

# **NEHA Certified Professional - Food Safety Credential (CP-FS®)**



## **Candidate Information Brochure**



## **CP-FS® Examination**

### **Eligibility Requirements**

To be eligible for the CP-FS® credential, a candidate must meet the criteria for A, B, or C as follows:

A. Degree Track: You are eligible for the credential if you have:

1. A Bachelor's degree in environmental health from a degree program accredited by the National Environmental Health Science and Protection Accreditation Council. To find out if your degree program has been accredited by NEHSPAC, please visit their website at: <http://www.nehspac.org/about-ehac/accredited-programs-ehac-undergraduate-programs/>; OR
2. a Bachelor's degree with at least two (2) years of experience in food protection; OR
3. a Bachelor's degree and possession of the NEHA REHS/RS credential

B. Experience Track: You are eligible for the credential if you have:

1. an Associate's degree and four (4) years of progressive experience in food-related work, and a valid, unexpired Certified Professional Food Manager (CPFM) certificate, Food Safety Managers Certification Examination (FSMCE) certificate, SuperSafe Mark certificate, OR a ServSafe Food Protection Manager certificate; OR
2. a High School Diploma or GED and five (5) years of progressive experience in food-related work, and a valid, unexpired Certified Professional Food Manager (CPFM) certificate, Food Safety Managers Certification Examination (FSMCE) certificate, SuperSafe Mark certificate, OR a ServSafe Food Protection Manager certificate.

C. "In-Training" Status:

If you are applying under condition A-2 of the eligibility requirements, but do not yet have the required work experience, you may apply for an "In-Training" Status registration. You will have three (3) years to acquire the necessary experience to transfer your registration to full-credential status. If you do not acquire the necessary experience in three years, your "In-Training" status will expire. In order to obtain the credential, you will need to once again apply and be found eligible to take the exam.

### **Foreign Applicants**

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 to determine equivalency to a Bachelor's degree in the United States. 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 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](http://www.naces.org).

Official Canadian university transcripts are accepted without a third-party evaluation if they are in English.

## **Completing the Application**

Applications must be completed and returned to NEHA for review at least four (4) weeks prior to the exam date. If an application is received by NEHA less than 4 weeks prior to when an examination is being given you may have to schedule the exam for another date.

A complete application should include:

1. Completed NEHA Application for Professional Credentials.
2. Official college transcripts or official high school transcripts or GED. To be considered an official transcript it should be received at the NEHA office in the sealed envelope from the school's Registrar's Office/Transcript Office. We will also accept electronic
3. Appropriate fees.
4. Third party review (applicable for candidates with foreign education).

## **Exam Fees**

All fees should accompany the NEHA Application for Professional Credentials.

|                                  | <u>Member Rate</u> | <u>Non-Member Rate</u> |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Application fees:                | \$95.00            | \$130.00               |
| Examination fees:                | \$165.00           | \$275.00               |
| Pearson VUE fee (if applicable): | \$110.00           | \$110.00               |

## **Exam Scheduling and Locations**

Candidates can choose to schedule the CP-FS® examination in several different ways:

1. The CP-FS® exam is offered annually at the NEHA Annual Educational Conference (AEC) & Exhibition.
2. State Affiliate and Regional Meetings periodically offer the CP-FS® exam at their meetings/conferences. An up to date listing of these meeting/conference offerings can be found on the NEHA website at: <http://www.neha.org/professional-development/credentials/credential-exam-schedule>
3. Candidates can choose to take the exam on computer through Pearson VUE. By choosing this option candidates can schedule the examination at their convenience at one of Pearson VUE's testing locations worldwide. To find a Pearson VUE testing center near you please visit [www.pearsonvue.com/neha](http://www.pearsonvue.com/neha). Taking the exam at Pearson VUE not only offers the candidate flexibility in scheduling the exam, but also allows the candidate to receive his/her scores immediately following the conclusion of the exam.

