

# **Candidate Handbook for NEHA's Certified in Food Safety Supplier Audits (CFSSA) Credential**



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## Introduction

Welcome! Thank you for your interest in the Certified in Food Safety Supplier Audits (CFSSA) credential offered by the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA). The CFSSA credential was developed to meet the needs of those professionals responsible for ensuring that Food Safety Plans are in place, appropriate and followed to ensure a safe food supply in the US and globally. Food Safety Professionals who earn the CFSSA credential have demonstrated their knowledge and competency in the area of food safety auditing and are dedicated to upholding high standards of ethical and professional practice in the field of food safety auditing. This handbook contains the application procedures, requirements for eligibility to sit for the CFSSA credential examination, and the policies that guide the decisions on credentialing. The CFSSA is governed by the 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 credible and based on best credential practices; it is a goal of NEHA to seek accreditation of the CFSSA program under ISO/IEC 17024 administered by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). In an effort 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 FSAs must abide by and uphold
- Complaints and disciplinary procedures.

NEHA has spent considerable time and resources to develop a credential program of integrity, balancing the interests of all stakeholders served by the credential, including regulatory agencies, business, academia, and food safety professionals. In developing the program requirements, NEHA has adhered to practices that assure the following important program outcomes:

- Validity of the credential examination
- Fairness of the procedures associated with granting, maintaining, suspending and removing the credential
- Establishment of requirements for qualifying to earn the credential
- Establishment of the requirements for maintaining the credential
- Assurances that the public trust is served through the credential program

- Credibility in the administration and maintenance of the program.

The competency requirements of the CFSSA credential examination emanate from a comprehensive job task analysis study which defines the job description for the Food Safety Auditor as follows:

A Food Safety Auditor conducts 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.

## I. **CFSSA Application and Exam Processes Summary**

### **Applying for the CFSSA Credential Examination**

You may download an application to apply for the CFSSA examination by using the link on the NEHA website at [neha.org](http://neha.org).

Applications must be completed in full, signed, and accompanied by the application and exam fees. 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. Note: Failure to submit the completed application by the deadline may delay scheduling the exam.

### **Eligibility Requirements**

The exam is just one of the eligibility requirements for the CFSSA credential. It is not a capstone exam, but just one of the demonstrations of knowledge and experience that together will designate an individual as being Certified in Food Safety Supplier Audits. Applicants must meet the eligibility requirements at the time the application is submitted.

### **Certified in Food Safety Supplier Audits (CFSSA):**

- A. Bachelor's Degree Track: You are eligible for the CFSSA credential if you have:
  1. A Bachelor's degree from an accredited institution of higher education or equivalent with 30 semester hours (or 45 quarter hours) of core science education (a combination of biological sciences, chemistry, physical sciences, food technology, nutrition, medical science, engineering, epidemiology, veterinary medical science, or related science field).
  2. Three years of experience in food production or in conducting regulatory food inspections at a supervisory or advanced capacity.
  3. Evidence of HACCP Training. Completion of HACCP training course based on the principles of CODEX Alimentarius and of a minimum duration of two days or equivalent. The course must include an assessment and result in the issuance of a certificate.
  4. Evidence of the Professional Food Safety Auditor Training Course or equivalent training course.

- B. **Experience Track:** You are eligible for the CFSSA credential if you have:
1. 30 semester hours (or 45 quarter hours) of college level core science education (a combination of biological sciences, chemistry, physical sciences, food technology, nutrition, medical science, engineering, epidemiology, veterinary medical science, or related science field).
  2. Five years of experience in food production or in conducting regulatory food inspections at a supervisory or advanced capacity.
  3. Hold a current CCFS Credential or pass the NEHA CCFS certificate training course or an equivalent training course.
  4. Evidence of HACCP Training. Completion of HACCP training course based on the principles of CODEX Alimentarius and of a minimum duration of two days or equivalent. The course must include an assessment and result in the issuance of a certificate.
  5. Evidence of the Professional Food Safety Auditor Training Course or equivalent training course.

### **Scheduling Your Exam**

When approved, candidates are authorized to sit for the examination. Once an application has been approved by NEHA credential staff, the candidate will receive e-mail notification with instructions on how to register for the exam. Candidates will receive an “Authorization to Test” email which will include a 20-character Candidate Identification Number, which will be needed to schedule the exam. You must bring your confirmation e-mail to the test site.

