



# NATIONAL CHIMNEY SWEEP GUILD

## Certification Candidate Handbook

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# INTRODUCTION

Congratulations! You've decided to pursue certification through the [National Chimney Sweep Guild](#) (NCSG). This handbook is the primary source of information for the NCSG certification program. It provides individuals with everything they need to know to participate in the certification process. It also serves as the official guide to all certification policies and procedures.

## Background

The NCSG Certifications Program was created by and for the chimney sweeping industry based on 15 months of input and direction from numerous subject matter experts across the United States.

These experts participated in the job task analyses (JTAs) for the [Certified Chimney Professional](#) (CCP), [Certified Chimney Journeyman](#) (CCJ), and [Certified Chimney Reliner](#) (CCR) certifications. The resulting content outlines were then distributed via survey to chimney sweep professionals across the United States, providing valid evidence for the inclusion of the different subdomains and knowledge/task statements for each role.

The programs also underwent a rigorous beta-testing phase, where the exam content and delivery are piloted. Feedback from chimney sweeps across the country continues to help fine-tune the exam process.

## About

The National Chimney Sweep Guild (NCSG) is a 501(c)(6) non-profit trade association that promotes the success of chimney and venting businesses. Together, our member businesses celebrate the legacy of the chimney and hearth trade and advance the interests of our industry.

Members in each of NCSG's six regions elect board members to represent their geographical region. In addition to regional directors, the membership elects two at-large directors from among its voting members and one supplier representative from among its supplier members. Additionally, two at-large directors are nominated by the NCSG Governance Committee and confirmed by the board.

### Statement of Impartiality and Fairness

NCSG's leadership and management, including its Certification Committee, endorse the principles of impartiality and fairness and commit to:

1. Implement its policies and procedures impartially and fairly
2. Not restrict certification based on undue financial or other limiting conditions
3. Not allow commercial, financial, or other pressures to compromise impartiality in certification activities

## Mission

The National Chimney Sweep Guild (NCSG) is a community of professionals that promotes safety, education, business development, and advocacy for the chimney and venting industry.

## Vision

NCSG is the leading resource for the chimney and venting industry.

## Certification Governance

The NCSG Certification Committee provides oversight and governance, as well as establishes policies related to NCSG certifications. The Certification Committee is solely responsible for all essential decisions related to developing, administering, and maintaining all ongoing NCSG certifications.

NCSG reserves the right, at its discretion, to change the standards, policies, and procedures for the certification process at any time. It is important that applicants and certificants refer to this handbook for current information and updates. All changes and updates will be posted on the certification website and/or communicated directly to certificants via email. Participants in the certification process are strongly encouraged to check the website often and be attentive to emails sent from NCSG.

## Contact Information

To learn more about NCSG, the value of certification, the requirements to earn and maintain certification, and to file a complaint or appeal, visit [certifiedchimneyprofessionals.com](https://certifiedchimneyprofessionals.com) or get in touch via email at [certifications@ncsg.org](mailto:certifications@ncsg.org) or by phone at 317-837-1500. Most of your questions can be answered by the NCSG staff; however, we partner with two external companies that support the technology behind our certification programs.

## Exam Registration and Testing

[Prolydian](#) supports the certification process through its candidate management system and continuing education manager. Many technical questions can be answered by visiting <https://prolydian.ladesk.com/525946-Test-Taker-FAQs>. Here you'll find information and videos on remote proctored exams, technical requirements, an overview of the exam-day experience, and more. In the event that you'll need technical support with your Prolydian account, you can contact [prolydian.ladesk.com](https://prolydian.ladesk.com).

## Online Proctoring

[ProctorU](#) provides the online proctoring system and personnel for NCSG certifications that enables candidates to take the exam conveniently and securely from their own environment. Should you need support during your exam, you can reach ProctorU support at 855-772-8678 or by clicking the blue chat icon in the bottom right corner of the screen when on the [ProctorU website](#).

# TYPES OF CERTIFICATIONS

NCSG offers three certifications: [Certified Chimney Professional](#) (CCP), [Certified Chimney Journeyman](#) (CCJ), and [Certified Chimney Reliner](#) (CCR).

## Exam Content Outline

NCSG certifications utilize computer-based exams composed of multiple-choice questions administered in one session, with a single, predefined break. All questions will be included in calculating the candidates' scores. The exam questions cover the topic areas detailed in the exam content outlines included below. The exams are currently offered in English only.

Certifications offered by NCSG are developed using nationally-recognized industry standards. The NCSG certification exams conform to content outlines based on a job task analysis of professionals working in the chimney industry. The initial practice analysis study was conducted in 2021 with participation from a diverse panel of subject matter experts (SMEs). The practice analysis study focused on identifying what those working in the chimney industry need to know and be able to do. Exam questions are based on this analysis, and it is an essential process in identifying required expertise and performance standards.

The NCSG Certification Committee provides oversight for the development and ongoing maintenance of the certification exams. The Certification Committee and NCSG staff work in partnership with testing specialists to ensure the exam is developed and maintained in a manner consistent with generally accepted principles for professional certification programs.

## **Study Plans: Impartiality Related to Education and Training Leading to Certification**

The NCSG Certification Committee does not require, provide, approve, accredit, recommend, or endorse any specific educational programs, courses, study guides, review materials, or other exam preparation products.