4. Special test sites may be arranged through NEHA in cooperation with its test vendor, PTI. In order to accommodate requests for special test sites, arrangements must be made a minimum of 6-8 weeks prior to the requested date. The fee to set up a special test site is \$350.00. For groups of 10 or more CP-FS® candidates, the special test site fee is waived. Please complete the Special Test Site Request Form (Appendix A) and return it to NEHA with your application. There must be at least three (3) people taking the exam to set up a special test site.

### **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 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 Request Form, including the specific diagnosis of your disability; submit medical records, or other written proof of the diagnosis by an appropriate licensed professional; and the type of accommodation being requested. All forms and documentation must be returned to NEHA at least 8 weeks prior to the scheduled test date. To receive a copy of the form please contact [Credentialing@neha.org](mailto:Credentialing@neha.org).

If the forms are not returned to NEHA at least 8 weeks prior to the scheduled test date your request for special accommodations may not be honored or may be delayed.

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).

### **ADMISSION TO THE EXAM**

**Paper and Pencil Exams:** NEHA will send an admission ticket approximately 2 weeks prior to your test date. The admission ticket will detail the exam date and location, reporting time, and starting time. Those that do not appear on the date of the exam at the appropriate time will forfeit all exam fees. Persons arriving after the examination has started may not be admitted.

If you lost your admission ticket or have not received an admission ticket at least 2 days prior to the test date, please contact NEHA immediately.

Only approved candidates will be admitted to the exam. No walk-in applicants will be admitted.

On test day please bring with you your admission ticket, photo identification (i.e. driver's license or passport), and sharpened #2 pencils.

**Pearson VUE Computer Candidates:** NEHA will send you an authorization email when your application is processed as approved. The email will have your Pearson VUE ID number and the Pearson VUE website to schedule a testing time. On test day please bring your photo identification (i.e. driver's license or passport). After scheduling your exam with Pearson VUE, please verify the information is correct and read the Pearson VUE Testing Center policy in your e-mail confirmation. Please contact Pearson VUE if you have any questions regarding what forms of identification are accepted.

### **Scores**

The scaled passing score for the CP-FS® is 650. Your score will be based on the number of questions answered correctly. If you are unsure of the answer, it is better to guess. You will not be given credit for any question left blank.

The NEHA CP-FS® examination reports scores using scaled scores that range from 0 to 900 with a passing score of 650. The raw passing score is mathematically transformed so that the passing scaled score equals 650. This process is similar to the way one adjusts Celsius and Fahrenheit temperature scales. While the values may differ the temperatures are the same. For example, water boils at the same temperature regardless of the scale used.

Candidates who pass the examination will earn scaled scores between 650 and above and those who fail earn a scaled score between 0 and 649. A scaled score is NOT a percentage score. In summary, a scale score is merely a transformation of a raw score. Scaling is done to report comparable results when forms and raw passing scores vary over time.

Exam results will be mailed and/or emailed to you from the NEHA office 4-6 weeks after the administration.

### **Retaking 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.

### **Credential Maintenance**

Once you have obtained the CP-FS® credential you must maintain it. To keep your credential in good standing you must:

1. Submit a minimum of 24 hours of continuing education every two years; and

2. Submit renewal fees for your credential every two years (\$130.00 members; \$345.00 non-members).

### **NEHA’s Credentialing Handbook**

It is strongly recommended that you read NEHA’s Credentialing Handbook: Guide to Policies and Procedures for NEHA’s Credentialing Programs. This handbook, which can be downloaded from the NEHA website at <http://neha.org/professional-development/credentials>, outlines all the policies you are expected to follow by being a NEHA credential holder. The handbook also outlines in further detail the procedures for applying for a credential, submitting continuing education, and maintaining your credential.

### **Exam Description and Content Outline**

The CP-FS® examination consists of a total of 140 multiple-choice questions. Candidates are given a total of two and ½ hours (2.5) hours to complete the exam. There will be a total of 140 items on the examination, 120 of which will be scored and 20 unscored pilot items. The scored items are reflective of the exam blueprint listed below.