The CFSSA Credential Examination is offered Monday through Saturday. Once you have been notified that you are eligible to take the exam, you must schedule and take your exam within one (1) year.

You may schedule online or by phone.

To schedule online, go to <http://www.pearsonvue.com/NEHA> . You will need to create a login and password to schedule your test.

To schedule by phone, go to <http://www.pearsonvue.com/NEHA> and click on the red Customer Service link to find the phone number and hours of operation for the call center for your country. When you call, a customer-service agent will work with you to find the testing center or centers nearest you and a time that is convenient to you.

You are urged to schedule your test as soon as convenient after your application is approved. Your authorization to test will be valid for one (1) year from the date of approval; after that it will be necessary to pay a new Pearson VUE fee.

### **Admission to the Testing Center**

Once you have made your exam appointment, you will receive a confirmation email from Pearson VUE. The email will confirm the address of the testing center; bring this confirmation e-mail to the testing center. Please arrive 15 minutes before your appointment. Late arrivals may not be accommodated; in that case, you will be considered a no show and must pay the retesting fee to reschedule your examination.

You will need **two forms of identification** for admission: a primary ID and a secondary ID. The IDs must be current and not expired.

**The name that appears on your two forms of identification must match the name under which you are registered to take the test. Do not register under a nickname! If you have done so, you must contact NEHA credential staff well before your testing appointment to change the name on your record.**

The following forms of ID are accepted as primary ID:

- Government-issued driver's license
- State/national identification card
- Passport\*
- Military ID\*
- Alien registration card (green card, permanent resident visa)
- U.S. Passport card
- U.S. Dept. of State Driver's License

\* The primary ID must contain a photo and signature unless the signature is embedded in the identification. When this occurs, the candidate must present another form of signature identification from the primary or secondary list.

The following forms of ID are accepted as secondary ID:

- Any ID on the primary list
- Social Security card
- Credit/bank ATM card (signature required).

### **At the testing center**

The CFSSA exam in the United States and several other countries is offered in Pearson VUE's network of over 250 Pearson Professional Centers. (Elsewhere, the exam is offered in comparable facilities known as Pearson VUE Select Testing Centers.) To take an online tour of a Pearson Professional Center (PPC), please visit <http://www.pearsonvue.com/ppc/>

The test administrator at the testing center will not allow test takers to take personal items with them into the examination area. Although locker storage is normally offered, it is best not to bring large bags, jewelry, electronics, and the like to the testing center. Consideration will be made for comfort items like pillows and tissues or medical necessities like crutches; the test administrator is required to inspect such items.

### **Biometrics**

As part of Pearson VUE's test-security program, a palm-vein scan is required at all PPC and some Select PVTTC centers. An electronic signature and digital photo is required at all centers.

### **Accommodations**

Candidates who require special accommodations must make a specific written request for the type of accommodation needed. The reason for the accommodation must be recognized under

the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Contact [credentialing@neha.org](mailto:credentialing@neha.org) to obtain the form to request accommodations. The request form must be submitted to NEHA at least 8 weeks in advance of the planned test date.

### **Cancellation, No Shows and Rescheduling the Examination**

You may cancel your scheduled exam (by phone or online) without penalty up to 24 hours before your appointment. You may make a new appointment without incurring a fee at the time you cancel or at some other time.

Unless you give 24 hours' notice of cancellation, if you do not show up for your exam appointment, you will be considered a no show. Likewise, if you show up late and are not admitted, if you fail to present adequate identification, or if you refuse the nondisclosure agreement, you will not be allowed to take the test and will be considered a no show. You will be allowed to schedule a new test appointment upon payment of the retest fee.

### **Hazardous Weather or Local Emergencies**

In the event of hazardous weather, or any other unforeseen emergencies occurring on the day of an exam, Pearson and NEHA credential staff will determine whether circumstances require the cancellation of the exam. Every attempt will be made to administer all exams as scheduled. Candidates will be given as much advance notice as possible.

### **Emergency Cancellations or Withdrawals**

Circumstances which are considered grounds for an emergency cancellation or withdrawal of an examination include: 1) Candidate illness; 2) Family death; 3) Jury duty; 4) Military duty; or 5) State of emergency. Candidates who experience an acceptable emergency situation must request cancellation or withdrawal from the examination in writing and include supporting documentation of the circumstances.