Candidates are encouraged to develop a study plan based on a review of the content outline available above. For a description and more details on each category, please see the content outlines available online:

- [CCP Content Outline](#)
- [CCR Content Outline](#)
- [CCJ Content Outline](#)

**Term Valid:  
3 Years**



**100 Questions**  
Approximately  
3 hours

**Overview:** The Certified Chimney Professional (CCP) is designed to provide an independent assessment of early-to-mid career chimney sweeps through a knowledge-based exam. Passing the CCP exam demonstrates that a candidate has thoughtfully prepared, understands pertinent codes and standards, and has the competency to perform skilled and safe maintenance of chimneys.

**Prerequisites:** None

**Candidate Profile:** Entry-level and mid-level chimney professionals that are seeking to demonstrate competency in chimney service, safety, and maintenance. One to three years of experience is recommended.

**Competencies:**

- Systems Knowledge and Installation
- Inspection, Cleaning and Tools
- Safety
- Science of Combustion

**CCP Exam Fee:**

- NCSG Members: \$499
- Individuals not members of NCSG: \$699

## CCP Exam Blueprint

The table below illustrates the major topics presented on each exam with the percentage of total questions that will appear in each category. [More details available online.](#)

1. Systems Knowledge and Installation ( <i>Heating Systems, Connectors, Venting, Chimneys, Chases and Clearance Reduction</i> )	37%
2. Inspection Sweeping and Tools ( <i>Inspections, Sweeping Methods and Tools, and Appliances</i> )	26%
3. Safety ( <i>Ladder and Scaffolding Safety, Roof Safety and Fall Protection, and Health Hazards and Guidelines</i> )	25%
4. Science of Combustion ( <i>Basic Science of Combustion</i> )	12%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Term Valid:  
3 Years**



**100 questions**  
Approximately  
3 hours

**Overview:** The Certified Chimney Reliner (CCR) is designed to provide an independent assessment of early-to-mid career chimney sweeps through a knowledge-based exam. Passing the CCR exam demonstrates that a candidate has thoughtfully prepared, understands pertinent codes and standards and has the competency to perform skilled and safe chimney relining and repairs.

**Prerequisites:** None

**Candidate Profile:** Entry-level and mid-level chimney professionals who specialize in relining chimneys that are seeking to demonstrate more advanced/specialized knowledge and experience. One to two years of experience is recommended.

**Competencies:**

- Chimney Construction and Chimney/Flue Liner Knowledge
- Inspection and Codes
- Chimney Relining and Repair Processes
- Safety
- Math

**CCR Exam Fee:**

- NCSG Members: \$499
- Individuals not members of NCSG: \$699

## CCR Exam Blueprint

The table below illustrates the major topics presented on each exam with the percentage of total questions that will appear in each category. [More details available online.](#)

1. Chimney Construction and Chimney/Flue Liner Knowledge ( <i>Chimney Construction and Chimney/Flue Liners</i> )	21%
2. Inspection and Codes ( <i>Codes and Standards</i> )	20%
3. Chimney Relining and Repair Processes ( <i>General Knowledge, Tile Removal, Fire Clay Tiles, Flue Liner Resurfacing Products, Metal Liners, Cast-In-Place, Factory Built Fireplace Systems, Gas and Oil Relining, Connectors, and Other Chimney/Venting Applications and Modifications</i> )	35%
4. Safety ( <i>Fall Protection, Scaffolding Safety, Tool and Equipment Safety, Personal Protective Equipment and Product Safety, and Confined Space Entry</i> )	16%
5. Math ( <i>Math Calculation for Chimney Relining</i> )	8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Term Valid:  
3 Years**



**100 questions**  
Approximately  
3 hours

**Overview:** The Certified Chimney Journeyman (CCJ) is designed to provide an independent assessment of seasoned chimney sweeps through a knowledge-based exam. Passing the CCJ exam demonstrates that the candidate has thoughtfully prepared, has an advanced understanding of pertinent codes and standards, has a depth of knowledge of chimney systems and the competency to perform skilled and safe chimney repairs and replacements. Additionally, CCJ candidates are assessed on administrative tasks related to reporting, documentation and customer service.

**Prerequisites:** CCP as issued by NCSG; NFI certification as issued by the National Fireplace Institute (NFI); or Certified Chimney Sweep as issued by the Chimney Safety Institute of America (CSIA). The relevant credential must be active within the last three years at the time of application.

**Candidate Profile:** Advanced-level chimney professionals dedicated to the trade who demonstrate leadership in the field. Three to five years of experience is recommended.

**Competencies:**

- Systems Knowledge and Installation
- Inspection, Sweeping, and Tools
- Safety
- Advanced Chimney Physics
- Administrative
- Repair and Replacement Options

**CCJ Exam Fee:**

- NCSG Members: \$499 (plus a \$50 application fee)
- Individuals not members of NCSG: \$699 (plus a \$50 application fee)

## CCJ Exam Blueprint

The table below illustrates the major topics presented on each exam with the percentage of total questions that will appear in each category. [More details available online.](#)

1. Systems Knowledge and Installation ( <i>Heating Systems, Connectors, Venting, Chimneys, and Chases</i> )	23%
2. Inspection Sweeping and Tools ( <i>Inspections, Sweeping Methods and Tools, and Appliances</i> )	20%
3. Safety ( <i>Ladder and Scaffolding Safety, Roof Safety and Fall Protection, Health Hazards and Guidelines, and Home and Homeowner Safety</i> )	15%
4. Advanced Chimney Physics ( <i>Combustion, Pressurization, Sizing and Design, and Floor Protectors and R/K Values</i> )	16%
5. Administrative ( <i>Documentation and Reporting, and Service and Communication</i> )	9%
6. Repair and Replacement Options ( <i>Masonry Repairs, Factory Built Repairs and Exterior Repairs</i> )	17%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

# APPLYING FOR CERTIFICATION

## Application Process and Timeline

Certification applicants are required to complete an [online application](#) within NCSG's certification management system, Prolydian ([app.prolydian.com/organizations/NCSG](http://app.prolydian.com/organizations/NCSG)). If you do not already have a profile in the system, you will be prompted to create one. Applicants with a disability who require assistance completing the application should contact [certifications@ncsg.org](mailto:certifications@ncsg.org).

