

Many new RIAs expect compliance to be a headache, but it doesn't have to be. This checklist can help you stay on top of the requirements. Please note that this list is not comprehensive, and some tasks may only apply to SEC-registered firms.

Create compliance documents

When you establish your firm, you'll need to make sure you have the following, in writing:

Code of ethics

Establish guidelines around personal securities trading and potential conflicts of interest. You'll need to identify any "access persons" who see client information or provide investment advice. Guidelines might require preapproval for trades and details around existing holdings. [Read the SEC rule.](#)

Policies and procedures

This document needs to explain how you plan to follow SEC guidelines. Include a schedule to review the document at least once a year and make sure you designate a chief compliance officer. (This person must be qualified. You can appoint yourself.) [Read the SEC rule.](#) You also need to create a business continuity plan (BCP) to comply with FINRA.

Brochures

You're required to provide (prospective) clients with a brochure about your firm in "plain English." You'll need to describe services you offer, fees charged, clients you serve, investment strategy (including risk), conflicts of interest and relevant legal and regulatory history. [\(Read the SEC's complete guidelines.\)](#)

Form CRS

This client relationship summary must be delivered to current and prospective investors before they enter a contract.

Privacy policy

Explain what nonpublic information you collect from customers and why, plus any information you collect from noncustomers if you plan to share it.

Stay current with regulators

In addition to state and local organizations, stay current with the regulators below.

SEC

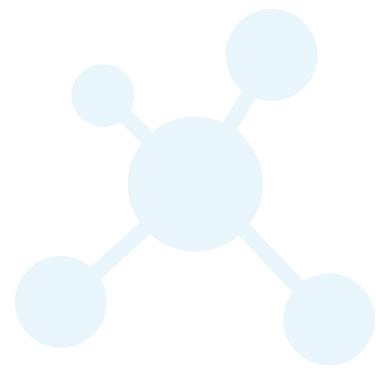
You must file a Form ADV with the SEC each year, or within three days of a material change to your business. Part 1 is a fill-in-the-blank style form. Part 2a requires you to share additional information in a narrative fashion.

FINRA

In addition to SEC regulations, FINRA also holds members to certain standards, most notably around cybersecurity and protecting client data.

IRS + Department of Labor

If you act as a fiduciary for defined contribution plans, you may be subject to additional IRS and Department of Labor rules.



Keep good records

The primary form RIAs must file is the Form-ADV, but this isn't the only maintenance required. You'll need to disclose and file the following:

Personal holdings and trades

Stay current with your code of ethics by ensuring any "access person" reports any personal trades quarterly. Keep these logs for five years.

Outside business activities (OBAs)

Keep track of these using FINRA's Form U4.

Annual compliance review

Review your policies and procedures each year and document it.

Advertising and performance records

Keep records of any advertising or marketing communications, as well as performance records to support any claims you make in these communications.

Written communications

Make sure your written communications include any relevant disclaimers or disclosures (consider an overarching disclosure to include in your email signature). Keep an archive of all written communication, including social media.

Copies of your brochures

Keep copies of the brochures and supplements you share with (prospective) clients.

Disciplinary and/or legal disclosures

Disclose legal proceedings that could affect a (prospective) client's evaluation of your firm. This includes dealings with state and federal regulators.

Financial statements

Disclose firm financials, including trial balances, on a current basis (i.e. within 30 days of month-end).

Advyzon can help you stay compliant via:

- CYBERSECURITY
- BOOK- AND RECORD-KEEPING
- ADV AND AUM TRACKING
- FORM 13F: GENERATION AND SUBMISSION
- INTERNAL MONITORING (CODE OF ETHICS)
- GIPS® PERFORMANCE TRACKING
- DELIVERY + TRACKING FOR CLIENT DOCUMENTS
- HELP WITH STATE REPORTING
- COMPLIANCE DASHBOARD TO HELP YOU STAY ORGANIZED



Compliance documents help ensure RIAs meet their fiduciary obligation to clients.

Curious how we can improve compliance for your firm?

[Set up a consultation](#)

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