

**Candidate Handbook  
for  
NEHA's  
Registered Food Safety Auditor  
(RFSA)**



## Introduction

Welcome! Thank you for your interest in the Registered Food Safety Auditor (RFSA) credential offered by the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA). The RFSA is for more experienced food safety professionals, who are one of the last lines of defense in the complex global food supply chain. This handbook contains the application procedures and the policies that guide the decisions on credentialing. The RFSA is governed by an oversight committee, an independently appointed body with sole responsibility for the initial governance of the credential program and in compliance with the standards established under ISO/IEC 17024. The practice of establishing an independent governing body is common in professional credentialing programs developed under the auspices of a parent organization in order to prevent both the appearance of, and real, conflicts-of-interest from emerging. This practice also assures that all credentialing decisions and practices are made in accordance with credentialing program requirements and are not linked to other Association programs or membership requirements. While the credentialing program evolves, it is expected that the governance structure will do so as well; however, the separation of credentialing from other Association activities will remain the practice. The credentialing program is administered by the NEHA staff headquartered in Denver, Colorado.

NEHA is dedicated to offering a credentialing program that is valid, reliable, and defensible and based on best credential practices; it is a goal of NEHA to seek accreditation of the RFSA program under ISO/IEC 17024 administered by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). To meet accreditation requirements, NEHA offers a full-scope credentialing program that is comprised of the following key components:

- An independently operating governing body with policies and procedures guiding all decisions on credentialing
- Eligibility requirements and application submission and review procedures
- An examination testing the competency and knowledge requirements of food safety auditors today
- Recertification requirements for maintenance the credential
- A Code of Ethics all RFSAs must abide by and uphold
- Complaints and disciplinary procedures.

## Registered Food Safety Auditor (RFSA) Application and Information

### Applying for the RFSA Credential

You may download an application to apply for the RFSA credential by using the link on the NEHA website at <http://neha.org/professional-development/credentials>.

Applications must be completed in full, signed, and accompanied by the application fee. Applicants must submit all other supporting documentation as a condition of accepting the application and meeting the eligibility requirements.

Applicants will be notified by NEHA credential staff if information is insufficient or incomplete on the Application or in any of the supporting documents. The Application is reviewed again when incomplete or missing documentation is received.

### Eligibility Requirements for the Registered Food Safety Auditor (RFSA):

1. Hold a current Certified in Food Safety Supplier Audits (CFSSA) credential.
2. Audit or inspection experience of a minimum of five audits in one food sector/category (equaling a minimum total of 80 hours) with the audits meeting or equivalent to an audit program within that same sector. Acceptable sectors are Human, Animal, and Produce. Only experience within the past 18 months of the RFSA application being submitted will be accepted.
3. Have a sponsoring Certification Body (CB) submit an acceptable Witness Audit Checklist in one food sector/category. The Witness Audit Checklist must align with the audit or inspection experience as outlined in Requirement 2.

### Code of Ethics and Disciplinary Policies

NEHA is committed to upholding the highest ethical standards in the profession. Individuals who apply for the credential are required to sign and return the RFSA Code of Ethics at the time of application. Individuals who are awarded the RFSA designation are required to uphold and abide by the Code of Ethics as a condition of maintaining their credential.

The RFSA Code of Ethics is a statement of the required behaviors and responsibilities of credential holders. Credential holders found to be in violation of the Code of Ethics are subject to an investigation of the violation, which may result in sanctions. All sanctions are subject to appeal. Following the exhaustion of appeals, the outcome of investigations resulting in sanctions shall be made public, and the notice will include the name of the credential holder, the Code(s) found in violation, and the sanction imposed.

The Code of Ethics was developed to safeguard the reputation of the organization, and in the interest of protecting the stakeholders impacted by the credential.

### NEHA Code of Ethics for Credentialed Professionals

As an environmental professional, credentialed by the National Environmental Health Association, I hereby acknowledge, accept, and agree 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.

NEHA has established policies and procedures for investigating complaints filed against credential holders. Any individual may file a complaint. All complaints will be reviewed, and if determined valid and actionable, will be investigated. Individuals who wish to file a complaint should contact NEHA credential staff for information on how to proceed. Direct all inquiries to [credentialing@neha.org](mailto:credentialing@neha.org).

### **Professional Conduct Policy**

The National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) has adopted a Professional Conduct Policy to safeguard the public from individuals who, in practice as NEHA credentialed professionals, might pose a danger to the public.