Candidates must complete the application in full, using their name exactly as it appears on a current approved government-issued photo ID. Approved government-issued photo ID includes:

- Government-issued driver's license
- Passport
- Non-US military issued identification card
- Any physical government-issued identification card (must include photo)

## Review of Application and Notice of Status

NCSG will review applications and provide notice of application status within 7 days. If approved, you will receive a verification email with instructions on how to register for the exam. If your application is not approved, you will receive a notification of the next steps.

If you have not received a confirmation email within 7 business days of submitting the application, you should contact [certifications@ncsg.org](mailto:certifications@ncsg.org) to confirm the status of your application.

## Application and Testing Deadlines

Candidates must register and take the exam within 6 months of submitting an application. Once a candidate's application is approved, the applicant can select a date and time to take a remotely proctored exam OR choose from a list of in-person testing events with an in-person proctor. Dates and locations for in-person testing events (with an in-person proctor) will be noted on [NCSG's event calendar](#).

## Other Fees

CCP, CCR, and CCJ exam fees are noted on pages 8, 9, and 10, respectively. Other fees, if applicable, include an application fee (CCJ only), recertification fee, and retest fee. All types of fees are non-transferable from one candidate to another.

### Application Fee (CCJ only)

A \$50 application fee for the Certified Chimney Journeyman (CCJ) will be non-refundable and non-transferable. This fee is separate from the exam fee, retake/retest fee(s), reschedule/cancellation fee(s), or optional preparatory programs.

## Recertification Fee

- NCSG members: \$299
- Non-members: \$499

Once the exam is passed, the certification is valid for 3 years. At the 3-year anniversary, certified individuals are eligible to apply for recertification for another 3-year period.

To be eligible for recertification, candidates must earn 36 CEUs and pay the recertification fee (\$299 for employees of NCSG member company or \$499 for non-members). Alternately, candidates can retake the exam and pay the exam fee. For more information on the recertification process, please skip to the After the Exam section of this handbook.

## Retest Fee

- \$100 (after 14 days, but before 6 months)

The retest fee is only applicable to candidates who have previously taken an NCSG exam (CCP, CCR or CCJ) but did not receive a passing score. Eligible candidates must contact NCSG for a discount code. The test given during the retest session will be a different, but equivalent exam than the first testing session.

## Making Payments

Payments may be made online via Prolydian at the time of the initial application or recertification application. All major credit and debit cards are accepted, including Visa, MasterCard, American Express, and Discover.

For questions related to the payment process, contact NCSG staff at [certifications@ncsg.org](mailto:certifications@ncsg.org) or 317-837-1500.

# TESTING OPTIONS

NCSG offers certification testing options via in-person proctored events ([see NCSG event calendar](#)) as well as through an online, remote proctoring process. Exams are administered through Prolydian and proctored by either ProctorU (for remote proctoring) or by an approved individual at a scheduled event (for in-person proctoring).

Once an individual has submitted an application and has been approved to take the exam, NCSG will send instructions via email for scheduling the exam. Candidates must follow the instructions in this email to schedule either an in-person exam or remote proctored exam.

## Scheduling a Remote Proctored Exam

If scheduling a remote proctored online exam, the individual must first **register** for the online exam, then **schedule** the exam on the desired date and time. Once the exam has been scheduled, candidates will receive a confirmation email listing the date and time of the exam. This email will also contain instructions on how to prepare for a live, remote proctored exam session. Please check email spam or junk folders for the email.

## Testing Accommodations for Candidates with Disabilities

NCSG complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and strives to ensure that no individual with a documented disability is deprived of the opportunity to take a certification exam solely by reason of that disability, provided that reasonable special accommodations can be made. Applicants requesting accommodations must notify NCSG prior to scheduling the exam via [this form](#). Please skip to the Policies section of this handbook for more information.

## Rescheduling

The exam may be rescheduled as long it is done **at least 4 hours** in advance of the scheduled test time and if it is within the 6-month window of submitting the application. If, however, the exam is canceled with less than 4 hours notice—or if the candidate misses their scheduled time, shows up late, or does not provide adequate identification—the candidate will not be able to make a new appointment without paying an additional testing fee of \$100. Specific instructions for rescheduling will be included in the exam scheduling confirmation email.

## Cancellation Policy

Cancellation or rescheduling is allowed **up to 4 hours** before the appointment time. If an appointment is missed, a new registration is required and a fee of \$100 will be assessed.

No fees will be refunded in the event a candidate fails to report at the scheduled time or fails to register for an exam within the allowed 6-month exam window.

### **Important Note:**

**BEFORE** exam day, be sure that your computer and the location where you intend to take the exam meet the requirements specified in your confirmation email. If they do not meet the requirements, you will not be able to complete the test, and you will not receive a refund.

## Exam How-To Resources

- [Online Test Taker FAQ](#)
- [5 Tips To Boost Test Taker Success](#)
- [Online Proctoring Troubleshooting Guide](#)
- [How To Get Started With Your Testing Session](#)

## Remote Proctored Exam Rules

To provide a fair and consistent environment for all candidates, exams are delivered using standardized procedures following strict security protocols. Candidates are required to follow all testing rules at all times. Failure to follow these rules may result in the termination of a candidate's testing session, invalidation of the candidate's exam score, and/or disciplinary action.

