National Environmental Health Association

NEHA Credentialing Handbook

Guide to Policies and Procedures



NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION
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In pursuit of our mission to build, sustain, and empower and effective environmental health workforce, we provide national credentialing that verifies and assures an individual is competent, properly trained, and equipped to carry out their duties in environmental health.

Maintaining the credential assures professionals keep up to date on the latest developments in their specialty and demonstrates their commitment to life-long learning. Employing professionals with credentials helps to assure both employers and communities that their environmental health workforce is capable of handling whatever challenges their job presents.

About Our Credentialing Program

Definition

Credentialing is a process by which a non-government agency validates an individual's qualifications and knowledge for practice in environmental health and protection based upon predetermined standards.

Our credentials are nationally recognized and validate your specialized knowledge and experience, thus promoting the practice of environmental health and protection. NEHA credentialed individuals are viewed as leaders, mentors, and role models in environmental health and protection.

Membership Requirements

NEHA membership is not required to obtain a NEHA credential, although membership does offer cost savings.

Non-Discrimination

No individual shall be excluded from the opportunity to participate in our credentialing programs on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, veteran or military status, marital status, pregnancy status, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by applicable law.

Contact Information

It is your responsibility to update your contact information in your MyNEHA account. Without this information, we are unable to send you important correspondence about testing and maintaining your credential.

Application

Process

All applicants for our credential examinations must complete an application prior to being approved to take the examination.

1. **Complete & Submit Application**
   - The application must be complete and include supporting documentation (i.e. official transcripts, food manager certification, and/or work experience verification), and fees and be submitted prior to being approved to take the examination. Application for each credential is available at www.neha.org/credentials.
   - Eligibility requirements differ for each credential exam. Learn more about each credential at www.neha.org/credentials.

2. **Wait for Authorization Email**
   After we receive and review your completed application (allow 1-2 weeks) we will send you an email:
   - with testing authorization details, or
   - requesting additional information, or
   - letting you know you are not eligible, and why.

If you need to take the exam in less than 2 weeks of submitting your application, it **may** be possible to expedite your application review for a fee of $75. Contact the Credentialing Department at credentialing@neha.org.

Period

We will hold your application for one year from the date we received it. If you have not taken the exam within 2 years of your application being approved, you must submit a new application along with all required fees.

Foreign Education

Our credentials are available to anyone who is eligible. However, we cannot evaluate foreign educational documents even if they have been translated into English.

All transcripts from a college or university outside the United States or its territories (including Canada) must be evaluated by qualified third party foreign education specialists. An evaluation report must accompany your credential application or be sent by the evaluation service directly to us.

We strongly recommend you choose a service that is a member of the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES). Find an evaluation service at: www.naces.org.

Reciprocity

Reciprocity is offered solely for the REHS/RS credential.
If you hold a state REHS/RS or RS credential, you may be eligible to receive the NEHA REHS/RS credential without re-examination (reciprocity).

Eligibility

To be eligible for reciprocity you must:

1. Have a valid (unexpired), current state registration; and
2. Have at a minimum a bachelor's degree with 30 semester/45 quarter hours in basic sciences; and
3. Have proof of passing the REHS/RS exam that was used by NEHA at the time you tested:
    - NEHA REHS/RS exam taken on or after July 13, 2014 with a score of 650 or higher.
    - NEHA REHS/RS exam taken between January 1, 1998 and July 12, 2014 with a score of 68% or higher.
    - Professional Examination Service (PES) exam taken prior to December 31, 1997 with a score of 70% or higher.

If you meet all of these qualifications, you qualify for reciprocity. If you do not, reciprocity is not available.

State Specific Reciprocity

Arizona

- You may qualify for regular reciprocity if you took the PES exam before December 31, 1997 or the NEHA REHS/RS exam after January 1, 2013. The one year Open Window Reciprocity opportunity expired on February 28, 2014.

California

- California state REHS/RS exams taken before August 1992 may be eligible for reciprocity. California state exams taken after August 1992 are not eligible due to the different exam used in California.

Connecticut

- You may qualify for regular reciprocity if you took the PES exam before December 31, 1997 or the NEHA REHS/RS exam after January 1, 2013. The one-year Open Window Reciprocity opportunity expired on February 28, 2014.

Ohio

- You may qualify for regular reciprocity if you took the PES exam before December 31, 1997 or the NEHA REHS/RS exam after January 1, 2013. The 1 year Open Window Reciprocity opportunity expired on February 28, 2014.

Texas

- Only the full-length NEHA REHS/RS exam (4 hours, 250 questions) is eligible. The shorter Texas RS exam (130 questions) is NOT eligible for reciprocity.

Fees

All application and exam fees are due before we can process your application. NEHA members are eligible for discounted application and exam fees. You must become a NEHA member before applying

for a credential to be eligible for the discounted fees.

Application and Exam Fees

Application fees are **non-refundable for all applications**, including those found to be ineligible. **There are no exceptions.** However, you are eligible to be refunded for the exam and Pearson VUE test fees.

