



## 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 is only able to be challenged 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 sets the standard for the highest level of patient care and promotes excellence through certification, education and professional collaboration. ABO board certification is recognized throughout the world as representing the highest level of commitment in orthodontics. Orthodontic treatment options and technology change rapidly, making it essential for orthodontists to keep abreast of the latest advances. By participating in the ABO's Certification Renewal process every 10 years, board certified orthodontists are demonstrating their continuous dedication to the highest standards of care that every patient deserves.

#### **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 has paid the assessed annual fees to the ABO required to maintain Board Certified status; and, if applicable, who has successfully completed each required renewal examination by the end of the certification.

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 board certified. 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 that they have met the highest level of patient care, 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 and Frame:*

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 Educational Toolkit: <https://americanboardortho.com/orthodontists/board-certified-orthodontist-support/educational-tool-kit/>

*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 Educational Toolkit: <https://americanboardortho.com/orthodontists/board-certified-orthodontist-support/educational-tool-kit/>, which Diplomates can access through the ABO Portal.

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) and any other earned and/or attained advanced academic degrees (e.g., DDS, DMD, MS, MSD, PhD); (2) professional licensure (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 W. Smith, DDS, MS, ABO-Board Certified™,

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 reproduction of the Marks must be made from original reproduction artwork provided by ABO, and in compliance with these guidelines.

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.

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 or misuse by others. Please follow these guidelines to help ensure that the ABO Marks remain protected.

### **How should I report suspected infringements and misuse?**

Trademarks and certification marks may be weakened or lost if a trademark owner does not take timely and appropriate action against infringements or other misuse of its marks. Please immediately contact [info@AmericanBoardOrtho.com](mailto: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.

Do not contact any suspected infringer directly.

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

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](mailto:info@AmericanBoardOrtho.com).

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