Below is an outline of the seven (7) different content areas the examination covers, and the percentages allotted to each of those areas. Please use this outline as a guide when preparing for the examination.

| Duties and Tasks |   | Percentage |
|------------------|---|------------|
| A                | Developing Food Safety Policies, Procedures, and Training     | 20.00%     |
| 1                | Identify the five risk factors                                |            |
| 2                | Identify potential areas for contamination                    |            |
| 3                | Identify food pathogen attributes                             |            |
| 4                | Develop good manufacturing practices (GMPs)                   |            |
| 5                | Develop allergen control procedures                           |            |
| 6                | Develop standard operating procedures (SOPs)                  |            |
| 7                | Develop standard sanitary operating procedures (SSOPs)        |            |
| 8                | Develop specific food preparation policies and procedures     |            |
| 9                | Develop an integrated pest management (IPM) plan              |            |
| 10               | Develop employee hygiene practices and policies               |            |
| 11               | Develop good retail practices (GRPs)                          |            |
| 12               | Identify root cause of adverse food safety conditions         |            |
| 13               | Develop sample collection, testing, and evaluation procedures |            |
| 14               | Develop emergency policies and procedures                     |            |
| 15               | Establish a training plan                                     |            |
| 16               | Ensure compliance with state and local training requirements  |            |
| 17               | Develop HACCP plans   |            |

| Duties and Tasks |  | Percentage |
|------------------|--|------------|
| 18               | Administer employee training                                 |            |
| B                | Assessing Food Safety  | 33.33%     |
| 1                | Assemble inspection equipment                                |            |
| 2                | Calibrate food safety equipment                              |            |
| 3                | Schedule the inspection                                      |            |
| 4                | Evaluate HACCP programs                                      |            |
| 5                | Review compliance history                                    |            |
| 6                | Conduct a menu review  |            |
| 7                | Determine food sources                                       |            |
| 8                | Assess time and temperature controls                         |            |
| 9                | Evaluate employee behaviors                                  |            |
| 10               | Evaluate HACCP plans   |            |
| 11               | Evaluate storage practices                                   |            |
| 12               | Assess cross-contamination of foods                          |            |
| 13               | Evaluate waste management practices                          |            |
| 14               | Evaluate chemical handling practices                         |            |
| 15               | Evaluate cleaning and sanitizing practices                   |            |
| 16               | Evaluate controls of special foods                           |            |
| 17               | Evaluate storage areas                                       |            |
| 18               | Analyze food preparation activities                          |            |
| 19               | Assess food equipment  |            |
| 20               | Review administrative documentation                          |            |
| 21               | Assess plumbing hazards                                      |            |
| 22               | Assess risk factors  |            |
| 23               | Document assessment findings                                 |            |
| 24               | Assess pest control practices                                |            |
| 25               | Assess employee hygiene practices                            |            |
| 26               | Evaluate the need and frequency of food safety assessments   |            |
| 27               | Manage the flow of foods                                     |            |
| 28               | Interpret test results                                       |            |
| 29               | Analyze food safety inspection findings                      |            |
| 30               | Draft required responses for violations                      |            |
| 31               | Develop a corrective action plan                             |            |
| 32               | Verify the operator's knowledge of a risk control plan       |            |
| 33               | Review whether or not a risk control plan is being used      |            |
| 34               | Educate food service staff                                   |            |
| 35               | Communicate post-inspection findings to the person in charge |            |
| C                | Reviewing Establishment Plans                                | 10.00%     |
| 1                | Research local laws and regulations                          |            |

