

NEHA CREDENTIALING HANDBOOK

**Guide to Policies and Procedures for NEHA's
Credentialing Programs**



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NEHA'S MISSION IS

"...to advance the environmental health and protection professional for the purpose of providing a healthful environment for all."

In pursuit of its mission, NEHA sponsors a variety of credentialing programs. Today, the association offers six national credential programs: the Registered Environmental Health Specialist/Registered Sanitarian (REHS/RS), the Certified Professional-Food Safety (CP-FS), the Certified in Comprehensive Food Safety (CCFS), the Certified Foodborne Outbreak Investigator (CFOI), the Certified in Food Safety Supplier Audits (CFSSA), and the Registered Food Safety Auditor (RFSA).

Congratulations on taking a step towards becoming NEHA credentialed. Holding a NEHA credential benefits not only you as an individual in proving your competency and capability in the field of environmental health and protection, but also benefits the community and employers. It is through the device of a credential that a community gains assurance that the workforce handling this responsibility is competent, properly trained, and equipped to carry out their responsibilities. The credential serves to verify that a professional has achieved what is perceived as a baseline level of competence in this complicated subject areas of environmental health and food safety. By having credentialed people on their staff, employers are assured of having a workforce of employees that are reasonably capable of handling whatever challenges their job responsibilities and their employer present.

DEFINITION OF HOLDING A NEHA CREDENTIAL

NEHA has adopted the following definition of being credentialed:

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

NEHA's credentials (REHS/RS, CP-FS, CCFS, CFOI, CFSSA and RFSA), nationally recognized in scope, validate your specialized knowledge and experience, thus promoting the practice of environmental health and food protection. NEHA credentialed individuals are viewed as leaders, mentors, and role models in environmental health and food protection. Studying for and maintaining a NEHA credential keeps you up to date on the latest developments in your specialty and demonstrates your commitment to life-long learning.

DESCRIPTION OF EACH NEHA CREDENTIAL

Registered Environmental Health Specialist/Registered Sanitarian (REHS/RS)

The REHS/RS is the premier NEHA credential available to a wide range of environmental health professionals. Individuals holding the REHS/RS credential show competency in environmental health issues and serve to prevent illness, injury, and death. Additionally, they work to improve the quality of life in local communities and to prepare their communities to respond to and recover from disasters including terrorism events, acts of nature, and pandemics.

Certified Professional-Food Safety (CP-FS) - The CP-FS is designed for individuals within the public and private sectors whose primary responsibility is the protection and safety of food. This prestigious credential integrates food microbiology, HACCP principles, and regulatory requirements into questions that test problem-solving skills and knowledge expertise.

Certified in Comprehensive Food Safety (CCFS) – The CCFS is a strong core credential for food safety professionals with a primary concern of overseeing the producing, processing, and manufacturing environments of the U.S. food supply. It has been designed to meet the increasing need for highly qualified food safety professionals from both industry and the regulatory community that provide oversight in preventing food safety breaches at U.S. production and manufacturing facilities and abroad.

Certified Foodborne Outbreak Investigator (CFOI) - A Certified Foodborne Outbreak Investigator (CFOI) Credential holder utilizes environmental health principles and food safety knowledge in collaboration with outbreak response partners to assess foodborne illness risks, perform environmental assessments, identify contributing factors and antecedents, and implement control measures to prevent the spread of foodborne illness and protect the public.

Certified in Food Safety Supplier Audits (CFSSA) – If you're responsible for conducting risk-based facility audits (foreign or domestic) against internationally recognized food safety standards designed to mitigate risk, promote food safety, and enhance consumer confidence in the food supply, then the CFSSA credential is the right choice for you. Upon passing the exam, an individual will be prepared to complete 1st and 2nd party, and food safety supply chain audits.

Registered Food Safety Auditor (RFSa) – If you're responsible for conducting risk-based facility audits (foreign or domestic) against internationally recognized food safety standards designed to mitigate risk, promote food safety, and enhance consumer confidence in the food supply, then the RFSa credential is the right choice for you. Upon submitting a completed application, the RFSa credential holder will be prepared to complete 3rd party audits.