Actions and behaviors that will be flagged during an exam:

- **Talking aloud:** Unless you have an accommodation, talking or whispering aloud during the exam is not permitted.
- **Being out of camera view:** Your face, chin to forehead, needs to be in the camera view at all times.
- **Anyone entering your testing area:** You may not have anyone else in your testing location with you.
- **Anyone talking to you while you're in your testing area:** Additional noises, including other people talking to you, while you're in your exam are not allowed.
- **Looking off-screen:** If you aren't allowed any materials, your eyes should stay on the screen at all times while testing.
- **Utilizing materials that are not allowed:** You're only allowed the permitted materials allowed by your instructor.
- **Taking pictures or screenshots of the exam:** Taking pictures while in your exam, including screenshots, is not permitted. If you're on a Mac and have a live human proctored launch, your proctor will even turn off the ability to use your keyboard screenshot hotkeys.
- **Copying and pasting any elements of the exam:** In most cases, our system will not allow you to copy and paste any content from your exam. Regardless of whether you can or cannot perform this function, our system will capture all events of copy and paste that occur.
- **Utilizing a virtual machine:** Virtual machines can be detected through the pre-exam system check and are not permitted.

- **Utilizing a secondary monitor:** You are only allowed to use one monitor attached to one computer during your exam.

## Violating Rules and Dismissal

Proctors are authorized to take immediate, appropriate measures against candidates who are caught violating testing rules. Any candidate who is observed engaging in any misconduct will be subject to dismissal from the exam, may be barred from future exams for a period ranging from one year to permanent dismissal, and may be required to forfeit their current exam fee and/or period of eligibility. The candidate is entitled to appeal the dismissal determination.

## Technical Requirements

Be sure that the computer and the location where you intend to take the exam meet the requirements specified in your confirmation email **BEFORE** exam day. If they do not meet the requirements, you will not be able to complete the test and will not receive a refund. Additional instructions will be provided to applicants in their confirmation email.

- Guardian Browser is required for testing. [Download here.](#)
- **Operating System:** macOS X 10.13 or higher, Windows 10 or higher. ProctorU does not support Linux or Chrome OS
- **Web Camera:** Minimum 640×480 resolution; recommended 1280×720 resolution
- **Internet Download Speed:** A required upload and download speed of 2Mbps, with 10Mbps preferred
- **RAM:** Minimum 2GB; recommended 4GB
- **A Functioning Microphone:** Webcams with built in microphones and stand alone microphones supported
- **Not Supported:** Tablets (iPad, Galaxy Tab, Galaxy Note, etc.); Mobile (Android, iOS); ARM CPU Architecture; Chromebooks

**If you experience any issues connecting to your proctor or during your exam, please contact ProctorU via the Live Chat feature within your ProctorU account OR call 1-855-772-8678, Option 1.**

## Power Failure or Loss of Internet

Computer-based tests are delivered via secure internet connections. Internet connections are subject to local internet providers. While it is not the norm, internet connections can occasionally be lost momentarily, requiring the proctor to log you back into your exam. If you lose your internet connection, inform the proctor, who will assist you in logging back into your exam. Upon logging back into your exam, you will resume at the first unanswered question. Your exam time remaining will be the same as when the internet connection was lost.

## Before Your Exam

Prior to beginning your exam you must complete the ProctorU computer requirements check and download the Guardian Browser. Follow the steps below to do so:

1. Download the [Guardian Browser](#)
2. Check your equipment to make sure your system is compatible with ProctorU at <https://go.proctoru.com/testitout>
3. Prepare identity verification documents. This includes one form of non-expired valid photo ID (i.e. driver's license, passport, student ID, etc.)

## On the Day of Your Exam

**Log in a few minutes prior to the exam.** You may want to refresh the screen at the time of the exam.

To access your exam:

1. Log into your Prolydian account at <https://app.prolydian.com>
2. Go to the **My Exams** dashboard and click the **Launch Exam** button. This button will be enabled one minute before your exam time.
3. Click **Start Session**
4. Download the Guardian Browser (if you don't already have it)
5. Follow the on-screen instructions to share your screen and check your equipment
6. Follow the identity verification instructions
7. Install a LogMeIn Rescue applet file that will bring up a chat box allowing you to connect with your proctor. The proctor will perform a system check and camera pan of your workspace and will give you directions on how to begin your exam.

## Identification Requirements

Candidates are required to present one form of non-expired valid photo ID (i.e. driver's license, passport, student ID, etc.). **The name and photo on the identification presented must match the examinee as identified at the time of registration. Candidates will not be permitted to test without proper identification, and all fees will be forfeited.**

## Applicant Statement of Understanding

During the online application process, each applicant will see the Applicant Statement of Understanding. Applications will not be approved without verification of reading and agreeing to the statement containing the following items:

1. I attest that the information provided in this application is true and accurate.
2. I understand and agree to comply with National Chimney Sweep Guild certification program requirements and agree to provide any additional information the Guild needs to determine my compliance.
3. I understand that if I fail the exam, I must wait for a minimum of 14 days before retaking it.

4. I understand I am personally responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of the exam content and I agree I will not discuss or document the exam content in any format or participate in any fraudulent test taking practices.
5. I understand that I have the opportunity to request special accommodation for the exam with appropriate documentation of a disability.
6. I understand and agree that National Chimney Sweep Guild reserves the right to use my exam score and certain data from my exam application to prepare summary statistical analyses, some of which may be published, but that my individual data will not be made public.
7. I understand that National Chimney Sweep Guild certification is valid for a period of 3 years, after which time I must meet recertification requirements to retain the certification.
8. I agree to comply with all rules of the National Chimney Sweep Guild certification exams, which are included in the Candidate Handbook and/or will be read to me by the proctor.