| Duties and Tasks |   | Percentage |
|------------------|---|------------|
| 2                | Apply for licenses, permits, and variances  |            |
| 3                | Compare menus to site conditions  |            |
| 4                | Review external site plans  |            |
| 5                | Evaluate food/product flow  |            |
| 6                | Evaluate hazards in food/product flow   |            |
| 7                | Evaluate plumbing, electrical, and mechanical infrastructure                            |            |
| 8                | Determine hot water demands   |            |
| 9                | Assess ware washing needs   |            |
| 10               | Evaluate food storage needs   |            |
| 11               | Evaluate restroom needs   |            |
| 12               | Evaluate sewage disposal system   |            |
| 13               | Evaluate facility lighting  |            |
| 14               | Evaluate the facility walls, floors, and ceilings                                       |            |
| 15               | Evaluate potable water sources  |            |
| 16               | Evaluate transport equipment  |            |
| 17               | Evaluate handwashing needs  |            |
| 18               | Review finish schedule  |            |
| 19               | Review employee training  |            |
| 20               | Review HACCP plans  |            |
| 21               | Verify physical build is according to plans   |            |
| 22               | Verify equipment certifications   |            |
| 23               | Verify compliance with local, state, or federal laws and regulations                    |            |
| 24               | Verify establishment licenses and permits   |            |
| D                | Investigating Foodborne Illness   | 15.00%     |
| 1                | Determine legitimacy of foodborne illness   |            |
| 2                | Communicate with appropriate agencies regarding the investigation process               |            |
| 3                | Communicate with internal and external stakeholders regarding the investigation process |            |
| 4                | Interview cases of foodborne illness  |            |
| 5                | Establish 72 hour food history  |            |
| 6                | Collect case samples  |            |
| 7                | Conduct suspected facility investigations   |            |
| 8                | Evaluate food preparation practices   |            |
| 9                | Identify employee impacts on a case   |            |
| 10               | Hold food for disposition   |            |
| 11               | Collect food samples  |            |
| 12               | Collect facility samples  |            |
| 13               | Initiate a trace back   |            |
| 14               | Manage internal and external crisis communications                                      |            |
| 15               | Abate existing violations   |            |



| Duties and Tasks |  | Percentage |
|------------------|--|------------|
| 16               | Write foodborne illness reports  |            |
| 17               | Coordinate incident recovery processes                                 |            |
| E                | Performing Recall Activities   | 6.67%      |
| 1                | Train staff on recall activities                                       |            |
| 2                | Conduct mock recalls   |            |
| 3                | Submit regulatory information  |            |
| 4                | Determine implicated products  |            |
| 5                | Determine affected lot numbers   |            |
| 6                | Secure distribution lists  |            |
| 7                | Communicate recall information to stakeholders                         |            |
| 8                | Prevent future sales of recalled products                              |            |
| 9                | Verify affected products were removed                                  |            |
| 10               | Execute disposition of affected products                               |            |
| 11               | Manage consumer inquiries regarding recall                             |            |
| F                | Managing Food Defense Practices  | 6.67%      |
| 1                | Conduct food defense vulnerability assessments                         |            |
| 2                | Identify food defense hazards  |            |
| 3                | Develop a food defense plan  |            |
| 4                | Establish food defense enforcement protocols                           |            |
| 5                | Implement corrective action plans                                      |            |
| 6                | Collaborate with federal, state, and local regulatory agencies         |            |
| 7                | Train employees on food defense plans                                  |            |
| 8                | Conduct food defense drills  |            |
| 9                | Identify a suspect food defense event                                  |            |
| 10               | Communicate critical information to internal and external stakeholders |            |
| 11               | Perform post event analysis  |            |
| G                | Responding to Emergencies  | 8.33%      |
| 1                | Determine parameters for ceasing operations                            |            |
| 2                | Coordinate the emergency response team                                 |            |
| 3                | Identify risks associated with the emergency                           |            |
| 4                | Identify emerging risks associated with the event                      |            |
| 5                | Segregate contaminated foods   |            |
| 6                | Contact regulatory agencies regarding emergencies                      |            |
| 7                | Communicate emergency information to stakeholders                      |            |
| 8                | Activate the recovery plan   |            |
| 9                | Assess infrastructure for capacity to operate                          |            |
| 10               | Evaluate a facility's ability to reopen                                |            |
| 11               | Verify compliance with emergency response plans                        |            |
| Totals           |  | 100.00%    |

## **Recommended Study References**

Below is a list of study references that are recommended to assist the candidate in preparing for the CP-FS® examination. Many textbooks are available for purchase through the NEHA online [Bookstore](#).

