

Continuing Professional Development

Rule and Code Changes

On November 28, 2008, the Benchers of the Law Society of Alberta approved the following amendments to the *Rules of the Law Society* and to the *Code of Professional Conduct*.

The *Code of Professional Conduct* (Chapter 2, Commentary G1, paragraph (h)) was amended as follows (*amended portion in italics*):

Maintenance and improvement of knowledge and skills. A lawyer has an obligation to maintain legal skills and knowledge and to keep abreast of developments in the lawyer's areas of practice. A lawyer should also seek to improve competence on an ongoing basis to facilitate optimum performance in each matter *and should annually prepare a professional development plan. The plan may reflect many different learning activities in order to achieve these goals.*

Also on November 28, 2008, new rules were added to the **Rules of the Law Society of Alberta** as follows:

Continuing Professional Development

67.1 (1) "Continuing professional development" is any learning activity that is:

- (a) relevant to the professional needs of a lawyer;
- (b) pertinent to long-term career interests as a lawyer;
- (c) in the interests of the employer of a lawyer or
- (d) related to the professional ethics and responsibilities of lawyers.

(2) Continuing professional development must contain significant substantive, technical, practical or intellectual content.

(3) It is each lawyer's responsibility to determine whether a learning activity meets these criteria and therefore qualifies as continuing professional development.

67.2 During the twelve month period commencing March 16 of each year, every active member shall:

- (a) prepare and make a record of a plan for his or her continuing professional development;
- (b) make a declaration confirming compliance with (a) above in a form acceptable to the Executive Director;
- (c) maintain a record of the plan for five years from the date of declaration; and
- (d) produce a copy of the record of the plan to the Executive Director on request.