE.

c) Licensees with an address of record outside of Illinois who are actively licensed as a CPA by the state in their address of record shall be considered compliant with the CPE requirements of this Section if the licensee has complied with the CPE renewal requirements of the state in their address of record.

d) The Division may periodically audit CPE course information submitted by licensees. It is the responsibility of each renewal applicant to retain or otherwise produce evidence of CPE compliance pursuant to subsection (a)(1).

e) Waiver of CPE Requirements

1) Any renewal applicant seeking renewal of a license without having fully complied with these CPE requirements shall submit to the Division a renewal application, the required fee set forth in Section 1420.40, a statement setting forth the facts concerning noncompliance, and a request for waiver of the CPE requirements on the basis of these facts. A request for waiver shall be made prior to the renewal date. If the Division finds from such statement or any other evidence submitted that extreme hardship has been shown for granting a waiver, the Division shall waive enforcement of CPE requirements for the renewal period for which the applicant has applied.

2) Extreme hardship shall be determined on an individual basis and is defined as an inability to devote sufficient hours to fulfilling the CPE requirements during the applicable prerenewal period because of:

A) Full-time service in the armed forces of the United States of America during a substantial part of the prerenewal period;

B) An incapacitating illness documented by a statement from a currently licensed physician; or

C) Other similar extenuating circumstances.

3) Any renewal applicant who, prior to the expiration date of the license, submits a request for a waiver, in whole or in part, as set forth in this Section and Section 1420.72, shall be deemed to be in good standing until the final decision on the waiver request is made by the Division.

(Source: Amended at 44 Ill. Reg. 184, effective January 3, 2020)