National Fireplace Institute® (NFI)
Policy Handbook
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National Fireplace Institute® (NFI) Policy Handbook

The National Fireplace Institute® (NFI) is the professional certification division of the National Fireplace Institute Inc, a 501(c)3 non-profit educational organization. NFI is ruled by a Board of Directors that includes representatives from the industry, public safety, and the allied service industry.

NFI's objective is to increase public safety by establishing meaningful credentials for professionals involved in planning, installing and servicing hearth appliance and venting systems.

The goal of the NFI is to improve public safety by certifying that hearth installers/planners have successfully passed a rigorous examination of knowledge identified by hearth industry experts and practitioners as fundamental to competent planning and installation of hearth systems. NFI certifies technicians and installers in four hearth products specializations:

- NFI Gas Specialist, NFI Woodburning Specialist, NFI Pellet Specialist
- NFI Hearth Design Specialist.

Participation in the certification process should be a challenging and rewarding professional experience that can increase knowledge, confidence, and public recognition.

The information provided here reflects the policies that directly affect examinees Policy and procedures are subject to change. Check the NFI website or contact NFI for the latest version.

I. Exam Characteristics

A. Purpose and Limitations

The NFI is a voluntary, nationally administered certification program. NFI certifications are awarded to examinees who attain a passing score on exams that test subject matter recognized as fundamentally important to the planning and installation of different types of hearth systems. NFI certifies that examinees have successfully passed an exam. While the certification is a recognized indicator of commitment to professional accomplishment, it does not guarantee competence.

Certification is a mark of accomplishment that is widely recognized as an indication of professional status and commitment. In a growing number of local and state jurisdictions, NFI certification is being considered as an appropriate pre-requisite for hearth products installation. Certification may be recognized as a requirement for licensing to perform installation in some jurisdictions, but certification in itself is not a license.

B. Basis of Exams

In order to ensure fairness, job relevance, and effectiveness of the certification process, examinations are based on a formal job analysis and recognized procedures for exam reliability and validity. These recognized, formal processes include participation of industry experts, survey of practitioners, and collaboration with testing consultants. 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 certification.

C. Specializations Offered

Those seeking to become NFI certified in Gas, Woodburning or Pellet hearth appliances must pass the Core Knowledge exam to become eligible and also pass one of those exams. The Core Knowledge reference manual covers topics such as combustion, heat transfer and levels of inspection. The fuel-specific specialty reference manuals cover information about appliances and venting systems of each fuel-type.

- A special collaboration with the Chimney Safety Institute of America (CSIA) resulted in a Core Knowledge exam exemption for currently certified chimney sweeps. Proof of a current CSIA certification and an administrative fee must be submitted. Complete details are available on the NFI website or by calling the NFI office.
- NFI Certified Specialists can elect to take additional specialty exams without having to take the Core Knowledge exam again as long as the initial specialty certification is current.

NFI offers recognition to Certified Specialists who have successfully gained NFI certifications in all three specialties (Gas, Woodburning and Pellet) and are known as **Master Hearth Professionals (MHPs)**.

The Hearth Design Specialist is a stand-alone certification. The Hearth Design Specialist manual contains technical knowledge a sales or support person needs to know about woodburning, gas and pellet hearth appliances.

D. Content of Exams

A full Index of Knowledge Statements (a comprehensive list of the knowledge needed to successfully plan hearth products) for each specialization is available in each NFI Reference Manual, or by contacting NFI.

II. Pre-Exam Information and Procedures

A. Registration

NFI exams are offered online and monitored through a remote proctoring service. Registration for the exam can be done on the NFI website (nficertfied.org). HPBA Affiliates and other hearth industry organizations often offer the NFI exams at their regional events. In some cases, they can facilitate NFI exam registration as part of their event registration system.

- Study materials purchased with the exam order will be shipped them as soon as possible after registration form is approved.
- Once the registration and payment are complete, NFI will send the examinee their log in information. Online exams may be taken any time of the day or night. No appointment is necessary

B. Non-discrimination

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), NFI will provide reasonable accommodation for those with disabilities, such as providing extra time and/or facilitating having someone to read the exam to the examinee. No accommodation will be offered that fundamentally alters the measurement of the skills or knowledge that the exam is intended to test, or which is an undue burden on NFI, including, but not limited to, offering the exam in any language other than English. In order to request accommodations for disabilities, examinees should contact NFI to obtain an ADA Special Request Form. The Request Form must be submitted to the NFI so that special considerations can be provided and the exam can be scheduled through the appropriate proctor.