### **Where to Test**

You can find a list of available testing centers at <http://pearsonvue.com/NEHA>.

### **Notification of Pass/Fail Status**

Unofficial score reports with your pass/fail status will be issued at the test site. Official score reports will be provided to the candidate by NEHA within four weeks of testing. Results are not provided over the phone. Exam results are only given to candidates or their legal representative. Exam results given to individuals other than the candidate must be requested in writing by the candidate.

### **Retaking the Examination**

Candidates who fail the exam may retake it after a 90-day waiting period; they must pay the retake and Pearson VUE fee each time. Candidates who fail may retake the exam an additional two times. After a third failure, the candidate will be required to wait 6 months and reapply as a new candidate and pay all applicable fees.

### **Contact Information**

Name and contact changes must be submitted to NEHA credential staff at the address provided in this handbook or by updating the contact information online. Failure to update your contact information may result in delays in receiving eligibility notices or examination results.

## II. About the CFSSA exam—Requirements and Exam Information

### About the CFSSA Examination

Individuals meeting eligibility requirements must pass a multiple-choice exam to qualify for credential and earn the CFSSA designation. The exam consists of 175 multiple-choice questions and you have 3 hours to take the exam. One-hundred and fifty questions are scored, and 25 are pre-tested for statistical purposes, but not scored. You are only scored on the 150 exam questions and only correct answers are counted. You will not receive feedback on the pre-tested questions.

Your Pearson VUE computer test appointment is for 3 hours and 15 minutes. You will have five minutes to agree to the nondisclosure agreement for the CFSSA examination, and 10 minutes to go through the exam tutorial. Thereafter, you will have 3 hours to take the exam. You are permitted to take a restroom break; however, your break time counts in the 3 hours allotted to test.

The CFSSA examination was developed by subject-matter experts under the guidance of psychometricians (experts in measurement and test development) and is designed to measure the knowledge, skills and abilities required to perform competently as a person Certified in Food Safety Supplier Audits. The passing point—or the score you need to achieve to pass—was also determined utilizing valid psychometric procedures.

The CFSSA examination questions cover the knowledge in each of the domains in the examination content outline. Candidates are encouraged to refer to the examination content outline which can be accessed by the following link <http://neha.org/professional-development/credentials/cfssa> to become familiar with the content areas on the CFSSA examination. Candidates may review the examination content outline to assess their level of knowledge in each of the content areas, and to identify the areas in which they believe they need additional preparation.

### Application and Exam Fees:

Each application must be accompanied by an application fee and exam fee of \$355.00 Member/\$495.00 Non-member. Please note that application fees (\$160.00 Member/\$185.00 Non-member) are non-refundable. Pearson VUE computer testing fees are \$110.00. Fees are to be paid in U.S. dollars.

Individuals who fail the exam and wish to retake it, must pay a retake fee of \$195.00 Member/\$310 Non-member, plus the \$110.00 Pearson VUE fee if the exam is taken on a computer.

### On the Day of the Exam

Candidates should report to the exam site on the day of the exam as instructed in their appointment confirmation email, and plan to arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the appointment time. Candidates must show their confirmation email and two forms of acceptable identification. The name on the ID must match exactly the name submitted on the application, or the candidate will be denied admission.



Questions concerning the content of the exam will not be answered during the exam. Listen carefully to the instructions given by the Proctor and read all directions thoroughly.

The CFSSA examination is closed book. You will not be permitted to bring any materials into the testing room. You will be provided with a secure storage area to check your valuables.

The following items are NOT PERMITTED in the exam room:

- Dictionaries or other reference materials
- Papers of any kind, except as provided by the proctor
- Cell phones
- Alarms or recording/playback devices
- Photographic or image copying devices
- Electronic devices of any kind
- Food or beverages

### **Exam Security**

All exam materials are the property of NEHA. Removal of any material from the exam room by unauthorized persons is prohibited. Copyrights for the CFSSA credential exam are owned by NEHA. Any attempt to reproduce or memorize all or part of the exam is prohibited. Any unauthorized disclosure, publication, copying, reproduction, transmission, distribution, or possession of the exam content or materials in any form may subject the individual to civil liability and/or criminal prosecution, removal of the credential, and/or restrictions on future access to NEHA sponsored credential examinations.

