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Most report they met MCLE requirements

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Most of the lawyers required to complete 20 hours of continuing legal education by June 30 reported that they did so, according to figures supplied by the Supreme Court's Minimum Continuing Legal Education Board.

Lawyers who have not yet completed their hours or reported have another month to do so, but they will have to pay late fees, said Karen Litscher Johnson, director of the MCLE board.

In late April, the MCLE board mailed out about 60,000 compliance forms to lawyers whose last names begin with the letters A through M. According to the rules, those lawyers were supposed to report by July 31.

About 47,000 lawyers reported that they completed their hours or were exempt from those requirements, according to the figures, which were released Wednesday.

About 3,600 are exempt from CLE, including those on inactive, retired and disability inactive status.

Nearly 1,000 more lawyers reported that they did not meet the June 30 deadline. But those lawyers have until Sept. 30 to log the 20 hours and report compliance, Johnson said. They will be charged a \$100 late fee.

About 4,800 lawyers on active status who are listed on the Master Roll of Attorneys failed to report, the figures show.

The MCLE board mailed a second notice about compliance to those lawyers this week, Johnson said.

A grace period exists until Sept. 30, allowing lawyers to complete the CLE credits and report. Those lawyers will be charged a \$150 late fee.

An additional 3,400 or so lawyers who were mailed notices but didn't report at all include those who were already removed from the master roll for failure to pay their registration fees to the ARDC, reported to be deceased in response to the first mailing or are on disciplinary status.

About 52 percent of lawyers reported online, while 48 percent returned a paper form.

"That's what I thought was remarkable," said Jack L. Brooks, chair of the MCLE board and a principal of Brooks & Trinrud P.C. in Rock Island. "We were expecting half that amount" of the 52 percent that reported online.

Some lawyers told Johnson that it took them between five and 10 minutes to report their CLE credits online.

"I was very encouraged by that because we worked very hard to develop online programs that were lawyer friendly," Brooks said.

This is the first year lawyers are required to comply with the new rules governing MCLE. Lawyers whose names start with the letters N through Z must log 20 hours of CLE credit by June 30, 2009.

There are about 300 accredited MCLE providers. Those looking to complete required CLE credits can choose from programs offered by the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission, the Illinois Institute for Continuing Legal Education, along with the Illinois State Bar Association and Chicago Bar Association, among others.