

The Florida Lawyer Ad Pre-Flight Checklist

Run every ad through this list before it goes out. Built from The Florida Bar Handbook on Lawyer Advertising and Solicitation, 13th Edition (effective December 10, 2025), Rules Regulating The Florida Bar, Subchapter 4-7.

1. Required in every ad (Rule 4-7.12)

- The name of at least one responsible lawyer, firm, or qualifying provider appears clearly and conspicuously, using the **official bar name**.
- The city, town, or county of a **bona fide office** is disclosed, and it is true. Listing cities where you have no real office is misleading.
- Required disclosures are legible and audible: no fine print, no fast or low-volume audio, on screen long enough to be read.
- If the ad uses a non-English language, required disclosures appear in that language too.

2. Nothing misleading (Rules 4-7.13 and 4-7.14)

- No predictions of outcomes or success.
- Past results only if factually verifiable, and not misleading by omission.
- Comparisons of skill, experience, or record only if objectively verifiable.
- Only practice areas you actually practice or intend to practice.
- "Expert" or "specialist" only with board certification, naming the certifying organization and area. This rule has a litigation history; confirm current text before relying on it.
- Awards and ratings only from bona fide, verifiable sources with disclosed criteria.
- Fee ads disclose who pays costs; advertised fees are honored; contingency wording is exact (for example, "No recovery, no fees or costs").

3. Disclaimers, where triggered

- Nonlawyer who could be mistaken for a firm member: "Not an employee or member of law firm."
- Dramatizations and actors are disclaimed when a reasonable viewer would not know.
- Testimonials meet ALL conditions: qualified speaker, actual experience, representative, not lawyer-written, nothing of value given, plus the "prospective clients may not obtain the same or similar results" disclaimer and the client's informed consent.
- No Florida Bar seal or logo, and nothing implying Bar approval.

4. Solicitation rules (Rule 4-7.18)

- No in-person, telephone, or real-time electronic solicitation of prospective clients (narrow exceptions only).
- Direct mail, email, text, and targeted social ads begin with the word "Advertisement," include the statement of qualifications, and disclose how you got the recipient's information.
- Personal-injury and wrongful-death solicitations tied to a specific accident wait 30 days.
- No legal problem stated on the outside of a mailer; nothing resembling a legal document.

5. Filing with the Bar (Rule 4-7.19)

- Is the ad filing-exempt? Websites and "safe harbor" tombstone-only content are exempt. Almost everything else in paid media is not.
- Non-exempt ads are filed at least **20 days before first use**: \$150 timely, \$250 late, per ad.
- Any change to a filed ad, including wording, photo, layout, or color, makes it a NEW ad with a new fee.
- A copy of every ad plus where and when it ran is kept for 3 years.

Want your next campaign built to pass facial review the first time?

Blake Hickey hosts the CLE educational series on advertising compliance for the Business Law Section of The Florida Bar. Book a free discovery call:

calendly.com/chumline-studio/discovery-call-30-min or email blake@hickeymedia.com

This checklist is a working summary for planning purposes, not legal advice. The Handbook and the Rules Regulating The Florida Bar control. Verify against the current rule text and route final calls through counsel. Source: The Florida Bar Handbook on Lawyer Advertising and Solicitation, 13th Ed. (eff. Dec. 10, 2025), Subchapter 4-7: Rules 4-7.12, 4-7.13, 4-7.14, 4-7.15, 4-7.16, 4-7.18, 4-7.19, 4-7.20. Ethics Hotline: 800-235-8619. © 2026 Hickey Media, Jupiter, FL. hickeymedia.com