The Proctor may dismiss a candidate from the exam for any of the following reasons:

- If the candidate's admission to the exam is unauthorized
- If a candidate creates a disturbance or gives or receives help
- If a candidate attempts to remove exam materials or notes from the testing room
- If the candidate attempts to take the exam for someone else
- If a candidate has in his or her possession any item excluded from the exam site as specified above
- If a candidate exhibits behavior consistent with memorization or copying of exam items.

### **Comments, Complaints and Appeals**

A candidate who has a concern about administrative procedures at a testing site or who has observed a breach of security or other improper conduct during a test should submit a report in writing to the NEHA credential staff within 5 calendar days after taking the examination.

A candidate who has a question or a concern about the reliability, validity, and/or fairness of the test may submit the question or concern in writing to the NEHA credential staff no later than 5 calendar days after taking the examination. Candidates will also have the opportunity to make comments on the computer during a Pearson VUE exam as well as on paper during a paper and pencil exam.

NEHA credential staff will not consider reports about improper test administration procedures or test content which exceed the 5 day deadline for doing so, or are not submitted in writing.

You will not be allowed to take notes out of the testing center, so submit your concerns via the comment button on the computer, the comment sheet in paper and pencil exams, or email the credential staff following the exam.

### **Summary of Scoring Process**

The minimum passing score for the CFSSA examination has been determined utilizing acceptable psychometric procedures. The CFSSA examination is criterion-referenced. The final passing score is established by a panel of subject-matter experts who determine the minimally acceptable level of competence for awarding the CFSSA credential, and the passing score is applied to all test takers. You must achieve the passing score to pass the examination. There are no exceptions. Results are reported as “pass” or “fail.”

### **Score Reports**

Candidates will receive their unofficial score report at the test center. Candidates who fail will receive a diagnostic report of their overall performance on each content area of the exam. This information is provided so candidates may see their areas of weakness, and better prepare to retake the exam. Scores issued at the test center are “unofficial.” A quality check is performed post-exam and NEHA credential staff will issue the official score report to the candidate within four weeks.

### **Cancellation of Scores**

NEHA and PTI reserve the right to cancel any examination score if, in its judgment, there is any reason to question the score’s validity. Conduct which warrants score cancellation may include, but is not limited to: consulting study aids of any type during a testing session; copying from notes or from another examinee’s answers during a testing session; speaking or otherwise communicating with others during a testing session; copying, photographing, transcribing, or otherwise reproducing test materials; removing test materials from the examination site; aiding other examinees or receiving aid from anyone else; or having improper access to the CFSSA examination content prior to the examination administration. Engaging in such misconduct may disqualify the individual from all future examinations and from ever being certified. Significant score increases upon retesting may also be investigated to ensure the authenticity of results.

### **Appealing Exam Results**

Candidates who fail the exam may appeal their results within 30 days of receipt of the score report must make this request in writing, and submit the appropriate documentation and \$50 fee. NEHA staff will review the response record and the determination will be communicated to the candidate within 60 days. The determination of NEHA shall be final. Scores that are cancelled are not subject to appeal.

### **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 CFSSA Code of Ethics at the time of application. Individuals who are awarded the CFSSA designation are required to uphold and abide by the Code of Ethics as a condition of maintaining their credential.

The CFSSA 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.

Please see the NEHA website for more information.

### **Language the Exam is Given In**

The CFSSA credential examination is given in English only. Translation dictionaries and/or other translation aids during the exam are not permitted. All program materials are provided in English.

### **Training and Exam Prep Materials**

As part of the CFSSA eligibility requirements, candidates are required to attend the Professional Food Safety Auditor Training Course or an equivalent course as this course will assist individuals in preparing for the exam. This course alone is not enough to pass the CFSSA credential exam. Candidates are encouraged to plan their own course of study by reviewing the examination content outline, identifying any areas of weakness, and securing the necessary resources to adequately prepare for the examination.

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

NEHA staff will not release any information regarding a candidate's examination application or examination performance 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, or marital status.