### **Should I be granted certification:**

9. I agree to comply with and uphold all policies and requirements of National Chimney Sweep Guild certification program(s).
10. I agree to make claims about the certification only in the manner specified as appropriate by National Chimney Sweep Guild. I further agree that I will not make misleading or unauthorized statements about the certification, not use the certificate issued in a misleading manner, and not use the certification in such a manner as to bring the National Chimney Sweep Guild or its certification programs into disrepute.
11. I acknowledge the certification and all associated marks or logos are the property of the National Chimney Sweep Guild and I agree to discontinue use of all references to certified status should my certification be suspended or withdrawn. Also, I agree to return or destroy the certificate if the certification is withdrawn.
12. I understand that if I seek recertification, it is my responsibility to a) demonstrate evidence of my continued competence through professional development or retaking the exam and b) pay the recertification fee. Further, I agree to voluntarily and immediately report to the National Chimney Sweep Guild any conditions that affect my capability to continue to fulfill the certification requirements.

### **I further understand that:**

1. Candidates will be observed by a proctor, either virtually through a webcam or in person, at all times while taking the exam. Proctors may not necessarily inform candidates of their observations, but they are required to report behavior that may violate the terms and regulations of the National Chimney Sweep Guild (NCSG) or other forms of irregular behavior.
2. Any cheating and/or breach of confidentiality/security or any attempt to subvert the exam process by any candidate violates the purpose and principles of the exam. Any candidate, who carries out, takes part in, or witnesses such behavior must report it to the proctor and/or the National Chimney Sweep Guild as soon as possible.
3. NCSG reserves the right to cancel or withhold any exam results when, in the sole opinion of the NCSG, a testing irregularity occurs; cheating has occurred; there is an apparent discrepancy in or falsification of a candidate's identification; a candidate engages in misconduct or plagiarism; when aberrancies in performance are for which there is no reasonable and satisfactory explanation; or the results are believed to be invalid for any other reason.
4. Conduct before, during or after testing that violates principles detailed in this Agreement may result in the invalidation of exam results and/or other penalties and will be reported to NCSG.

# AFTER THE EXAM

Candidates will receive email notification of their exam results within 30 calendar days of completing the certification exam. That email will contain notification of whether the candidate passed or did not pass as well as feedback regarding the candidate's exam performance in each of the domain areas. This feedback is intended to support new certificants in selecting professional development and continuing education activities. For candidates who do not pass the exam, this feedback is also intended to support them in preparing to retake it.

## Retesting

Retesting candidates who fail the exam must wait 14 days from the initial exam date (and within 6 months) before retaking exam. A retest fee must be submitted during the rescheduling process. If the candidate fails the second attempt, they must wait at least 9 months before retaking the exam for a third time.

## Appeals

All candidates have the right to file an appeal of an adverse decision resulting in a denial of certification or recertification based on a failure to satisfy application requirements, payment of fees required by NCSG, or failure of the certification exam caused by conditions beyond the candidate's control. See the Appeals Policy later in this Candidate Handbook.

## Certificates

A certificate will be available for download for candidates who successfully pass their exam. Log into [Prolydian](#) and click on your **My Achievements** section to download. Successful candidates will also receive information on maintaining certified status. The certificate may only be displayed during the period of time for which the credential is valid.

# MAINTAINING CERTIFICATION

## Purpose

Those who hold an NCSG certification demonstrate their commitment to staying abreast of best practices by ensuring their knowledge and expertise remain current via recertification.

# Recertification Requirements

## Certification Cycle

Certifications are valid for 3 years from the initial expiration date. Certified individuals must complete recertification requirements and submit a complete application no later than 3 months after the expiration date.

## Pathway A: Continuing Education Units (CEUs)

Certified individuals may recertify by accumulating 36 CEUs over the certification cycle subject to the following requirements:

- CCPs maintain their knowledge and certification by earning 36 CEUs as follows: 16 Technical; 8 Codes & Standards; 6 Safety; and 6 Elective (any category including business)
- CCRs maintain their knowledge and certification by earning 36 CEUs as follows: 18 Technical; 6 Codes & Standards; 6 Safety; and 6 Elective (any category including business)
- CCJs maintain their knowledge and certification by earning 36 CEUs as follows: 18 Technical; 6 Codes & Standards; 4 Safety; 2 Business; and 6 Elective (any category including business)
- CEU-granting activities must be NCSG pre-approved courses with a course number. Activities like college classes, volunteering, or public service do not qualify.
- Eligible CEUs are tracked in Prolydian for each certified individual based on rosters submitted by course instructors and approved by the NCSG CEU task force.
- CEUs must be earned after the certification begin date and within the 3-year cycle. CEUs earned before or after the current certification cycle are not eligible.

## Pathway B: Re-Exam

As an alternative to CEUs, certified individuals may recertify by successfully passing the current version of the certification exam. The following conditions apply:

- A passing score must be achieved by the candidate no less than 3 months after their certification expiration date.
- The exam must be the current published version in effect at the time of testing.
- Candidates who take an NCSG exam but did not receive a passing score can retest once after 14 days but within 6 months. Candidates can retest no more than two times within a 1-year period. Re-exam results are valid only for the recertification cycle in which they are earned and do not carry forward. The applicable exam fee applies to each retest attempt.