EXAM ADMINISTRATION

NEHA's credentialing programs are owned and sponsored by NEHA. Professional Testing Inc. (PTI) administers the REHS/RS, CP-FS, CCFS, CFOI, CFSSA and RFSA at various testing sites and at Pearson VUE computer testing centers around the country and throughout the world. Pearson VUE has over 1,000 locations nationwide.

CONTACTING NEHA

NEHA
720 S. Colorado Blvd., Ste. 1000-N
Denver, CO 80246
Phone: (303) 756-9090 ext. 310
Fax: (303) 691-9490
Email: credentialing@neha.org
Web: <http://neha.org/>

MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

Membership in NEHA is *not* required to participate in any of NEHA's credentialing programs. Information on member benefits can be found on our website at: <http://neha.org/membership-communities/join>

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

It is the policy of NEHA that no individual shall be excluded from the opportunity to participate in NEHA's credentialing programs on the basis of ethnic origin, national origin, religion, sex, age or disability.

NAME/ADDRESS/EMAIL CHANGE

It is **your** responsibility to update your contact information in [My NEHA](#) if your personal information has changed. Without this information, NEHA is unable to send you important correspondence on testing and maintaining your credential.

EXAMINATION STANDARDS

NEHA is committed to offering fair, valid and reliable credentialing examinations. A fair examination is not biased for or against any group because of ethnic background, geographic locale or any other demographic criterion. A valid examination accurately reflects the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for competent practice. All questions appearing on the examinations have been validated using accepted psychometric practices. Reliability means the examination is consistent in its measurements of the knowledge, skills and abilities of competent practice. Each examination question is evaluated on a regular basis for reliability, fairness, and validity.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

All applicants for NEHA credentialing examinations must complete an application prior to being approved to take the examination. All sections, supporting documentation (i.e. official transcripts, and work experience verification), and fees must be completed and submitted prior to being approved to take the examination. Applications can be downloaded from NEHA's website at www.neha.org/credentials.

Eligibility to sit for any of NEHA's credentialing examinations is determined by NEHA.

Eligibility requirements are different for each of NEHA's credentialing examinations. Please review eligibility requirements for the particular examination you are interested in taking by reviewing the appropriate Candidate Information Brochure. Candidate Information Brochures can be viewed on our website at www.neha.org/credentials.

Once your completed application is received by NEHA, the review process takes approximately 4-6 weeks. You will receive notification from NEHA once the review process is complete in the form of an admission letter (for REHS/RS paper and pencil administrations), a testing authorization email (for those choosing to take the exam on computer at Pearson VUE testing centers), an incomplete application email (stating your application is incomplete with reasons listed), or a denial email (indicating you are not eligible to take the exam with explanation).

If you need to take the exam in less than 4 weeks of submitting your application, it **may** be possible to expedite your application review for a fee of \$45. Please contact the credentialing department at (303) 756-9090 ext. 310 or email credentialing@neha.org to see if this can be arranged.

An application is good for a period of two years from the date it was received by NEHA. If the candidate has not taken the exam within 2 years of submitting the application, the candidate will be required to submit a new application along with all required fees. Pearson VUE computer testing authorizations expire after 1 year.

APPLICANTS WITH FOREIGN EDUCATION

All NEHA credentials are available to all those who are eligible. If you have college or university education from outside the United States or its territories, you must have your foreign education evaluated by a "third party" foreign education evaluation service. You must submit an evaluation report with your NEHA Credential Application or the report can be sent by the evaluation service directly to NEHA.

NEHA cannot evaluate foreign educational documents even if they have been translated into English. All foreign transcripts must be evaluated by foreign education specialists. NEHA strongly recommends you choose a service that is a member of the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES). For information on NACES member companies, go to www.naces.org.

Canadian education is considered foreign education. It must be evaluated by a third party evaluation service. For the CP-FS and CCFS credentials **only**, Canadian transcripts may be accepted as long as they are in English.