1. All applicants for NEHA credentials must disclose all felony and misdemeanor convictions on their initial applications and on each renewal application. This disclosure obligation includes pleas of nolo contendere, guilty pleas, as well as judgments of convictions entered after a trial.
2. Applicants are not required to disclose any criminal conviction that has been expunged from the public record or a deferred judgment, sentence, or other adjudication that did not result in the entry of a judgment of conviction against the applicant.
3. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction, or withholding any material information regarding a conviction, shall be an independent basis for denial of eligibility to sit for a credential examination, revocation of a credential, or denial of an application for renewal.

### **Disciplinary Procedures**

In prosecuting its mission of establishing a credible credential program which ensures high standards of ethical and professional practice in food safety auditing, NEHA has established and implemented a Code of Ethics. NEHA requires its credential holders to remain in good standing with the organization by complying with the tenets of the Code. As such, NEHA reserves the right to sanction credential holders found to be in violation of the Code of Ethics, following the investigation of such complaints in accordance with its published procedures.

### **Due Process**

NEHA respects and upholds the right of its credential holders to due process in circumstances in which a negative or adverse decision is made on the standing and status of the credential holder. Due process shall apply in instances affecting an individual's ability to earn and maintain RFSA credential status.

### **Confidentiality and Release of Information**

NEHA staff will not release any information regarding a candidate's application or status to any employer, regulatory agency or any other person or entity that may inquire about such information unless it has obtained written permission from the candidate or credential holder in question. Personnel associated with any aspect of the credential program may not disclose any information about a candidate or credential holder unless authorized to do so.

### **Statement of Non-Discrimination**

NEHA does not discriminate among applicants, candidates or credential holders on the basis on age, sex, race, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or marital status.

### **Renewal Requirements**

The RFSa credential is awarded for a period of 2 years. To remain certified, credential holders must meet the renewal requirements. Renewal requirements are based on the philosophy of continued competence, and as such, credential holders must meet the renewal requirements. Credential holders must:

- Earn and submit a minimum of 36 hours of continuing education every two years (the 36 hours will cover the requirement for both the CFSSA and the RFSa); and
- Must supply five audits (equaling a minimum total of 80 hours) to prove they are actively employed in food safety auditing; and
- Submit renewal fees for the credential every two years (\$195.00 members; \$390.00 non-members); and
- Agree to continue to abide by and uphold the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct Policy and the policies of the credential program, which includes continued appropriate and authorized use of the certificate, logo, and marks.

### **Fees**

The RFSa credential fees are published on the Website. It is the applicant's responsibility to submit the correct fee. The correct payment must accompany the Application for the RFSa credential.

Renewal fees are due every two (2) years and must be paid in full. The RFSa renewal fees are published on the Website. It is the credential holder's responsibility to submit the correct fee. NEHA credential staff will send reminder notices via email. Credential holders are encouraged to become familiar with the renewal requirements and are responsible for keeping their contact information up to date.

### **Auditing Applications**

The credential staff may at any time audit 10% of applications for the RFSa credential. Keep a copy of your application and all supporting documentation for your records in case you should be audited.

### **Rejecting Applications for the RFSa Credential**

Applications that are incomplete, do not meet the eligibility requirements and/or are not accompanied by the correct payment of fee will be rejected. Credential staff will notify all applicants of rejection via email and will state the reasons for rejecting the application. A

record of the rejected application shall be maintained by the Credential Department for a period of one year.

### **Denial of Eligibility**

Any applicant who does not meet the eligibility requirements must be notified that their credential application has been denied within four weeks of review. The reasons for the denial shall be indicated.

### **Appeal of Denial of Eligibility**

Applicants who are denied eligibility may request reconsideration of the decision of denial by making an Appeal to NEHA. Requests for an appeal must be made no later than 30 days after the applicant is denied. Within 6 months of the receipt of the written appeal, NEHA must conclude its deliberations. All decisions of NEHA are final.

### **Trademarks and Copyrights**

The RFSA Credential mark will be submitted to the U.S. Patent and Trade Office for registration. The “Registered Food Safety Auditor” and “RFSA” designations are the property of NEHA. Individuals who earn the RFSA credential may use these designations if the credential has not expired, been suspended, revoked or voluntarily relinquished. The credential is the property of NEHA and must be returned to NEHA upon request. All examination materials and publications relating to the credential are copyrighted. The trademarks and copyrights are protected under U.S. and international law and unauthorized uses of these marks or copyrights are prohibited. Unauthorized use may result in sanctions or other penalties.

### **Authorized and Appropriate use of the RFSA designation**

NEHA encourages the authorized use of the logo and marks. Credential holders who wish to use the RFSA designation may do so in the following manner:

Jane Doe, RFSA

Jane Doe, Registered Food Safety Auditor

Credential holders are permitted to use the RFSA designation in the above manner, on business cards, or letterhead, within written guidelines. Authorized use requirements of the RFSA designation shall be sent to newly credentialed individuals with their certificate.