C. Pricing

Pricing for exams and/or study materials is available on the NFI website. Visit www.nficertified.org for more information. Current HPBA members receive a 30% discount. A special discount code is available from your local HPBA Affiliate.

D. Time Limits, Rescheduling, Cancellation, and Refunds

For Computerized Testing:

1. Cancelling Exams
   - Within 6 months after registration, exam registration can be cancelled and a refund requested, or a credit to allow a different examinee to take the exam, if the request is made in writing to NFI.
   - A refund for the exam, less a $69 administrative fee, will be granted.
   - Refunds/credits for exams may be made after the 6-month period on a case-by-case basis.
   - Refunds are made for study materials only if they are returned to NFI in good condition (no rips, tears, writing on pages or highlighting) within 6 months of purchase. No refunds are made for related shipping costs to return the manual to NFI.

III. Exam Preparation

A. Resource Materials

The primary reference resources for the exams are the most current version of the NFI *Reference Manual* for each specialty certification published by the National Fireplace Institute. In addition, job experience, familiarity with manufacturer's installation instruction manuals, and fundamental construction knowledge may be required or helpful.

B. Preparation Methods

Self-study of the current NFI Reference Manual is strongly recommended, even for experienced professionals. In addition, organized exam review sessions are offered online and at a number of locations at different times.

IV. Exam Information

- The examinations consist of multiple choice type questions. The number of questions varies with each specialty certification exam.

- Computerized exams may be taken at any time. Log in information is sent out once the exam has been purchased.
    - Computers must have a working webcam and microphone.
    - Computers may only have one monitor. Additional monitors must be turn off.
    - Chromebook computers, cell phones and/or tablets may not be used.
- NFI exams are closed book exams. No study materials are allowed in the testing area.
- Only hand held, non-programmable calculators are permitted during testing. Other calculators, including cell phones are not permitted. The exam has an online calculator available.
- Exam proctors cannot answer questions about the content of the exam.
- Any testing irregularities should be reported to the proctor and/or NFI.
- Exam results will be confirmed when the video file is reviewed.

V. Exam Scoring and Results

A. Results and Feedback

- Pass/fail results are available to the examinee upon completion of the exam.
- An overall numerical score or grade is not reported. The Candidate Feedback Report provides feedback on the percentages of correctly answered questions in each knowledge category. It also provides the identifying numbers of Knowledge Statements associated with the missed questions on the exam. An Index of Knowledge Statements provided in each Hearth Reference Manual facilitates reinforcement and further study by linking each Statement to sections in the manual.

B. Confidentiality and Publication

- Examinees agree that by passing NFI exams that their names and furnished contact information will be published on the NFI website and in other media. An examinee may opt out of appearing on the NFI website by logging in to their NFI account or by notifying the NFI office in writing.
- Renewal dates for certifications are considered public information and may be provided to employers, exam sponsoring organizations, and the public.

C. Retesting

- Examinees who fail an exam and wish to retest must register and pay a retesting fee (listed on the NFI website).
- Examinees should be aware that exams and reference manuals are revised on a regular basis and should check to see whether their reference manual is the current edition for the exam.
- Examinees who fail an exam and wish to retest shall wait 10 days before taking the exam again.

D. Exam Results Appeals

An examinee who fails an NFI Exam may appeal the results of the exam to the NFI Board of Governors. The appeal must be received by NFI within 30 days of receipt of exam results. The appeal must be in writing and must include the basis or reason for the appeal. The appeal may result in rejection (exam results stand), rescoring, and/or retesting, or granting of certification.

