

Attorney Real Estate Licensing Program Requirements in Colorado

Okay, let's just, let's unpack this for a second. Imagine you want to get into a new profession. And I don't mean like a hobby, I mean a serious, regulated, high-stakes career.

Usually that means going back to school, it means, you know, a ton of time, a ton of money. It looks like tuition checks, late nights with textbooks, and a whole lot of caffeine. Exactly.

Weeks, probably months of your life spent in a classroom or, you know, staring at a computer screen. That's the barrier to entry. And, to be fair, it's high for a reason.

You want people to know what they're doing. Of course. Especially in real estate, it's the biggest transaction of most people's lives.

Totally. But, what if I told you there's a kind of VIP entrance for a certain group of people, a shortcut that takes a, what, nearly 170-hour requirement and just slashes it down to 12? It sounds like a cheat code. It really does.

But, in this case, for Colorado real estate, it's actually just efficient. It's staggering. So, today, in this discussion, we're looking at the attorney pathway to real estate licensure right here in Colorado.

Yep. So, if you're a lawyer or you're just curious about how these systems work, this is for you. Our mission for this quick look is to walk through the rules, the actual curriculum, and all the little logistical steps.

And we should say all this info comes straight from the source. We're talking the Division of Real Estate, the DRE and curriculum guides from places like Apex Real Estate School. So, let's set the baseline.

If I'm just a regular person, no law degree, what do I have to do? What's the mountain I have to climb? The standard path is a marathon. It really is. The Division of Real Estate requires you to complete 168 hours of education.

168? Yeah. Let's just sit with that number. That's a full-time job for a month.

It's substantial. Yeah. And it breaks down into these big chunks.

You've got 48 hours of law, another 48 on contracts. Okay. Then 24 hours on closings, 32 on practical applications.

It keeps going. And I'm guessing that's not even all of it, is it? Not even close. You've also got smaller but still mandatory classes on trust accounts and record keeping.

Wow. So, that's the standard. That's the mountain.

Now, the reveal. What's the requirement for an attorney? 12 hours. 12.

That's not a mountain. That's a speed bump. It's a weekend.

And there's a solid logic to it. Why would you make an attorney sit through 48 hours of real estate law? They already did that. It was called law school.

Exactly. They pass the bar exam. They get contracts.

They get fiduciary duty. The DRE just recognizes that teaching it to them again is, well, it's redundant. That makes perfect sense.

So, who qualifies? Do I have to be a Colorado lawyer? That's the interesting part. No. Yeah.

You just need an active, valid law license from any U.S. state or territory. Any state. So, a lawyer from New York who moves to Denver can use this? Yep.

Or from Guam or Puerto Rico. Yeah. As long as the license is active when you apply.

Does it matter what kind of law they practice? Like, if I'm a patent attorney and haven't seen a property contract in a decade? It doesn't matter. The state basically assumes that if you pass the bar, you have that foundational legal mind. The kind of lawyer you are isn't a factor.

Okay. So, this 12-hour course, it must be pretty important stuff if even lawyers can't skip it. What's in it? This is the key.

It's the difference between knowing the law and knowing the rules. Oh. The course focuses on three pillars.

Trust accounts, record keeping, and real estate closings. So, the nitty-gritty administrative stuff. The public protection stuff.

Let's start with trust accounts. This is all about handling other people's money. Earnest money.

Deposits. But wait. Lawyers handle client money all the time.

They have special accounts for that. They do. But the Division of Real Estate has its own very rigid rules for how you account for that money.

It's not just, don't steal it. It's, here's exactly how you prove you didn't. So, a lawyer knows the concept of a trust, but they might not know the specific spreadsheet the DRE wants them to use.

Precisely. They might not know the exact timeline for depositing an earnest money check. Mess that up and you're looking at an audit.

This course is what saves you from that headache. Got it. Okay.

What about the second one? Record keeping. Same idea. The paper trail.

How long do you have to keep transaction files? I'd assume lawyers are good at that. They are. But the rules can be different.

In Colorado real estate, it's generally four years. A lawyer's own practice might have different standards. This just gets everyone on the same page.

Right. And the last one was closings. Everyone's favorite day.

But again, Colorado has very specific regulations for the closing process, the settlement statements, how you prorate taxes. So, it's the mechanics of the transaction, not just the legal theory behind it. That's a perfect way to put it.

It's a bridge course. It connects general legal knowledge to specific Colorado real estate rules. Okay.

So, I'm a lawyer. I do my 12 hours. Am I good to go? Do they just mail me my license? Not quite.

That just gets you in the door to take the exam. The same exam everyone else takes. The very same one.