To request a refund for exam and Pearson VUE fees, email credentialing@neha.org **within 90 days** from when the fees were processed by us. We do not provide refunds after 90 days.

Exam

Standards

Each exam question is evaluated on a regular basis for reliability, fairness, and validity.

- A fair exam is not biased for or against any groups because of ethnic background, geographic locale, or any other demographic criterion.
- A valid exam accurately reflects the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for competent practice. All questions on the exams have been validated using accepted psychometric practices.
- Reliability means the exam is consistent in its measurements of the knowledge, skills and abilities of competent practice.

Administration

NEHA's credentialing programs are owned and sponsored by NEHA. Professional Testing Inc. (PTI) administers the credential exams at Pearson VUE computer testing centers around the country and throughout the world.

Security

Our exams are the exclusive property of NEHA. Candidates who take a NEHA exam acknowledge that they understand the following:

- Federal copyright law protects the exam and questions contained therein.
- No part of the exam may be copied or reproduced in part or whole by any means whatsoever, including memorization.
- The theft or attempted theft of any part of an exam is punishable as a felony.
- Candidate participation in any irregularity occurring during the exam, such as giving or obtaining unauthorized information or aid, as evidenced by observation or subsequent statistical analysis, may be sufficient cause to
    - terminate the candidate's participation,
    - invalidate the results of the candidate's examination, or
    - take other appropriate action deemed necessary.
- Candidates will not be eligible to receive a copy of their exam at any time due to exam security protocol.

Scheduling/Rescheduling

- Scheduling an exam through a Pearson VUE computer testing center requires pre-approval of your application and a PTI number from NEHA.
- When you have approval and a PTI number, you can schedule your exam online at www.pearsonvue.com/neha.
- A minimum of 24 hours' notice is required to cancel an exam at Pearson VUE or you will forfeit your exam and Pearson VUE fee.

Special Accommodations

NEHA is committed to providing equal access to its credentialing examinations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Candidates with disabilities may request reasonable testing accommodations to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. NEHA works with its testing provider to facilitate appropriate accommodations and accessible testing arrangements based on individual needs.

Requests

To make a request for special accommodations, email credentialing@neha.org:

1. Complete the ADA Accommodation Request Form, including the specific diagnosis of your disability, medical records, or other written proof of the diagnosis by an appropriate licensed professional and the type of accommodation being requested.
2. Submit the completed forms at least 4 weeks prior to the scheduled test date to avoid needing to reschedule your exam date.

Communication

All matters related to testing accommodations will only be communicated by our staff with the candidate, professionals knowledgeable about the candidate's disability or impairment, the candidate's authorized representative (if applicable), Professional Testing Inc. (PTI), and the test administrator.

Results

Exam results are reported directly to us. We will notify you of your results.

- Your results will be emailed to you 1-2 weeks following the exam. If you are an REHS or RS state exam candidate you will need to follow up with your state program administrator to obtain your score.
- Exam scores are reported as a three-digit scaled exam score, not a percentage score.

Retaking

If you do not pass the exam we will send you a retake application 1-2 weeks after your exam.

- You must wait 90 days after the date of your last exam before retaking the exam.
- You may submit a retake application and pay at any time and will receive authorization 1-2 weeks later to set up the exam.
- Retake applications can be submitted up to 1 year from the date of your last exam. If the retake exam is not taken within that time, you will need to reapply for the credential and pay all applicable fees.

Ineligibility

It is our policy that no individual shall be excluded from the opportunity to participate in the NEHA credentialing program on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, veteran or military

status, marital status, pregnancy status, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by applicable law. A review and appeals process is available to you if you would like the NEHA Credentialing Appeals Ad Hoc Committee to review your application. The decision of the Committee is final. A failing score of any NEHA credentialing exam is not subject for appeal.

Conduct

Individuals who hold a NEHA credential must acknowledge, accept, and abide by the NEHA Code of Ethics for NEHA Credentialed Professionals and digitally sign the code of ethics statement as part of their application to NEHA credentialing.

Code of Ethics Statement

As an environmental health professional, credentialed by the National Environmental Health Association, I hereby acknowledge, accept, and profess to abide by the following code of conduct and ethics:

- I shall endeavor to keep myself current and informed and satisfy any continuing education requirements that may be in effect for my credential.
- I shall conduct myself in a professional manner befitting of my credentialed status.
- I shall proudly represent my credentialed status to the public I serve.
- I shall do nothing to undermine, detract from, or otherwise cause to develop any damaging associations with respect to this credential. I accept that any activity on my part that will cause this credential any measure of injury serves as a breach and a failure on my part to uphold this code of ethics. Moreover, I accept that such actions for which I might be responsible could result in the revocation of my credential.
- I shall do nothing to impair my ability to discharge any administrative or regulatory duty related to my professional credential that may also be required under federal, state or local law as a part of the position I hold.

Revocation of Credential

NEHA reserves the right to deny, revoke, or suspend the credential of any individual due to misconduct.