**A CP-FS® Study Guide, an Online Prep Course and CP-FS® Flash Cards have been developed and are available for purchase in the NEHA Bookstore.**

### **Individual References**

1. *FDA: Federal Drug Administration 2009 Food Code*
2. *FDA: Federal Drug Administration 2013 Food Code*
3. *FDA: Code of Federal Regulations Title 21*
4. *Modern Food Microbiology (Seventh Edition), 2005, J. M. Jay, M. J. Loessner, and D. A. Golden*
5. *FDA: Bioterrorism Act of 2002*
6. *FDA: CARVER + Shock: Enhancing Food Defense*
7. *CDC: Emerging Infectious Diseases (Volume 18, Number 3), 2012.*
8. *FDA: Food Establishment Plan Review Guide*
9. *CIFOR: Guidelines for Foodborne Disease Outbreak Response*
10. *Conference for Food Protection: Emergency Action Plan for Retail Food Establishments*
11. *FDA: Investigations Operations Manual 2012*
12. *Essentials of Food Safety and Sanitation, 4th Edition, 2005. D. McSwane, N. Rue, and R. Linton*
13. *FDA: Guidance for Industry: Retail Food Stores and Food Service Establishments*
14. *FDA: Managing Food Safety: A Regulator's Manual For Applying HACCP Principles to Risk-based Retail and Food Service Inspections and Evaluating Voluntary Food Safety Management Systems*
15. *Environmental Engineering, 6th Edition, 2009. J.A. Salvato, N. Nemerow, F. Agardy*
16. *FDA: Reportable Food Registry for Industry*
17. *Principles of Food Sanitation, 5th Edition, 2006, N.G. Marriott and R.B. Gravani*
18. *FDA: Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards*
19. *FEMA: Incident Command System Overview*
20. *FDA: Food and Drug Administration Amendments Act (FDAAA) of 2007*
21. *FDA: Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA)*
22. *FDA: Guide to Traceback of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables Implicated in Epidemiological Investigations*
23. *IUFoST: Scientific Information Bulletin (SIB): Food Traceability, 2012*
24. *FDA: HACCP Principles & Application Guidelines*
25. *FEMA: National Incident Management System*
26. *The HACCP Food Safety Manual, 1995, Joan K. Loken*
27. *Control of Communicable Diseases Manual, 18th Edition, 2004. APHA, Ed. By David Heymann, MD*

Appendix A

**Special Test Site Request Form for Paper and Pencil Group Exams.**

Minimum of 3 people testing. \$350 fee for 3-9 people.

Please allow 4-6 weeks for processing.

**Name of Person Requesting Site:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Phone Number:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Employer:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Address:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Email Address:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Requested Test Date:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Requested Location:**

**Number of Expected Exam Candidates:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please attach to this application a list of candidate names and which exam (REHS/RS®, CP-FS®, CCFS, CFSSA or CFOI) they are taking. We need the list a month before the test date. There is a 3-person minimum for setting up a special test site.**

**Acknowledgement Statement**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, acknowledge that this request to the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) for a special test site is only a request and not a binding agreement to provide such a test site. I also acknowledge that if there are fewer than 10 candidates testing, **a fee of \$350.00** will be incurred and must be **paid in full a month PRIOR** to the test date.

My signature below attests to my understanding and abiding to the above statement.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Proctor Information for Special Test Sites**

Proctor Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address (Cannot ship to PO Box, APO or FPO):

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**National Environmental Health Association**

Attn: Credentialing Department  
720 S. Colorado Blvd., Suite 1000-N  
Denver, CO 80246

E-mail: [credentialing@neha.org](mailto:credentialing@neha.org)

Fax: 303-691-9490

**Please allow 4-6 weeks for processing**

If you have any questions or need assistance completing this application, please contact the NEHA Credentialing Department at: 303-756-9090, ext. 310.