RECIPROCITY

Reciprocity is offered solely for the REHS/RS credential. Eligibility requirements and application procedures for reciprocity are detailed on the REHS/RS webpage at the link titled "[NEHA REHS/RS Credential Reciprocity](#)".

FEES AND EXPIRATION POLICY

All application and examination fees are due before the application will be processed.

NEHA members are eligible for reduced application and examination fees. You can become a member of NEHA at the same time you are applying for a credential and be eligible for the reduced fees.

An application is good for a period of two years from the date it was received by NEHA. If the candidate has not taken the exam within 2 years of submitting the application, the candidate will be required to submit a new application along with all required fees. Pearson VUE computer testing authorizations expire after 1 year.

APPLICATION WITHDRAWAL POLICY

Withdrawal of a credentialing application after it has been submitted to NEHA must be requested in writing to NEHA. The application fee is non-refundable for all applications, including those found to be ineligible, *no exceptions*. Written requests for refunds of examination fees will be honored only up to ninety (90) days after the fees have been processed by NEHA. All fees are non-transferable.

EXAMINATION PROCEDURES

EXAM SECURITY

The NEHA examinations are the exclusive property of NEHA. Candidates who take a NEHA examination acknowledge that they understand the following:

1. Federal copyright law protects the examination and questions contained therein. No part of the examination may be copied or reproduced in part or whole by any means whatsoever, including memorization.
2. The theft or attempted theft of an examination booklet is punishable as a felony.

3. Candidate participation in any irregularity occurring during the examination 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 a candidate's examination, or take other appropriate action deemed necessary.
4. Candidates will not be eligible to receive a copy of their exam at any time due to exam security protocol.

EXAMINATION SCHEDULING/RESCHEDULING/CANCELLATION FEES

When scheduling an exam through a Pearson VUE computer testing center, you must be pre-approved by NEHA and have received a PTI number. Please schedule your examination online through the Pearson VUE website at www.pearsonvue.com/neha or call the Pearson VUE phone number on your authorization email. You must cancel an examination at Pearson VUE a minimum of 24 hours before your exam or you will forfeit your examination fee and your computer test fee.

EXAMINATION RESULTS

Examination results are reported directly to NEHA. NEHA, in turn, will notify you of your results. If a candidate passes, results will be mailed 4-6 weeks following the examination. If a candidate fails, results will be mailed and/or emailed 4-6 weeks following the examination. Examination scores will be reported to candidates as a three digit exam score or a percent score, depending on the credential.

RETAKE THE EXAM

An individual who fails a credential exam will receive a retake application 4-6 weeks after they tested. The individual must wait 90 days after the date of their last exam before they may retake the exam. There is no limit to the number of times an individual may retake the exam.

You may submit your retake application and pay at any time and will receive a notification 4-6 weeks later with information on setting up the exam. Retake applications are valid for a period of 2 years from the date of your last exam. If you do not take the exam within 2 years of your last exam, then you will need to reapply for the credential and pay all applicable fees.

CREDENTIALING PACKETS

Credentialing packets are mailed to individuals that pass the exam. The credentialing packet includes your examination results, wall certificate, wallet card and continuing education information.

GENERAL POLICIES

DENIAL OF CREDENTIAL DUE TO INELIGIBILITY

It is the policy of NEHA that no individual shall be excluded from the opportunity to participate in the NEHA credentialing program on the basis of ethnic origin, religion, sex, age or disability. A review and appeals process is available to individuals seeking an amendment of a decision denying eligibility to sit for a NEHA examination. The NEHA Board of Directors conducts the review and appeals process. The decision of the Board is final. Failure of any NEHA credentialing examination is not subject for appeal.