- Prior to a credential being denied, revoked, or suspended, the individual will be notified in writing about why the action is warranted.
- A written appeal may be submitted to credentialing@neha.org within 30 calendar days after they are notified.

Credentialing Appeals Ad Hoc Committee

- The ad hoc review committee is comprised of three board members: The President, President-Elect and Past-President. If a conflict exists with any of three preselected Board members, then the President shall appoint a replacement.

- In the event a member has a NEHA credentialing appeal, and with the advice of the NEHA Credentialing Department, the Committee will review said case.
- The ad hoc Review Committee shall review the appeal and recommendations of the Credentialing Department and vote to approve or deny the application for credentialing, or misconduct allegations.
- The Committee review and its decisions will occur within 60 days of receipt of the appeal notice.
- The decision of the Committee is final.

Misconduct includes but is not limited to:

- Falsification of credential application, credential renewal application, or of any information requested by NEHA;
- Misrepresentation of credential status;
- Gross or repeated malpractice or negligence;
- Cheating or other irregularities related to the administration of a NEHA examination;
- Revocation or suspension of a state credential (if applicable);
- Failure to maintain confidentiality of credential examination questions or answers**;**
- Limitation or sanction imposed by another professional organization relating to environmental health/food sanitation;
- Unauthorized possession of, use of or access to NEHA examinations, certificates, logos, the terms of any NEHA credential, and abbreviations relating to these terms, and any other NEHA documents and materials;
- Failure to report a known violation of NEHA's standards, policies or procedures;
- Violation of any provision of the NEHA Code of Ethics for NEHA Credentialed Professionals;
- The conviction or plea of guilty or plea of nolo contendre to a felony or misdemeanor related to environmental health/food sanitation.

Credential Status

Credential Documents

When you pass your credential exam, we will email you your exam results, a digital wall certificate, a digital credential badge, and information about continuing education.

In-Training

If you have successfully obtained a credential with "In-Training" status, you must submit verification of required work experience to us within 3-years (acquisition period).

If you do not submit experience verification by the end of the acquisition period, your "In-Training" status will expire, and you must re-apply and take the exam again to obtain the credential.

Emeritus Status

Our Emeritus status for credentials honors those individuals who have spent their careers in the pursuit of a healthier environment. This credential status signifies your tremendous quality and commitment to the field of environmental health.

To qualify for the "Emeritus" status, you must meet:

1. Have completed a minimum of 15 years of service in the environmental health field and,
2. Have a current NEHA credential that is in active status (i.e. not currently expired) and,
3. Not planning to consult, work part-time or full-time, teach, or volunteer in environmental health as a full-fledged credential holder and,
4. Submit the Emeritus Status Request Form. Request the form by emailing credentialing@neha.org.

Those who qualify for the Emeritus status credential must renew their credential on a biennial basis. There is no continuing education requirement.

Credential Cycle

Our credentials run on a two-year renewal and continuing education cycle. The first day of your credential cycle is the first day of the month after you pass the credential exam. For example, if you passed an exam on November 9 your credential cycle would begin December 1 and end November 30, two years later.

Renewal

Before the end of the two-year credential cycle, you must submit the appropriate number of continuing education (CE) contact hours and renewal fees.

- All fees and CE contact hours must be received by us no later than the credential expiration date.
- A late fee will be applied if CE contact hours and/or fees are received after the credential expiration date.

If you are on active military duty and need assistance renewing your credential while deployed, contact credentialing@neha.org. Please be prepared to submit a copy of your deployment orders.

Continuing Education

During the two-year credential period you must accumulate the appropriate number of continuing education contact hours. **One contact hour is equal to one clock hour of class time.** REHS/RS and CP-FS credentials require 24 CE hours every two years. For information on other credential CE requirements visit www.neha.org/discontinued-credentials.

Content

CE content must relate to the NEHA credential for which you are submitting CEs. For example, CEs that might be approved for the REHS/RS would be education in the environmental health field in one of the following areas: air, land, water, wastewater, bioterrorism, environmental health management, food protection, GIS, swimming pools, environmental justice, emerging pathogens, vector control, zoonotic diseases, hazardous and toxic substances just to name a few. However, for the CP-FS credential the education would have to be in food safety and/or food defense.

Type

- Computer-based training/on-line courses
- Home study courses
- Training modules
- JEH quizzes
- Military training
- National/state/local conferences
- University/college courses
- Videos, including NEHA's eLearning courses

You may also receive up to 10 contact hours of continuing education **per credentialing cycle** for giving a presentation at a conference, publishing an article (please email us a copy of the article), or being a course instructor.

Submission

Login to your MyNEHA account to submit your continuing education electronically.

- CE submissions are reviewed for approval within two business days.
- After your submission is reviewed you will be able to review it in your MyNEHA profile under "View My Credit History".

You are not required to submit supporting documentation (i.e. certificate of completion, course agenda, etc.). However, please keep supporting documentation for your own records, as we perform random audits to review documentation. Those selected for an audit will have 6 months to provide the appropriate documentation to us regardless of their credential expiration date.