### **Renewal**

The CFSSA credential is awarded for a period of 2 years. Credential holders are required to renew prior to the expiration of their credential. Credential holders must comply with all renewal requirements. NEHA credential staff will send reminder notices via email. Credential holders are encouraged to become familiar with the renewal requirements.

### **Trademarks and Copyrights**

The "Certified in Food Safety Supplier Audits" and "CFSSA" designations are the property of the NEHA. Individuals who earn the CFSSA credential may use these designations if the credential has not expired, been suspended, revoked or voluntarily relinquished. The certificate is the property of NEHA and must be returned to NEHA upon request. Examination materials and publications are copyrighted and protected under U.S. law. NEHA aggressively enforces the appropriate use of its property, and unauthorized use may result in sanctions or other penalties.

## **III. Preparation for the CFSSA Examination**

### **CFSSA Examination Content Outline**

As you prepare for the CFSSA credential examination, you are strongly encouraged to review the examination content outline. The outline contains the major content areas on the exam, and the percentage of the exam each content area represents. Use it to guide you in identifying any content areas you need extra time and resources to prepare for, and ask yourself the questions

found below. You may access the examination content outline by clicking on this link <http://neha.org/professional-development/credentials/cfssa>.

- Which content areas represent the greatest number of test questions?
- How much time do you need to focus on these areas to prepare for the exam, versus other areas?
- How do your current knowledge and skills compare to the content areas of the exam? Are you strong in some, but weak on others?
- How much training or work have you done in the areas on the exam?

Your analysis of the content outline and your answers to the questions above will help you determine where you need to spend your study time.

### Testing Tips

On the day of the exam:

- Plan to arrive at the exam site at least 15 minutes prior to your appointment. If you have considerable distance to travel, consider arriving the night before.
- Get a good night's rest the night before.
- Eat a well-balanced meal prior to reporting to the exam site. Avoid excessive stimulants such as caffeine.
- Read and follow the instructions carefully. Ask the Proctor for clarification if you are not sure about the instructions. Remember, the Proctors will not answer questions related to exam content.
- Pace yourself by periodically checking your progress. This will allow you to make any adjustments in time. Remember, only the questions you answer correctly are scored. There are no penalties for answering a question incorrectly, so answer as many questions as you can. If you are unsure of a response, eliminate as many options as possible, and choose an option from those that remain.
- You may go back to review any items at any time, if your allotted time has not expired.
- Pay attention to reminders of the time you have left to finish the exam.

## IV. Policies Related to the CFSSA Credential Program

The following policies guide the awarding of the CFSSA credential, the rights and duties of candidates and credential holder, due process, and the development and administration of a credible credential examination and program. These policies guide the decisions associated with the credential.

The information provided in this Candidate Handbook contains abbreviations of several policies related to the CFSSA credential. Additional policies you need to be aware of are included below. Please read these policies in their entirety, as several policies become applicable after you earn the credential. Several of the policies related to the application process will assist you in completing the application correctly.

Note: in submitting your application, you will acknowledge that you have read and agree to comply with the policies.

### **Awarding Certification**

The credential is awarded for a period of 2 years. Individuals who are successful on the CFSSA credential examination will be issued a certificate and may use the CFSSA designation. NEHA has the sole responsibility for making all credentialing decisions.

In circumstances in which a credential is denied, suspended or revoked, an appeal of the decision may be filed with NEHA in accordance with the appeals process.

### **Auditing Applications**

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

### **Rejecting Applications for the CFSSA Examination**

Applications that are incomplete, do not meet the eligibility requirements and 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.

### **Development of the CFSSA Examination**

In its development and maintenance of the CFSSA credential examination, the credential personnel shall work with experts in test development and measurement to ensure the development and administration of valid and legally defensible examination. The CFSSA credential shall be validated through a job task analysis at an approximately five-year interval, or as circumstances may warrant. Performance statistics shall be conducted at regular intervals and in an ongoing manner to ensure the consistent administration of fair, valid and reliable examinations is occurring.

### **Examination Administration**

The administration of the CFSSA credential examination shall follow accepted industry standards to ensure fair and consistent administrations. Test administration may be contracted to a testing vendor.

### **Registering for the CFSSA Examination**

To register for the examination, candidates must first be authorized by the NEHA credential staff. Candidates are required to follow all registration requirements.

