



American Board of Orthodontics Certification Marks Usage Guidelines

Introduction

The following policy governs the use of the American Board of Orthodontics' ("ABO") certification marks ("Marks") by board certified orthodontists.

What is ABO board certification?

The ABO was founded in 1929 as the first specialty board in dentistry. ABO board certification is a voluntary credential that exceeds dental licensure requirements and can only be achieved by orthodontic specialists. The board certification process requires orthodontists to complete critical self-evaluations and measure their work against current standards; therefore, continually identifying opportunities for improvement. Research has shown that individuals who have completed ABO board certification feel the process enhanced their skills as orthodontists.

As advocates for the orthodontic specialty, the ABO promotes excellence through certification, education, and professional collaboration. ABO board certification reflects a commitment to lifelong learning and adherence to recognized standards in orthodontics. With treatment options and technology evolving rapidly, ongoing education is essential. Through the ABO's Certification Renewal process, board-certified orthodontists demonstrate their ongoing dedication to maintaining current knowledge and best practices in the specialty.

Who is authorized to use the Marks?

An "Authorized User" is an orthodontist who has successfully completed the written and clinical examinations administered by the ABO, has been awarded a certificate, and maintains in good standing as established and required by the Board. And, if applicable, who has successfully completed mandatory renewal requirements prior to certification expiration dates.

Upon the awarding of a certificate, a board-certified orthodontist becomes an Authorized User of the Marks and retains that status so long as the orthodontist remains in compliance with all legal, financial, and regulatory standards as required by the Board to remain in good standing with an "Active" or "Retired" ABO status. However, the ABO monitors the use of its Marks and may revoke Authorized User status and/or certification of any user found to violate ethical standards, brand guidelines, recertification requirements, any other directives or policies of the ABO, and/or as otherwise determined within the sole discretion of the ABO.

The ABO encourages Authorized Users to proudly display the Marks to reflect their achievement of board certification, which signifies a commitment to excellence through certification, education, and professional collaboration.

Use of the Marks by anyone other than Authorized Users is strictly prohibited, and may constitute a violation of the American Dental Association's ("ADA") *Principles of Ethics, Code of Professional Conduct and Advisory Opinions*, the American Association of Orthodontists' ("AAO") *Principles of Ethics, Code of Professional Conduct and Advisory Opinions*, and/or the ABO *Code of Professional Conduct*, as each may be amended from time to time (collectively, "Ethics Code").

What are the Marks?

ABO Board Certified Seal:

The seal is a registered certification mark with the United States Patent and Trademark Office ("USPTO") and should always be accompanied by the ® notice to signify registration. Approved high-resolution images of the seal may be obtained via the ABO Portal in the ABO Storefront: <https://abo.roc-p.com/>

ABO Board Certified Micro Seal:

The micro seal is a certification mark incorporating several marks that are registered with the USPTO and should always be accompanied by the ® notice to signify registration. Approved high-resolution images of the micro seal may be obtained via the ABO Portal in the ABO Storefront: <https://abo.roc-p.com/>

ABO® and AMERICAN BOARD OF ORTHODONTICS®:

ABO® and AMERICAN BOARD OF ORTHODONTICS® are each registered trademarks with the USPTO and should always be accompanied by the ® notice to signify registration.

ABO Logo:

The ABO Logo is a trademark incorporating several marks that are registered with the USPTO and should always be accompanied by the ® notice to signify registration. Approved high-resolution images of the micro seal may be obtained via the ABO Portal in the ABO Storefront: <https://abo.roc-p.com/>

ABO-Board Certified Word Mark and Post-Nominal:

ABO-BOARD CERTIFIED™ is a common law certification mark, currently pending registration with the USPTO, and thus should be accompanied by the ™ notice until registration is granted.

The ABO reserves the right to add, modify, or remove Marks from this policy in its sole discretion. Authorized Users shall, within a reasonable time after any such revisions or updates to this policy, modify their use of the Marks so as to remain in compliance herewith.

General Guidelines

How may Authorized Users use the Marks?

Only individuals may achieve board certification. Therefore, use of all Marks must relate specifically to the individual Authorized User who has achieved board certification and must not be used to suggest that a practice or entity has achieved board certification. The ABO Brand Standards Guide (ABO Brand Guide) should be referenced for additional details and examples. The ABO Brand Guide is available through the ABO Policies: <https://americanboardortho.com/about-abo/policies/>.