You have to pass both the national and the state portions of the Colorado real estate broker's exam. Interesting. Even the national part.

Yep. It covers things like appraisal methods and financing that aren't purely legal concepts. It's testing your knowledge of the trade.

You can't just rely on your law degree to pass. That's a really key point. And listen to this.

Once you pass, those results are only good for one year. One year. So, you can't pass the test and then wait around.

You've got to make your move. And I'm assuming the usual background check applies. Oh, yeah.

Mandatory fingerprint background check for everyone. No exceptions. You know, I was wondering, can you see how someone did on these courses? Are grades public? That's a great question.

And it brings up privacy. The answer is no. Education records are not public information.

The division doesn't post your scores. Probably for the best. So, paperwork.

What do I need to send in? You'll need a certified license history from your state bar. It has to be recent dated within 90 days of your application. And I'm guessing it has to be a clean record.

It has to show everything, including any disciplinary actions. The DRE definitely wants to know if you've had issues handling client funds somewhere else before they give you a license here. Makes total sense.

So, let's say our attorney gets through all of this. They pass the exam, the background check, they get their license. What kind of license is it? Can they just open up their own shop? No.

And this trips a lot of people up. You start with an associate broker credential. The code for it is FA.

So, you're an associate. You have to work for someone else. Typically, yes.

You have to work under an employing broker. You can't just hang your own shingle on day one. But I'm a lawyer.

I might already run my own firm. Doesn't matter. To get to that independent or employing broker level, you need two years of active broker experience.

Two years. Is there any way around that? Not really. And it's very specific.

It has to be active broker experience. So, if you were, say, a salesperson in another state years ago, that doesn't count. Oh, wow.

That's a huge distinction. It is. So, practically, an attorney getting their license will probably need to join a brokerage for those first two years.

And if they do want to run their own shop and hire people later? Then they need those two years of experience, plus a 24-hour brokerage administration course, an experience log, and an affidavit. The state wants to see you've actually done the work. Okay.

That seems fair. It's about protecting the public. Exactly.

So, let's talk about where you get this training. We mentioned Apex Real Estate School. What's their story? Well, Apex is interesting.

The school itself is about five years old, so it's fairly new. Okay. But, and this is the key part, the team behind it has over 50 years of combined experience in real estate education.

50 years. So, they've been around the block. A few times.

The source material says they launched one of the first online schools in the state. So, while the brand is newer, the expertise runs really deep. They know Colorado rules inside and out.

Which is what you want. And for a busy attorney, I'm guessing the program is flexible. It has to be.

It's designed for them. It's all online, self-paced. You can do it on your phone, your tablet, whenever you have a spare hour.

So, you could be waiting for a hearing to start and knock out a chapter on trust accounts. Exactly that. It's built to be efficient, to get you the info you need for the exam without any fluff.

And I saw it's described as affordable and easy to use. Right. The last thing you want is to be fighting with the website when you're trying to learn complicated rules.

So, to sum it up, we have this really efficient pathway for attorneys. A really well-structured system, yeah. So, what's the big picture here? Why should a lawyer even bother with this? Well, think about the synergy.

A real estate deal is a legal event at its core. An attorney already understands the contract, the liability, the why behind everything. Right.

They see the risks nobody else does. By adding the real estate license, they get the how. They could originate the deal, negotiate it, and close it.

They become this powerful, dual-threat professional. It's a power combo, for sure. And a huge value for their clients.

Immense value. And it's a new revenue stream for the attorney's practice. It just makes business sense.

But they still have to play by the rules. The DRE treats everyone the same when it comes to compliance. No skipping the line there.

Public protection always comes first. It's just so fascinating to see a government process that actually acknowledges your prior education and says, okay, you know this part. Let's skip it.

It's efficient regulation. It's honestly kind of refreshing. So, if you're out there listening, and you have that law license on your wall, you're basically just 12 hours away from a real estate license.

And an exam. And an exam, right. Can't forget the exam.

And a background check. Details, details. But compared to 168 hours, it's a sprint.

A very accessible sprint. Here's a final thought for you to chew on. We think of these professions as separate.

For a lawyer or AR, you're a broker. But this pathway really blurs that line. And it leaves you with a question.

If you already have the legal mind to understand the contract, how much more effective, how much more formidable could you be if you also held the license to actually execute the deal? That's the question right there. If you're ready to put that law license to work in a new arena, you might want to look into the program at Apex Real Estate School. Seems like a very direct route.

Indeed. Thanks for joining us for this quick look. It's always fun finding the legitimate shortcuts.

Always a pleasure. We'll see you on the next one. Keep learning.

Learn more online at apexreschool.com