NEHA CODE OF ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

NEHA credentialed individuals must acknowledge, accept and abide by the NEHA Code of Ethics for NEHA Credentialed Professionals. All NEHA credentialed individuals must agree to and sign the statement below as part of their application to NEHA credentialing:

As an environmental 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.*

Individuals applying for a NEHA credential, as well as individuals that are renewing their credential, must also sign the professional conduct policy. Individuals that have had a professional certification, registration and/or license revoked, suspended, sanctioned or had any disciplinary action against them in the US or another country may be denied a credential. Also, if the individual was convicted of a felony or a misdemeanor, they may be denied a credential. More information on the professional conduct policy may be found on our website at:

<http://neha.org/professional-development/credentials/professional-conduct-policy>

REVOCATION OF CREDENTIAL – DUE TO MISCONDUCT

NEHA reserves the right to revoke the credential of any individual holding a NEHA credential due to misconduct. The right to deny, revoke, or suspend a NEHA credential is vested in the NEHA Board of Directors. All decisions shall be verified and upheld by NEHA's Board of Directors. Prior to a credential being denied, revoked, or suspended the individual shall be notified in writing of the charges that warrant such action. Any individual whose credential comes under review for denial, revocation, or suspension may submit a written appeal to the NEHA Board of Directors within thirty (30) calendar days after notification of charges. Misconduct includes but is not limited to:

- Falsification of credential application, credential renewal application, or of any information requested by NEHA;
- Failure to submit appropriate number of Continuing Education hours or to submit appropriate credential fees;
- 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 their 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, wallet identification cards, logos of NEHA, the terms of Registered Environmental Health Specialist/Registered Sanitarian (REHS/RS), Certified Professional-Food Safety (CP-FS), Certified in Comprehensive Food Safety (CCFS), Certified Foodborne Outbreak Investigator (CFOI), Certified in Food Safety Supplier Audits (CFSSA), Registered Food Safety Auditor (RFSA), Certified Environmental Health Technician (CEHT), Certified Installer Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (CIOWTS), Healthy Homes Specialist (HHS), Registered Environmental Technician (RET), Registered Hazardous Substances Professional (RHSP), and Registered Hazardous Substances Specialist (RHSS), and abbreviations relating to these terms, and any other NEHA documents and materials;
- Habitual use of alcohol, any drug or any substance, or any physical or mental condition which impairs competent and objective professional performance;

- 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 contendere to a felony or misdemeanor related to environmental health/food sanitation.

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS FOR CANDIDATES WITH DISABILITIES OR IMPAIRMENTS

NEHA is committed to ensuring that no individual is deprived of the opportunity to take a credentialing examination solely by reason of a disability or impairment. All computer test centers are fully accessible and compliant with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA).

To make a request for special accommodations you must complete the NEHA 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. The form must be returned to NEHA at least 8 weeks prior to the scheduled test date.

If the form and applicable documentation from a licensed professional are not returned to NEHA at least 8 weeks prior to the scheduled test date, you will have to reschedule your test date.

To obtain a copy of the ADA Accommodation Request Form, contact the NEHA Credentialing Department.

With respect to all matters related to testing accommodations, NEHA will only communicate with the candidate, professionals knowledgeable about the candidate’s disability or impairment, those responsible for administering the exam, and the candidate’s authorized representative (if applicable).

IN-TRAINING STATUS

When a candidate has successfully obtained a credential with “In-Training” status he/she must submit verification of the required work experience to NEHA by the end of the 3-year acquisition period. If a candidate fails to submit experience verification by the end of the acquisition period, the “In-Training” status expires. The candidate must re-apply to take the examination in order to obtain the credential.

ACTIVE MILITARY DUTY

NEHA credentialed individuals who need assistance with their credential renewal while deployed will be evaluated on a case by case basis. Contact credentialing@neha.org for more details. Be prepared to submit a copy of your deployment orders.

EMERITUS STATUS

NEHA's Emeritus status credential honors those individuals who have spent their careers in the pursuit of a healthier environment and safer food. Attainment of the credential signifies the individual's tremendous quality and commitment to the field of environmental health and food safety. To qualify for the "Emeritus" status, an individual must meet the following requirements:

1. Have completed a minimum of 15 years of service in the environmental health field or food safety and,
2. Have a current NEHA credential that is in active status (i.e. not currently expired) and,
3. Not plan to consult, work part-time or full-time, teach, or volunteer in environmental health or food safety as a full-fledged (i.e. REHS/RS) credential holder and,
4. Submit an Emeritus Status Request Form and payment of \$25 (member)/\$50 (non-member).