E. Certification Recognition

Individual Certifications

- Examinees who successfully pass the NFI Core Knowledge exam and a NFI specialty exam (Gas, Woodburning or Pellet) will be designated NFI Certified Specialists. Passage of the Core Knowledge exam is only required in conjunction with the initial specialty sought. Expiration dates for those that only hold one certification are based on the date the examinee successfully passes both the Core Knowledge exam and one of the specialty exams.
- Examinees who successfully pass the Hearth Design Specialist exam will be designated NFI Certified Specialists.
- The company of the employee or employees who hold the certification(s) can identify their company as having an NFI Certified Specialist on staff as long as an employee or employees holds/hold current NFI certification(s) in good standing.
- Identification includes use of the NFI trademark logo in public relations and advertising materials. The company cannot claim installation or planning by NFI Certified Specialists unless they are carried out or directly supervised (on-site) by a current NFI Certified Specialist.
- Although fees related to an individual's certification may have been provided for by a third party (e.g. the employer), the certification earned is the sole property of the examinee, and company identification rights are transferrable upon any changes in employment. The NFI Certified Specialist is responsible for providing NFI with corrections or changes to contact information.

Multiple Certifications

- NFI Certified Specialists can elect to additional specialty exams without having to take the Core Knowledge exam again as long as the initial specialty certification is current.
- **Master Hearth Professional (MHP) Designation:** Specialists who currently hold all three specialty certifications (Gas, Woodburning, and Pellet) will be designated as Master Hearth Professionals (MHP).

F. Length of Certification

- Once NFI certification requirements are met, certifications are valid for a period of three years. For example, if an exam is taken and passed on January 10, 2026, the certification is valid through January 31, 2029.
- NFI Certified Specialist must renew the certification in order to retain the credentials and their benefits by one of the following methods:
    - Retesting

      or
    - Continuing Education

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NATIONAL FIREPLACE INSTITUTE®
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VI. Certification Renewal Information

A. Requirements for Renewing Certifications by Taking an Exam

- If a NFI Certified Specialist does not have the required number of Continuing Education Units (CEUs) to renew a certification, or if the Specialist just prefers to pass the new version of the exam to renew the certification, it will be necessary to:
- Purchase the NFI exam package including the current manual.
- The renewal expiration date (month and day) remains the same.
- If the Specialist is renewing the initial specialty certification, the Specialist must pass the NFI Core Knowledge exam and the initial specialty exam (Gas, Woodburning or Pellet).

B. Requirements for Renewing Certifications by Accruing CEUs

- NFI Certified Specialists wanting to renew by accruing the required number of CEUs must log into the NFI website to renew the expiring certification(s) online.
- All qualifying CEUs must be earned prior to the expiration date of the certification(s) being renewed.
- Any extra CEUs earned during an initial certification period will not carry over into the next certification period.

C. Failure to Renew Certification

If the NFI Certified Specialist does not renew a certification before its expiration date:

- NFI will remove the certification listing, and if appropriate, the Specialist's name and contact information from the NFI website. NFI may inform the appropriate individuals, companies and/or organizations (e.g. employer, HPBA Affiliate) that the Specialist is no longer certified.
- The Specialist and employer forfeit the right to any use of NFI Certification recognition materials that are based on the expired certification(s).
- A former NFI Certified Specialist who wishes to reinstate the certification more than 12 months after the expiration date must pay full exam fees and must successfully pass the exams, including the Core Knowledge and specialty exam.

If there is evidence of misuse, NFI has the right to take legal action against the specialist and/or the employer.

VII. CEU Renewal Requirements

For One Certification

Prior to the expiration of a three-year certification, the Certified Specialist must earn and document **24 CEUs** in these specific categories:

- Technical – (Course subject matter found in the NFI reference manuals) 12 CEUs
- Safety, Health & Liability (SHL) 4 CEUs
- Electives 8 CEUs*

**Note: Extra Technical or SHL CEUs may fulfill Elective CEU requirements*

TOTAL 24 CEUs

For Two, Three or Four Certifications
Prior to the expiration of second or third three-year certifications, the Specialist must earn and document a total of **32 CEUs** in the specific categories.

The requirements for two, three or four certifications are as follows:

- Technical – (Course subject matter found in the NFI reference manuals) 16 CEUs
- Safety, Health & Liability (SHL) 4 CEUs
- Professional Development Electives 12 CEUs*
  **Note: Extra Technical or SHL CEUs may fulfill Elective CEU requirements.*

TOTAL 32 CEUs
If the Certified Specialist has already renewed the first certification by CEUs (24), the specialist will only need an additional **8 CEUs (minimum 4 Technical; maximum 4 Elective)** by the next certification expiration.