## Pathway Combination

Certified individuals may not combine partial CEUs with partial re-exam credit. Recertification is completed via one pathway only per cycle. If a candidate begins the re-exam pathway and does not pass, they may switch to the CEU pathway provided they meet all CEU requirements prior to the expiration deadline.

# Recertification Procedure

## Notification and Timeline

Candidates will receive notifications through Prolydian as follows. All communications shall be sent to the email address on record; the certified individual is responsible for maintaining current contact information.

Trigger Point	Action
12 months before expiration	First reminder; recertification window opens; pathway selection guidance included
6 months before expiration	Second reminder; status update; resources and application portal link provided
3 months before expiration	Third reminder; urgent notice; consequences of lapse communicated
2 weeks before expiration	Final reminder
Day of expiration	Certification expires if recertification is not complete
3 months after expiration	Grace period has ended and certification is no longer valid

## Application Submission

Certified individuals must submit a complete recertification application through the certification body's online portal. Application for recertification can begin anytime in the third year of certification as long as the required 36 CEUs have been acquired. The application must include:

- Completed and signed recertification application form
- For Pathway A: Itemized CEU log with activity title, course number, provider, date, and CEU value
- For Pathway B: No application is required; must pass exam in order to remain certified
- Payment of the applicable fee

## Review and Verification

Upon receipt of a complete application, the following verification process applies:

- **Pathway A (CEUs):** The certification manager and/or certification coordinator reviews all applications for eligibility and completeness.
- **Pathway B (Re-Exam):** The certification manager and/or certification coordinator reviews all applications for eligibility and completeness. The passing result received directly within the exam delivery system determines a pass or fail dependent on the established cut score.

## **Decision and Issuance**

Following successful verification, the certification manager or coordinator approves the recertification. An updated certificate will be available in the portal with the new expiration date once the candidate passes the exam. The certification coordinator will update the public certification registry to reflect the renewed status.

If the application is denied, the candidate will receive an email within 5 business days, stating the reason(s) for denial.

## **Lapse and Reinstatement**

A certification lapses automatically upon expiration if recertification requirements are not fulfilled. The following conditions apply to lapsed certifications:

- The individual agrees to cease representing themselves as currently certified.
- The public certification registry will only list individuals who are currently certified.
- Lapsed certifications may be reinstated within 90 days of the lapse date by submitting a complete application meeting the current recertification requirements, and paying the recertification fee.
- Certifications lapsed for more than 90 days may not be reinstated; the individual must apply as a new candidate and meet all current initial certification requirements.

## **Impartiality and Conflicts of Interest**

All personnel involved in recertification decisions must declare any real or perceived conflict of interest with an applicant prior to undertaking any evaluation or decision-making activity. Declared conflicts are managed as follows:

- The conflicted individual is recused from all aspects of that applicant's review and decision.
- A substitute reviewer is appointed by the Certification Manager.
- Declarations and recusals are documented in the applicant's file.

This procedure supports conformance with ISO 17024 Clause 4.3 (Impartiality).

## **Monitoring, Review, and Continuous Improvement**

The performance of the recertification procedures will be reviewed at least annually. Revisions to the procedures will occur whenever there is a substantive change to the certification scheme, exam blueprint, or ISO 17024 requirements.

## **Exceptions and Special Circumstances**

Requests for extension of the recertification deadline due to documented extenuating circumstances (e.g., serious illness, active military deployment, declared disaster) must be submitted in writing to the Certification Manager at least thirty (30) days before expiration. Extensions are granted at the sole discretion of the Certification Manager, are limited to one (1) extension per certification cycle, and shall not exceed six (6) months. Extensions are documented and retained in the individual's file.

# OWNERSHIP AND USE OF NCSG CREDENTIALS

The certification marks and logos are the property of the National Chimney Sweep Guild (NCSG). Permission to use the certification marks or logos is granted to certified persons at the discretion of NCSG for permissible uses only.

## **Persons Authorized To Use the Marks**

Use of any NCSG certification marks and logos is limited to those persons who have been granted the certification by NCSG and who satisfy all maintenance and recertification requirements established by NCSG and NOT by a company as a whole. Use of the mark and logo by individuals who have not been granted and maintained the certification is expressly prohibited.

## **Non-Assignability and Non-Transferability**

Permission to use the certification marks and logos is limited to the certified person. It shall not be transferred to, assigned to, or otherwise used by any other individual, organization, or entity.

## **Mark and Logo Use**

Those persons who have been granted permission to use the certification mark and logo shall do so according to the rules and guidelines established by NCSG. Persons granted permission to use the certification mark and logo must familiarize themselves with the established rules and guidelines for use and must execute approved agreements setting forth such regulations and guidelines for use.

The marks and logos may not be revised or altered in any way. They must be displayed in the same form as produced by NCSG and cannot be reproduced unless such reproduction is identical to the mark provided by NCSG.

The initials "CCP," "CCR," and/or "CCJ" may be used on materials, such as business cards, stationery, letterhead, and similar documents on which the name of the individual certified is prominently displayed to promote themselves personally as an individual certified in the maintenance and reliability profession.

The mark or logo may not be used in any manner that could bring NCSG into disrepute or in any way considered misleading or unauthorized. The mark or logo may not be used in any manner that would tend to imply a connection between any business and the certification, which may, in fact, not exist. This includes any use of the mark or logo that the public might construe as an endorsement, approval, or sponsorship by NCSG of a certificate holder's business or any product or service thereof.

NCSG retains the right, at its sole discretion, to suspend or revoke any person's permission to use its certification mark or logo. In most circumstances, when NCSG is informed that a person is misusing the certification mark or logo, NCSG will provide the person notice of the misuse and a reasonable opportunity to comply with NCSG's rules and guidelines. However, NCSG retains the right to suspend or revoke privileges without notice and an opportunity to correct, particularly when the violation is of a gross nature, and more immediate action is necessary to stop misuse.