The Marks may be used in reference to the Authorized User, including, for example, in a listing of professional affiliations or accomplishments, in a biography page or section of the practice website, and other professional and/or promotional materials for the Authorized User. The Marks may be used on business cards, individual stationery, charting, name badges, and other professional documents, correspondence, and materials.

The ABO-Board Certified™ post-nominal may be used after the Authorized User's name. When combined with other post-nominals permitted by law and any applicable Ethics Code, the ABO suggests the following sequence: (1) abbreviated dental degree(s) (e.g., DDS, DMD, or equivalent); (2) and any other earned and/or attained advanced academic degrees (e.g., MS, MSD, PhD, etc.); (3) board certification, as long as such use and indication is in accordance with any applicable Ethics Code (e.g., ABO-Board Certified™); and (4) fellowships and memberships. For example: John Q. Smith, DDS, MS, ABO-Board Certified™.

Authorized Users may use the ABO Certification Marks to communicate their achievement of board certification and to reflect their commitment to continued education, assessment, and adherence to recognized professional standards.

The Marks should be rendered in a sufficient size to be legible in normal usage. There is no regulation on the maximum size, provided that the Marks may not be displayed larger or more prominently than the Authorized User's own name or branding.

What is incorrect usage of the Marks?

The Marks must each be used as a single, integral design. The Marks may not be altered, modified, or hand drawn. The Marks may not be reproduced or electronically scanned in such poor quality as to distort or significantly alter their appearance.

The Marks must not be used as part of, or incorporated into, the name of a practice, entity, or employer name or logo, or any other proprietary mark or logo in a manner that creates the overall impression of a single, unitary mark.

All reproductions of the Marks must use the artwork provided by ABO and comply with these guidelines.

The Marks may not be used in any way that explicitly states or implicitly suggests that a board-certified orthodontist is superior in skill, ability, or quality of care when compared to a non-board-certified orthodontist. Every jurisdiction has advertising regulations contained in their respective dental practice acts that prohibit false, deceptive, or misleading claims in professional advertising. These laws routinely include restrictions against language that implies professional superiority. Using the Marks to assert superiority in care or outcomes would be misleading and is prohibited. In addition, the ADA and the AAO each maintain codes of ethics that expressly prohibit advertising any credential in a manner that misleads the public or suggests superiority without an objective basis. For these reasons, the Marks may not be used in promotional materials—whether digital, print, or spoken—in a way that conveys or implies that ABO certification reflects a higher level of care, better results, or greater clinical ability than that provided

by non-certified orthodontists. Doing so may place the user at risk of violating state law and professional ethics requirements.

The Marks must not be used in a vulgar, libelous, disparaging or otherwise unlawful manner. The ABO assumes no responsibility for damages or any wrongdoing that an individual may cause in using the Marks. The ABO shall not be held liable for the unauthorized, improper, or illegal use of the Marks.

While it is appropriate to communicate to the public an accurate description of the process of board certification, the ABO discourages the use of specific statistics that may be used for marketing or self-promotion. The statistics reported by the ABO are fluid in nature, and it is recommended to direct the public to the ABO website for up-to date information regarding board certification specifics.

Immediately upon notice from the ABO, any Authorized User and/or any other person or entity must remove any or all uses of the Marks that the ABO deems, in its sole discretion, to violate its policies, guidelines, and/or other standards.

Guidelines for Protecting ABO Marks Against Infringement and Misuse

In addition to using the Marks properly, it is important to protect ABO Marks from infringement, misuse, or otherwise unlawful activities by others. Please follow these guidelines to help ensure that the ABO Marks remain protected.

How should I report suspected infringements and misuse?

Trademark and certification mark rights may be weakened if a trademark owner does not take timely and appropriate action against infringement of, misuse of, or otherwise unlawful activities related to its marks. Please immediately contact Info@AmericanBoardOrtho.com if you become aware of:

- Any third-party or unauthorized use of ABO Marks, or any similar trademarks, that you believe may violate the ABO's rights.
- Any third-party use of ABO Marks in a generic sense, for example, by using the mark to refer to any products or services generally and not the products or services of the ABO, or its Authorized Users, offered under the ABO Marks.
- Any continued use of ABO Marks by individuals or practices that you have reason to believe are not currently authorized to do so.

Please, do not contact any suspected infringer directly; contact the American Board of Orthodontics.

As an Authorized User, can I allow others to use the Marks?

The Marks are for individual use only. An Authorized User may not, and has no authority to, grant others any right or permission to use ABO Marks without express written approval of the ABO. If a third party requests a license or permission to use any Marks, please direct them to Info@AmericanBoardOrtho.com.

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