

Virginia CPAs: Ethics and Professional Standards - 2026 VA-Approved

Designed specifically for Virginia CPAs, this course covers the Virginia Board of Accountancy's 2026 presentation, foundational ethics concepts, and the AICPA Code of Professional Conduct. You'll also explore the IRS Dirty Dozen tax scams for 2025, helping you recognize and avoid the schemes most likely to harm your clients. Whether you're fulfilling your Virginia ethics CPE requirement or sharpening your professional judgment, this course delivers practical, relevant content in a straightforward format.

CREDIT HOURS 2 | FIELD OF STUDY ETHICS | EXAM QUESTIONS 10

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LEARNING ASSIGNMENTS AND OBJECTIVES

Assignment

- Watch the course video before starting:
https://www.pacificcpe.com/courses/92601A/open_video
- Study the full course materials included here.
- Complete the review questions after each chapter.
- Answer 10 final exam questions.
- Final exam is scored immediately, 70% or better passes.
- Certificate of completion is available in your account.
- Failed exams can be retaken free of charge.

Course Objectives

- Recall the Virginia Board of Accountancy 2026 topics.
- Recognize the history and function of ethics.
- Recognize the rules of the Code of Professional Conduct.
- Identify the current “Dirty Dozen” tax scams.

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Chapter 1: VIRGINIA BOARD OF ACCOUNTANCY 2026 PRESENTATION

Chapter Objective

After completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- Recall the Virginia Board of Accountancy 2026 topics.

Part I: Per the Board's regulations, you are required to view the special Virginia Board of Accountancy Ethics Segment for 2026.

In order to complete this requirement, please use the following instructions dependent on the format of course presentation you have purchased. **You must complete the Board's video segment before proceeding with the remainder of this course.**

Video segment instructions:

- The course's video segment can be accessed by clicking this link: <https://www.pacificcpe.com/va-ethics>
- OR open your web browser and type or paste in the web link exactly as indicated above.
- After viewing the video segment, please return to this manual to proceed with the remainder of this course.
- If you need assistance accessing the video, customer service is available Monday to Friday from 7:00 am to 4:00 pm PT and can be reached at support@pacificcpe.com or (800) 787-5313.

Part II: Virginia Board of Accountancy Segment Evaluation

Per the Board's request, please use the following link to provide specific feedback regarding the Board's video segment and the 2026 format and CPE ethics options. Thank you for your consideration and cooperation regarding this request.

<https://boa.virginia.gov/individual-cpas/cpe/vboa-approved-ethics-course/ethics-course-evaluation/>

Part III: Additional Information

For updated and detailed information regarding your CPA license, Board policies, CPE requirements, and much more, we recommend that you regularly visit the VA Board of Accountancy website at <https://boa.virginia.gov/>.

For your convenience and review, we have included on the following pages the highlights / outline of the VBOA Segment for 2026.

VBOA SEGMENT 2026 HIGHLIGHTS

As a licensed Virginia CPA you are responsible for knowing and following the Virginia laws and regulations governing how CPAs can and should perform professional services and represent themselves. Highlights from the 2026 VBOA segment include the following topics.

1. CPA mobility and new licensing requirements
2. CPE compliance tips and tricks
3. Firm licensing

What's new in licensing and mobility?

In an effort to strengthen the pipeline, the board felt it was important to make changes to the CPA licensure requirements. Effective January 1, 2026, prospective licensees may pursue one of three pathways, all of which require an accounting concentration or equivalent as defined by the board and passage of the CPA Exam:

1. Bachelor's degree plus 30 semester credit hours and 1 year of experience
2. Master's degree and 1 year of experience
3. Bachelor's degree plus 2 years of experience

Additionally, the legislation will no longer refer to the educational hour requirements as 120 and 150 but rather will refer to the bachelor's and master's degrees overall.

As licensed professionals, you are encouraged to make note of these changes so that you can effectively recruit and mentor employees in addition to being knowledgeable regarding the experience requirements should you be asked to complete the Experience Verification Form.

How will the new pathways affect CPA mobility across states?

A common question raised is how the new pathway allowing a bachelor's degree and two years of experience may impact CPA mobility across jurisdictions.

Practice privilege, previously referred to as "substantial equivalency" when considering mobility, will depend on each jurisdiction's licensure pathways and practice privilege requirements. In other words, a CPA licensed in another jurisdiction, who is in good standing and has passed the CPA Exam, is granted practice privilege to provide services to the public within the commonwealth without notice to the board or payment of any fees.

However, if the CPA's principal place of business is Virginia, and services are provided to the public he or she will be required to hold a Virginia license to use the CPA title in Virginia.

Before practicing in another jurisdiction, we strongly encourage Virginia licensees to inquire of the respective jurisdiction's Board of Accountancy to ensure compliance with the practice privilege requirements.

Why is CPE important to the board and what is the requirement?

We believe that education is the key to success, and it is imperative that we are all lifelong learners. Holding a CPA license tells the world that you are highly competent and not just at the time that you passed the CPA Exam, but at all times that you hold the license. This means that you are up to date on all of the standards and changes within the profession that are relevant to the services provided and the clients served.