Upon request or completion of a second certification, NFI can synchronize expiration dates for 2, 3 or 4 certifications if all fees are paid and all CEU/Exam requirements are met. The dates will be synchronized to a median date between the earliest and latest certification's expiration dates. If the Specialist plans to renew by CEUs, it is strongly recommended that the certification expiration dates be synchronized.

VIII. CEU Categories

TECHNICAL
Planning and installation technical subjects for manufactured residential hearth products that are included in the Reference Manual and/or the NFI Exam knowledge statements, including:

- 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
Workplace Safety and Health
Consumer Health and Safety (Hearth Products Issues) Liability

ELECTIVES*
Additional Technical or Safety, Health & Liability sessions OR Business and Profession Subjects, including:

- Business Management
- Sales & Marketing

- Service Department Organization and Management
- Communication Skills
- Hearth Industry Diversification Products subjects related to:
    - Outdoor Living
    - Outdoor Room
    - Barbecue
    - Patio
    - Portable Spas
    - HVAC
    - Exhaust System Maintenance (e.g., chimney sweeping, dryer vent maintenance)

**Note: Extra Technical or SHL CEUs may fulfill Elective CEU requirements.*

IX. CEU Rules and Regulations

A. General CEU Policy: All Types of Instruction

1. Industry training must be submitted for CEUs 30 days in advance of the event.
    a. Exception: For highly standardized programs such as American Red Cross First Aid or CPR, or standard OSHA training programs, prior and formal CEU approval is not required. Proof of attendance is required.
    b. Applications for courses over 2 hours in length are required to include a timeline that indicates estimated instructional time for major topics and for breaks (refreshment, bathroom, meals, etc.).
    c. The minimum course length for CEU consideration is 15 minutes.
2. Usually, one hour of training/education equals one CEU.
    a. Instructional presentations that have been converted from live, face-to-face courses to recorded online courses without accompanying audio or written instruction similar to that available in the live presentation may result in reduced or denied CEUs.
3. The maximum number of credits that are awarded for a one-day program is six (6).
4. The maximum number of credits that are awarded for a two-day course is twelve (12)
    a. No more than 6 CEUs can be awarded for any single day.
5. The maximum number of credits that are awarded for a multiple day program over two days in length is sixteen (16).
    a. No more than 6 CEUs can be awarded for any single day.
6. If a person attends an education program accredited with CEUs within seven (7) days prior to taking and passing the NFI exam, the person may earn CEUs for that course attendance, which can be applied to that certification. Otherwise, no CEUs are awarded for coursework completed before taking and passing the NFI exam.
7. There are no retroactive CEU credits for courses/events/activities that were not approved for CEUs before attendance or completion. However, if appealed, NFI Staff will review on a case-by-case basis. The burden of proof for course content and attendance will be with the person making the request and/or the instructor/sponsor.
8. CEUs for a course can only be earned once in a certification period with the following exceptions:

a. A course with expirations and renewals (e.g., CPR) or that are required multiple times within a certification period by an employer or jurisdiction is eligible for CEUs each time.
b. A course demonstrated and declared by the instructor/sponsor to have at least 30% new content is eligible for CEUs for repeated attendance.

9. NFI reserves the right to reject applications for courses that introduce or espouse political or otherwise inappropriate subject matter.
10. When signing a CEU event attendance form, you must write legibly using the same name that is on the NFI records. NFI ID numbers must also be included for CEUs to be awarded.
11. Once approved for CEUs, courses do not have to be resubmitted unless:
    a. The length of the course changes.
    b. The content has changed (more than 30% has changed).

B. CEU Training Event Attendance Policy

1. Sign In/Log In
   Participant must indicate presence at or before the beginning of the training session:
   - Sign the Attendance Sheet at Traditional Classroom events (instructor delivering content in person to the audience) and Roundtable Discussion events (organized, formal discussion group with pre-announced topic and moderator).
   - Log in successfully in advance of scheduled start and answer roll call for live online training events (courses/training sessions delivered live by instructor to remote audience via internet).

Attendance

The approved course number and course date must appear on the attendance sheet submitted to NFI for CEU credit for attendees.