Those who qualify for the Emeritus credential must renew their credential on a biennial basis, but without a continuing education requirement. In recognition of their services and retired status, NEHA has kept the fees for this credential at a minimum.

Once awarded this credential an "E" will be attached to your credential letters (i.e. REHS/RS-E, CP-FS-E, etc.) and a new wallet card and wall certificate will be issued.

CREDENTIALING PERIOD AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

CREDENTIALING CYCLE

All of NEHA's credentials run on a two-year cycle. The first day of your credential period is the first day of the month after you have passed the examination. For example, if you passed an examination on November 9, 2015, your credential period would begin December 1, 2015 and end November 30, 2017.

CREDENTIAL RENEWAL

At the end of the two-year credential cycle, NEHA credentialed individuals must have submitted the appropriate number of continuing education contact hours and the appropriate renewal fees.

All fees and continuing education contact hours must be received by NEHA no later than the credential expiration date.

If CEs and/or fees are received after the credential expiration date, a late fee will apply.

CONTINUING EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

During the two-year credential period you must accumulate the appropriate number of continuing education contact hours:

CEHT	12 Contact Hours	RET	12 Contact Hours
CIOWTS	12 Contact Hours	HHS	15 Contact Hours
CP-FS	24 Contact Hours	RHSP	24 Contact Hours
CCFS	24 Contact Hours	RHSS	12 Contact Hours
REHS/RS	24 Contact Hours	CFOI	24 Contact Hours
CFSSA	24 Contact Hour	RFSA	36 Contact Hours (includes CFSSA)

Please Note: One (1) contact hour is equal to one (1) clock hour of class time.

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. For the HHS credential, the education would have to be in healthy home topics: vector control, mold, radon, building science, hazardous materials, and children's EH issues, etc. For the CIOWTS credential the education would have to be related to onsite wastewater topics.

CONTINUING EDUCATION CONTACT HOURS

Part of maintaining and renewing a NEHA credential is the submission of NEHA-approved Continuing Education (CE) within the two-year credential period. You can log onto the NEHA website's [CE page](#) and submit your continuing education submissions electronically. Once your submission is received by NEHA, an email will automatically be generated and sent back to you indicating your submission was received. NEHA staff will be checking the submissions for approval approximately once a week. Once your submission is reviewed and uploaded you will be able to review it in your "MY NEHA" profile indicating your submission was approved or denied.

Since you will be submitting your submissions electronically, we will no longer require you to submit supporting documentation (i.e. certificate of completion, course agenda, etc). However, we do require that you keep a record of the supporting documentation, as we may randomly audit individuals to provide such documentation. Those selected for an audit will have 6 months to provide the appropriate documentation to NEHA regardless of their credential expiration date.

For more information on continuing education go to the [CE Frequently Asked Questions](#) page.

ACCEPTABLE CONTINUING EDUCATION

Conferences, seminars, classes, lectures, online trainings, etc., are all acceptable forms of continuing education if they are related to the environmental health field – food, water, wastewater, air, vector and pest control, hazardous materials and/or waste management, radiation, recreation, housing and institutional health and safety, occupational health and safety, program planning and legal aspects, or general environmental health and scientific concepts.

You may submit up to 4 hours of NEHA book reviews, and up to 10 hours of course instruction per credentialing cycle. You may not submit the same course more than 1 time. You may also submit articles you have written for journals or other academic publications. Please submit the hours you worked on the article, up to 10 hours per credentialing cycle. Credential study/review courses are not acceptable CE hours, as they take place before your credential is in effect.

University courses at the undergraduate and graduate level are acceptable if they address environmental health. NEHA grants 16 contact hours for each semester credit hour and 13 contact hours for each quarter credit hour.

CONTACTING NEHA

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