In Virginia, the CPE requirement is to obtain 120 CPE hours over a rolling three-year period with a minimum of 20 hours each calendar year in addition to two hours of a VBOA-approved ethics course such as this one and, if applicable given the level of service provided, eight hours of CPE in accounting and auditing.

How can I determine which CPE is acceptable, track it effectively, and avoid common mistakes?

With respect to tracking CPE, it is best practice to upload all CPE certificates into the NASBA CPE Audit Service. Doing so will prove beneficial to you if you are selected for audit as all of your documentation will be easily accessible.

The board accepts a variety of CPE, but in order to earn credit proper documentation must be maintained. For example, if earning credit for a seminar or educational conference provided by a professional organization, a certificate of completion from the CPE sponsor that includes the sponsor's name, participant's name, course name, date taken, and hours of CPE earned must be obtained and submitted. The board does not accept receipts, registration confirmations, cancelled checks, outlines, slide decks, spreadsheets, or sign-in sheets as supporting documentation for CPE.

Also worth noting is that the board does not currently require licensees to obtain CPE from specific or approved sponsors, with the exception of the VBOA-approved ethics course. In other words, while taking CPE from approved providers is safest and easiest, the board does not require CPE vendors to be NASBA qualified in order to recognize credit.

As a reminder, please maintain documentation for your CPE hours when you change jobs, as not doing so has proven to be a common pitfall among licensees.

What if I don't get all my CPE done? Can I apply for an exemption?

If you happen to not meet the CPE requirements, please contact the board as soon as possible. Self-reported deficiencies are subject to lesser discipline.

The only CPAs exempt from CPE are those who have applied and been approved for Inactive status, which is designed for retirees, CPAs not working for an extended period of time, such as stay-at-home parents, or CPAs who have completely changed careers.

Inactive CPAs cannot work or volunteer in any business or financial roles, unless deemed retired in which case a limited number of annual hours is allowed, but must be approved by the board prior to beginning the service.

Note that if you are providing services to the public, or working in any business environment, including public accounting in any role, auditing or compliance, real estate, business, information security controls, or project management—you will not be eligible for Inactive status. Additionally, those who have not been a Virginia CPA for at least five years do not qualify for Inactive status.

Are there additional considerations if I am planning on retiring soon?

All licensed CPAs planning to retire need to apply for Inactive status immediately following their retirement date.

Also, if you are winding down or selling your CPA practice, you must comply with the AICPA Code of Professional Conduct, which requires that each client receive a written request for consent to transfer its files to the successor firm, before the firm changes hands. There are also IRS and AICPA standards regarding retention of records.

Breaking News

We interrupt this program to share breaking news regarding the Inactive status for retirees. In December 2025, the Virginia Board of Accountancy approved a new CPE-exempt status for retirees: the “Emeritus” status. This status will be effective July 1, 2026.

Therefore, CPAs who have retired may apply for Inactive or the Emeritus status. The Emeritus status allows more flexibility for a retired CPA who wants to volunteer in different roles.

To qualify for Emeritus, a CPA must be retired and not provide any services for compensation and either:

- Have practiced for at least 30 years, or
- Have practiced for 15 years and have reached at least 60 years of age.

The Emeritus status will be implemented on July 1, 2026. See the VBOA website for more information.

Additionally, any licensed CPAs who have been or are approved for either Inactive or Emeritus status must now use the related qualifier whenever they use the CPA title:

- CPA (Inactive)

- CPA (Emeritus)

If I have a licensed CPA firm and I sell my practice, even if I am not retiring, what are the required steps?

If you are a licensed CPA planning to sell your practice but not yet retired, you must comply with the AICPA Code of Professional Conduct as just discussed and, if you have tax clients, there are IRS rules and AICPA standards that must be followed as well.

You must also notify the board of the sale of your practice in addition to whether you plan to maintain your firm license. We as the board caution you about continued usage of your firm's name and website. We have discovered firms that have sold their name and website along with the other assets of the firm and not reported this to the board. If the board is not notified of the sale of the firm and/or the firm's name, the former CPA owner could be subject to enforcement action.

When does a firm need a license?

A firm must hold a Virginia CPA firm license if it:

1. Provides attest services, compilation services or financial statement preparation services to persons or entities located in Virginia, or
2. Uses the CPA title in its name or otherwise indicates it is a CPA firm.

What are the recent changes to firm licensing?

Recent firm licensing changes relate to usage of the CPA title. For a firm to use the CPA title in any manner, it must have a CPA license. This legislation was passed in 2024, and we encourage you to visit the board website for more details.

Does my firm need to enroll in peer review?

The requirement to enroll in peer review is not tied to firm licensure for Virginia CPA firms. However, Virginia CPA firms must follow the peer review standards promulgated by the AICPA. Firms performing accounting and auditing services under the AICPA's standards for audits, reviews, attestation engagements, the GAO's Government Auditing Standards, and the PCAOB standards are required to enroll in peer review. Per the AICPA's standards relevant to peer reviews, a firm's typical due date for its initial review is 18 months from the date it enrolled or should have enrolled in the program, whichever is earlier.

Note that if the firm performs financial statement preparation engagements as its highest level of service, it is not required to enroll in the peer review program.

In closing

We hope you have learned useful information from this 2026 VBOA Ethics Segment.