Participant must attend the entire CEU program from beginning to end, including meeting these requirements:

- For traditional classroom, roundtable discussion, and live online training:
  - Participants must not be later than 5 minutes from the start of the event.
  - Participants must not leave or take any breaks other than those given by the instructor, with the exception of 5 minute bathroom breaks.
- For on demand courses:
  - Total time participant spends connected to and using the programs are subject to review and approval/disapproval by NFI.
  - Any test, quiz, exercises must be completed to the satisfaction of the instructor/host.

2. Completion
   Participants must complete the CEU program satisfactorily, including these requirements:
   - For traditional classroom, roundtable discussion, and live online training:
     - Participants must be present at the end of the event.
     - Participants must successfully complete quizzes and/or exercises that may be required by the sponsor/instructor.
   - For on demand courses
     - Participants must successfully complete quizzes and/or exercises that may be required by the sponsor/instructor.

- Participants must be able to provide verification of attendance at the course in the form of a certificate.

C. Other CEU policies:

1. Industry Training
   Instructors may receive credit for teaching any program approved with NFI CEUs only once within a three year certification period. The instructor is awarded the same number of CEUs that have been accredited for the course.
2. Industry Publication
   Writing and having a hearth industry paper or article published may be eligible for CEUs based on the following requirements.

- The article must:
  - pertain to the hearth industry
  - be published within the certification period
  - be at least 500 words in length.
- The author must
  - submit application for CEUs within 60 days of publication
  - submit a copy of the article with publication name, date of publication, and word count
  - submit the type of CEU category of the article (Technical; Safety, Health & Liability, Professional Development Electives)
- An approved article will be awarded 1 CEU for 500-999 words and 2 CEUs for 1000 words or more. Co-authored articles will be eligible for a percentage of the CEUs based on the number of listed authors (e.g., .5 CEUs for a 500-word article listed with 2 authors). An article can only be submitted and awarded CEUs once, regardless of the number of times it is published. The maximum number of CEUs that can be attained through published articles is 6.

3. CEU Committee Work
   Participation in organized meetings whose purpose is developing hearth industry education/certification programs is eligible for CEUs under the following requirements:
   - Only time spent in meetings qualifies for CEUs.
   - There is a daily limit of 6 CEUs (12 per meeting).
   - The maximum number of CEUs that can be awarded for education/certification program development meetings is 16 in a certification period.
4. Core Knowledge Exam CSIA Exemption
   Currently CSIA certified chimney sweeps may be exempt from taking the Core Knowledge exam when getting NFI certified.
   - There is an application on the NFI website that must be submitted along with an administrative fee that must be paid.
   - Applicants are NOT NFI certified until they also pass at least one of the NFI fuel-type exams (Woodburning, Gas or Pellet).

D. Tracking CEUs

1. NFI Certified Specialists are required to keep track of their attendance/progress. To assist in this effort, NFI records and tracks proof of attendance at CEU events that is submitted to NFI by the

course sponsor and/or by the Specialist. The history of submitted CEUs is available on the NFI website.

2. Should there be a discrepancy between NFI records and individual Certified Specialist records, the Certified Specialist must submit proof of attendance to gain any disputed CEUs.

NATIONAL FIREPLACE INSTITUTE

LOGO USE POLICY

1. National Fireplace Institute ("NFI") is the holder of several U.S. registered trademarks indicating a designation of "Certified" by NFI ("NFI-Certified Trademarks"). When used properly, an NFI-Certified Trademark indicates that a person is NFI-certified in one or more hearth product categories. NFI does not certify goods, services or companies.

2. NFI-Certified Trademarks may be used for advertising or marketing purposes by a) any person who, at the time of use, is NFI-certified in one or more hearth product categories, or b) any organization who, at the time of use, employs one or more persons currently NFI-certified in one or more hearth product categories.

3. An NFI-Certified Trademark may not be positioned, placed, affixed or otherwise used in a manner that suggests NFI's sponsorship or approval of any goods or services.

4. Any use of an NFI-Certified Trademark that is inconsistent with this NFI Logo Use Policy, as determined by NFI in its sole discretion, is strictly prohibited.

- Identification includes use of the NFI trademark logo in public relations and advertising materials. The company cannot claim installation or planning by NFI Certified Specialists unless they are carried out or directly supervised (on-site) by a current NFI Certified Specialist.

Questions?
Visit the NFI website at http://www.nficertified.org for additional information, exam and review course sites, to purchase NFI Exams and Study Materials, and to renew certifications.

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