Actions by NCSG to suspend or revoke the use of the certification mark shall be communicated in writing to the person whose privileges are being suspended or revoked and to all other persons affected by the decision. NCSG may also publicize its actions on its website and/or any other of its publications. Should any person continue the use of NCSG's certification marks or logos after notice of suspension or revocation, NCSG shall seek full equitable and/or legal remedies through a court of competent jurisdiction.

## **Proper Use of the Credential**

After meeting all eligibility requirements and passing the exam, individuals may use their credential(s) in all correspondence, on resumes/CVs, and promotional materials, such as stationery, websites, business cards, etc. The mark or logo may be used only with the certified individual's name.

Individuals who have met the certification requirements are authorized to use the following certification mark according to the following guidelines:

- The credential may be used as:
  - CCP or Certified Chimney Professional
  - CCR or Certified Chimney Reliner
  - CCJ or Certified Chimney Journeyman
- The credential is used after the certificant's name and following any academic degrees or licenses
  - E.g., Juan Delgado, RN, CCP; or Kris Bowman, MBA, CCJ
- The credential must be clearly associated with the individual certified or be referenced in general terms:
  - Examples of correct use:
    - Fred Chang is a Certified Chimney Reliner
    - Wanda Swanson, CCJ
    - Three XYZ employees hold the CCP certification
  - Example of incorrect use:
    - XYZ organization employs three Reliners (when referring to a CCR credential)
    - XYZ organization is a CCP business (certification is to the individual only)
    - Joel Ortiz has their Certification for Certified Chimney Journeyman

## **Verifying Certification Status**

An publicly-available directory of NCSG certified professionals is available online at <https://ncsg.org/find-a-sweep/find-a-certified-sweep>.

# POLICIES

## Contact Information Changes

NCSG online portal (Prolydian) is the primary method used for communication regarding exam confirmations, exam results and recertification. As a candidate and certificant, you have 24/7 access to exam-profile details and are responsible for ensuring that your contact information in your profile is kept up to date. NCSG recommends using a personal email address and phone number in the event of changes in employment.

## Non-Discrimination

NCSG does not and shall not discriminate based on age, ethnic origin, color, religion, race, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, disability, marital status, or military status in any of its activities or operations. These include, but are not limited to, approval of certification/recertification applicants, staff decisions (including but not limited to hiring, discipline, promotion and termination), selection of volunteers and vendors and provision of services. NCSG is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for certification candidates, certificants, volunteers, staff members, clients, subcontractors, vendors and clients.

## Statement of Impartiality and Fairness

NCSG's leadership and management, including its Certification Committee, endorse the principles of impartiality and fairness and commit to:

- Implement its policies and procedures impartially and fairly,
- Not restrict certification based on undue financial or other limiting conditions, and
- Not allow commercial, financial, or other pressures to compromise impartiality in certification activities.

## Confidentiality and Privacy of Information

NCSG shall hold in confidence and a secure manner the information obtained in the course of certification program activities at all levels of the organization, including the activities of all personnel (paid, contracted, or volunteer) acting on its behalf. Except as required in this Policies & Procedures Manual, information about a particular individual is considered confidential information and shall not be disclosed to a third party by the NCSG staff, volunteers, or contractors without the prior written consent of the individual. Where the law requires information to be disclosed to a third party, and unless the law restricts it, the individual shall be notified in writing beforehand of the information disclosed.

# Testing Accommodations for Candidates with Disabilities

NCSG complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and is committed to providing necessary testing accommodations for examinees with documented disabilities, consistent with the requirements of the law. Accommodations may also be approved for examinees with documented qualifying medical conditions that may be temporary or are not otherwise covered by the ADA, such as pregnancy or a temporary impairment following surgery, including conditions that require the use of medical devices or medication during the exam. NCSG will also provide testing accommodations for candidates testing in other jurisdictions to the extent required by applicable laws in those jurisdictions.

An individual is not considered to have a disability requiring accommodation if the limitations arising from the individual's impairment do not significantly restrict the individual's major life activities compared to the abilities of an average person. Non-specific diagnoses such as individual learning styles, learning differences, academic problems, computer phobias, slow reading, and test difficulty or anxiety in and of themselves do not constitute a disability or impairment.

**The decision as to whether a medical condition not covered by the ADA is a "qualifying medical condition" for purposes of the CCP, CCR and CCJ exams, accommodation is at the sole discretion of the NCSG.**

A range of available accommodations is considered to assist examinees with disabilities or qualifying medical conditions. Accommodations are provided on an individual basis and depend on the nature of the disability or medical condition and the documentation provided. NCSG will make reasonable efforts to provide the requested accommodations to examinees provided the functional impairment has been demonstrated through adequate documentation. The accommodations do not fundamentally alter the measurement of the skills or knowledge the exam is intended to test, do not jeopardize exam integrity and security, are compatible with the nature and purpose of the exam or assessment program, and do not result in an undue burden to the NCSG. Accommodations cannot be made to the actual content of the exam.

## Exam Accommodations

Applicants may request accommodations by completing a Request for Accommodation form upon application submission prior to scheduling their exam. In order to fulfill any accommodations, NCSG requires at least 30 days between the approved accommodation and the testing date. The [Request for Testing Accommodations Agreement Form](#) is available online.

All requests for exam accommodations are strictly confidential, and documentation submitted in support of the request is used solely for the purpose of evaluating the request. Failure to provide NCSG with adequate supporting documentation in a timely manner will cause a delay in the review process and the applicant's ability to schedule and take the exam.