### **Candidate Identification**

Candidates must check in using two form of acceptable identification, one of which must be a government-issued photo ID with signature. The name on the ID must match exactly the name submitted on the application.

### **Test Administration Monitoring**

The administration of the examination shall be monitored for quality assurance purposes.

### **Cheating**

Strict policies are maintained to safeguard the security of the examination. Any individual who removes, or attempts to remove, examination materials from the testing site, including memorizing examination questions, is subject to prosecution in addition to sanctions. These sanctions may include removal of the credential and restrictions on future access to the credential examination.

### **Invalidating Scores**

NEHA is concerned with reporting only valid scores. On rare occasions, circumstances may invalidate exam scores; therefore, NEHA reserves the right to cancel or withhold exam scores if there is any reason to question their validity. Examination results may be cancelled or invalidated if, upon investigation, violations of credential policies have been committed.

If doubts are raised about the validity of candidates' scores because of suspected misconduct; in such circumstances, candidates shall cooperate in the investigation of their scores. Such candidates will be notified of procedures to ensure fair treatment. Some scores may be rendered invalid due to circumstances beyond candidates' control, such as faulty exam materials or mistiming. In this event, retesting will be arranged.

### **Issuing the Credential**

Certificates are issued by the credential staff to individuals who meet all credential requirements, including passing the credential examination, agreeing to abide by and uphold the Code of Ethics, and paying applicable fees. Certificates are issued within four weeks of completion of requirements for earning the credential.

### **Special Accommodations**

NEHA complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and will ensure no individual is deprived of the opportunity to take the credential examination solely due to a disability as defined under the ADA. Candidates must complete and submit the Request for Exam Special Accommodations Form and supporting documentation related to disability needs. Requests for special testing accommodations require documentation of a formally diagnosed and qualified disability by a qualified professional who has provided evaluation or treatment for the candidate.

### **Appeal of Denial of Request for Special Accommodations**

Candidates who are denied their request for Special Accommodations may file an appeal with NEHA in accordance with the policies of the credential program. The decision of NEHA is final.

### **Enforcement of the Code of Ethics**

NEHA shall establish and enforce a Code of Ethics applicable to all certified individuals. Credential holders must agree to uphold and abide by the Code of Ethics as a condition of earning and maintaining CFSSA credential, using the designation and being awarded a certificate.

### **Filing a Complaint**

Any individual may file a complaint against a certified individual. Only complaints that follow the published procedures will be considered.

### **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 CFSSA credential status.

### **Renewal Requirements**

The CFSSA 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 24 hours of continuing education every two years; and
- Submit renewal fees for your credential every two years (\$145.00 members; \$365.00 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 CFSSA 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 CFSSA Examination.

Renewal fees are due every two (2) years and must be paid in full. The CFSSA renewal fees are published on the Website. It is the credential holder's responsibility to submit the correct fee.

### **Retest Fees**



Candidates who are unsuccessful on the CFSSA credential examination may reapply. Retest fees are published on the Website. It is the applicant's responsibility to submit the correct fee and meet other retest requirements.

### **Other Fees**

NEHA reserves the right to assess additional fees for late applications, granting extensions, rescheduling an examination without a valid reason, incomplete applications and other circumstances it deems appropriate.

### **Certificates**

The initial certificate is issued to credential holders upon completion of all credential requirements. Credential holders who request a new certificate due to name change or replacement will need to contact [credentialing@neha.org](mailto:credentialing@neha.org)

### **Refunds**

The Application Fee is non-refundable and non-transferable for all applications, including those that are rejected. Written requests for refunds of Exam and Pearson VUE fees will be honored only up to ninety (90) days after the fees have been processed by NEHA. Refunds are not granted to candidates who forfeit or fail the examination.

### **Confidentiality**

Information regarding the status of an applicant or candidate will only be discussed with the applicant or candidate or their legal representative. The credential staff may release information regarding a candidate's performance on the credential examination to an employer or entity only with written permission from the candidate.

### **Trademarks and Copyrights**

The CFSSA Credential mark will be submitted to the U.S. Patent and Trade Office for registration. The "Certified in Food Safety Supplier Audits" and "CFSSA" designations are the property of the NEHA. Individuals who earn the CFSSA 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 CFSSA designation**

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

John Doe, CFSSA

John Doe, Certified in Food Safety Supplier Audits

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