



NFI EXAM DEVELOPMENT Validity & Reliability

The National Fireplace Institute® (NFI) certification exams were developed through a process based on national testing standards that include job analysis, exam blueprint, exam validation, and scoring methodology. NFI was assisted by Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO), a nationally-recognized testing consultant agency.

Job Analysis Study

The role of a hearth planner/installer in residential hearth product installations was carefully analyzed by Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) and hearth industry professionals who identified specific job tasks and areas of required knowledge necessary for safe and correct installations. Following the identification of job tasks and knowledges by SMEs, validation surveys based on the study were created and sent to over 5,000 hearth practitioners. The survey provided data that prioritized knowledge areas based on their relative importance to hearth products installation.

Development of a Exam

The results of the industry survey provided a guide for determining exam content and appropriate percentages of questions in specific categories of job knowledge. An exam blueprint was developed for each category of hearth products, based on the fuel for the products: Gas, Woodburning, and Pellet.

Content and Exam Production

Specific questions relating to areas of performance, outlined in the job analysis study, were developed and written by industry practitioners who were trained by a consultant in exam question writing. Questions were then reviewed by the testing consultant for clarity and format and also by industry experts for technical accuracy. Pilot exams with extra, non-scored questions were administered. These overlength exams allowed a final opportunity for review, for developing a question bank, and for determining the passing score.

Passing Score

Passing scores were determined through the Angoff Procedure, a nationally recognized method to set the score that distinguishes performance that indicates possession or lack of knowledge needed for minimum competence. The process involves surveying a committee about the relative difficulty of each question, reviewing performance statistics from the pilot overlength exam and statistical calculation of the passing score.

Certification Maintenance

NFI certifications are valid for three years. Certifications can be renewed either by retesting or through the NFI Continuing Education Program for Certification Renewal. Certified specialists who choose the continuing education program must earn the required number of CEUs prior to their certification expiration. The requirements are:

Continuing Education Unit (CEU) Requirements for National Fireplace Institute® Certification Renewal

24 Credits to Renew ONE Certification
32 Credits to Renew TWO or THREE Certifications

TECHNICAL	12 Credits
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Product Knowledge	
Codes and Standards	
Venting Principles and Design	
Ventilation (House Pressure)	
Fuel Knowledge	
Installation Planning	
Installation Guidelines and Techniques	
Tools and Gauges	
Troubleshooting and Repair	
SAFETY, HEALTH & LIABILITY	4 Credits
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Workplace Safety	
Consumer Health and Safety (Hearth Product Issues)	
Liability	
ELECTIVES	8 Credits
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Additional Technical or Safety, Health & Liability sessions OR	
Business Management	
Sales & Marketing	
Service Department Organization and Management	
Communication Skills	
TOTAL	24 Credits
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If a person holds 2 or 3 certifications, a total of 32 credits of continuing education will be required:

TECHNICAL – WOOD/GAS/PELLET	16 Credits
SAFETY, HEALTH & LIABILITY	4 Credits
ELECTIVE	12 Credits
TOTAL	32 Credits

A CEU Committee receives applications and awards credits for education sessions and training programs.

Credentialing and Recognition

Each certified hearth professional passing their respective NFI exam is acknowledged by a certificate, a photo I.D., and a listing on the NFI website, www.nficertified.org. The NFI website is used by consumers, builders, and building officials to identify certified hearth installers nationwide.