

CLVS Verification & Vetting Guide

How to verify credentials and avoid unqualified videographers

- ✓ Step-by-step CLVS verification process
- ✓ Insurance and bonding requirements by state
- ✓ 10 red flags that indicate an unqualified videographer
- ✓ Sample vetting questionnaire you can send to providers

Understanding CLVS Certification

What is CLVS?

CLVS (Certified Legal Video Specialist) is the industry's gold-standard credential, administered by the National Court Reporters Association (NCRA). It's the most widely recognized certification by courts nationwide. The program targets videographers who wish to develop proficiency in legal video deposition practices.

CLVS vs. CDVS Comparison

Criterion	CLVS (NCRA)	CDVS (AGCV)
Education cost	\$350 member / \$450 non-member	\$800–\$1,200 total
Written exam	120 questions, 70% to pass, 110 min	Online course + evaluation
Production exam	In-person at NCRA HQ, Reston, VA	Mock deposition submitted remotely
Production exam cost	\$325 member / \$425 non-member	Included in total
Exam schedule	Twice yearly (spring and fall)	Rolling admissions
Annual renewal	\$100 non-member / \$197 member	Varies
CE requirement	1.0 CEU (10 hrs) every 3 years	Varies
Court recognition	Widely recognized	Growing, but newer
Best for	Top-tier credibility	Budget-conscious videographers

What CLVS Tests (Exam Content Domains)

19% Pre-production

39% Production

28% Post-production

14% Professional practices

How to Verify CLVS Credentials

Step 1

Ask the provider for their CLVS credential number and date of certification.

Step 2

Verify through NCRA's registry at [ncra.org](https://www.ncra.org). Contact NCRA directly if online verification is unavailable.

Step 3

Check renewal status. CLVS requires annual renewal fees and 1.0 CEU (10 hours of approved seminar time) every three years.

Warning: A lapsed CLVS means the person earned the credential but hasn't maintained continuing education. Standards have changed significantly with the rise of remote depositions.

Step 4

Ask for proof of the production exam completion (the hands-on staged deposition at NCRA headquarters in Reston, VA).

Step 5

If the provider claims a credential from an organization other than NCRA or AGCV, investigate thoroughly. Many online "certification mills" exist.

10 Red Flags of an Unqualified Videographer

- 1** Can't recite Rule 30 opening requirements from memory. Every certified videographer knows these cold.
- 2** No backup plan for equipment failure. If their answer involves "restart" or "reschedule" — walk away. They should describe dual recording.
- 3** No real-time audio monitoring. If they don't wear headphones during recording, they can't catch audio issues before they become problems.
- 4** Shows a wedding reel or corporate video. Completely different skill set from deposition videography.
- 5** Treats every state's rules identically. State deposition rules vary significantly (California oath requirements, Illinois BIPA, etc.).
- 6** Claims "certified" from an unknown organization. Only NCRA (CLVS) and AGCV (CDVS) are recognized by courts.
- 7** Unfamiliar with transcript synchronization. If they can't coordinate with a court reporter for time-coded sync, they lack deposition experience.
- 8** No chain of custody procedures. Can't explain metadata integrity, file storage, or evidence provenance.
- 9** Video uses Zoom gallery view. Four tiny rectangles instead of a proper witness close-up is an admissibility problem per Alcorn.
- 10** No attorney references. Any experienced deposition videographer can provide attorney references.

When Certification Matters

HIRE CERTIFIED WHEN:

- ✓ Deposition may be played at trial
- ✓ Jurisdiction has strict admissibility standards
- ✓ High-stakes testimony (expert witnesses, key fact witnesses)
- ✓ Remote deposition requiring protocol expertise
- ✓ Any chance the video reaches a jury

CERTIFICATION LESS CRITICAL WHEN:

- Video is purely for internal case prep
- Uncertified videographer has 15+ years deposition-specific experience with attorney references
- Zero trial exposure risk

Cost Comparison

Factor	Certified (CLVS/CDVS)	Uncertified / DIY
Cost	\$200-\$400/session	\$0-\$150 (Zoom/internal)
Trial admissibility	Strong	Frequently challenged
Equipment	Broadcast-quality, redundant	Varies wildly
Chain of custody	Neutral third-party, encrypted	Party-controlled
Legal protocol	Full Rule 30 compliance	Often ad-hoc or missing
Reporter integration	Coordinated, synced transcripts	Typically disconnected

Pro Tip: Some uncertified videographers with 10+ years of deposition-specific experience will outperform a freshly certified CLVS holder. But when hiring someone new, a guaranteed baseline is worth paying for.

Provider Vetting Questionnaire

Send these questions to any deposition videographer you're considering.

1. Certification & Credentials

- What certifications do you hold? (CLVS, CDVS, other)
- What is your credential number and date of certification?
- Are you current on continuing education requirements?

2. Rule 30 Compliance

- Walk me through the opening statement requirements you include at the start of every deposition.

Expected: court reporter name/address, location/date/time, deponent name, oath, ID of all persons

3. Equipment & Redundancy

- What is your primary recording setup?
- What is your backup plan if your primary camera fails mid-deposition?

Expected: dual recording — camera + external recorder, backup batteries, spare cables

- Do you monitor audio in real-time during recording?

4. Jurisdiction Knowledge

- Are you familiar with [STATE] deposition rules?
- What specific requirements apply in this jurisdiction?

5. Court Reporter Coordination

- Have you worked alongside court reporters? Describe your sync workflow.
- What trial presentation software are your files compatible with?

Expected: TrialDirector, OnCue, Summation, Sanction

6. Experience & References

- How many depositions have you recorded in the past 12 months?
- Can you provide 2-3 attorney references?
- Can you share a sample of actual deposition footage (not corporate or event video)?

7. Insurance & Logistics

- Do you carry professional liability insurance?
- What is your cancellation policy?
- What are your rates for [half-day / full-day], and what is included vs. add-on?

Insurance & Bonding Reference

Requirement	Details
California (CCP 2025)	Videographers recording treating physicians or experts must be authorized to administer an oath
Illinois (BIPA)	Video capturing biometric data may require specific consent and data handling procedures
Medical depositions	HIPAA compliance required for storage, transmission, and retention of footage with PHI
General best practice	Verify professional liability insurance, equipment insurance, and E&O; coverage

Always confirm insurance coverage before the deposition date. If any of your current providers trigger these red flags, visit dephire.com to find vetted, CLVS-certified videographers — searchable by city, certification status, and attorney reviews.

Find CLVS-certified videographers in your area

[Search providers at dephire.com](https://dephire.com)

Every listing includes certification status, reviews, and direct contact info.

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