An applicant may request more than one accommodation; however, supporting documentation is required for each requested accommodation.

Examinees cannot schedule their CCP, CCR, or CCJ exam, nor can the exam be administered until the process described above has been completed.

## Common Accommodations

NCSG will base the accommodations on the requests and required documentation received. Common accommodations include extended time for testing (1.5 time or double time), frequent or additional breaks, access to auxiliary items (food, medication, or medical devices), or provision of a reader and/or scribe. Candidates will not be charged any additional fees for approved accommodations.

## Required Supporting Documentation

Adequate supporting documentation from a qualified medical professional certifying the applicant's disability or qualifying medical condition, with specific identification of the requested accommodation and the medical basis for the request, must be submitted to NCSG, either directly from the medical professional or by the applicant. NCSG will verify the authenticity of any submissions sent by the applicant. A qualified professional is someone with the credentials, training, and expertise to diagnose the reported disability or qualifying medical condition. The primary relationship of the attesting professional to the individual must be that of a treating medical professional to a patient; there must be no familial, intimate, supervisory or other close relationship between the qualified professional and the individual requesting the accommodation(s).

The documentation must:

1. Be on the Disability-Related Needs by Qualified Provider Form, typed in English, dated and signed and include the name, title, and professional credentials of the qualified medical professional.
2. Contain contact information, including the address, telephone number, and/or email address of each professional providing documentation.
3. Include the name of the specific disability or medical condition.

NCSG reserves the right to request further verification, if necessary, of the evaluating professional's credentials and expertise relevant to the diagnosis, to verify the authenticity of the supporting documentation, and to seek clarification of the information provided by the evaluating professional.

## Review of Requested Accommodations

NCSG will consider requests for exam accommodations following receipt of an exam application and all required documentation supporting the request. The applicant will be sent a notification of the NCSG's decision regarding the requested accommodation(s).

If accommodations have been approved, the notification will be in the form of a [Testing Accommodations Agreement Form](#) indicating the accommodation(s) that has/have been approved. The applicant must sign the agreement and return it to NCSG by the date indicated within the agreement. The application for an applicant requesting exam accommodations will not be complete until the NCSG receives the signed agreement.

If accommodations have been denied or the applicant disagrees with the Testing Accommodations Agreement, they may appeal NCSG's decision.

## Appeals

An appeal is a formal request for special consideration regarding a decision made by the Certification Committee or its representatives related to an individual's achievement or retention of certification.

## Appeal Submission

An appeal must be submitted electronically on the NCSG website [Appeal & Complaints Form](#). The appeal must be submitted no later than 30 days after notification by the NCSG of the adverse decision. All relevant supporting documentation must be included or referenced in the appeal submission.

## Initial Appeal Review and Determination

The NCSG Certification Manager or their designee will serve as the first level of appeals review. The review will occur within 10 business days of receipt, and a response will be sent to the appellant via email. Staff members will recuse themselves from the appeal consideration if there is any reason for which impartiality might reasonably be questioned or if there is an actual or apparent conflict of interest.

The NCSG Certification Manager or their designee will review the appeal to determine whether it meets the definition of an appeal and whether appeal submission requirements are met. If it does, the NCSG Certification Manager or their designee will investigate and consider the appeal, including but not limited to taking into account the results of previous similar appeals and making a determination on appeal action.

### **The initial response will be one of the following:**

- Appeal denied - The response will be accompanied by an explanation for the denial and/or information on an alternate course of action where applicable. The denial will include information on the appellant's further recourse if the appellant wishes to pursue the appeal.
- Appeal approved
- Appeal forwarded to the Appeals & Complaints Panel
- Appeal was delayed to provide time to gather further information. - Within 30 calendar days, the appellant will be sent either an appeal-denied or an appeal-forwarded notification.

Written notice of the Appeals Panel determination (appeal denied or appeal approved) or a progress notice (appeal forwarded or appeal delayed) will be provided to the appellant within 10 business days of the determination.

## Procedure: Second Level Appeal Review and Determination

If applicable, appeals are sent to a three-member team pulled from the Appeals Panel for consideration. The appeal will be considered no later than 90 days after the appeal receipt.

Members of the Appeals Panel will recuse themselves from the appeal consideration if there is any reason for which impartiality might reasonably be questioned or if there is an actual or apparent conflict of interest.

The appeal will not include a hearing or any similar trial-type proceeding.

The function of the Appeals Panel in a given case is to review the decision being appealed based on the record that was presented at the time of the determination.

The Appeals Panel will review the appeal, including but not limited to taking into account the results of previous similar appeals, and make a determination on appeal action.

### **The second level response will be one of the following:**

- Appeal denied
- Appeal approved
- Appeal was delayed to provide time to gather further information

Written notice of the Appeals Panel determination (appeal denied or appeal approved) or a progress notice (of appeal delayed) will be provided to the appellant within 10 business days of the determination.

## **Procedural Appeal Review and Determination**

If an appellant feels their appeal was handled improperly by the staff or Appeals Panel, a procedural appeal may be filed with the Certification Committee. The appeal will be considered no later than 90 days after the appeal receipt.

Members of the Certification Committee will recuse themselves from the appeal consideration if there is any reason for which impartiality might reasonably be questioned or if there is an actual or apparent conflict of interest.

The appeal will not include a hearing or any similar trial-type proceeding. The function of the Certification Committee in a given case is to review the handling of the appeal to determine if The NCSG policies and procedures were followed.

### **The procedural appeal response will be one of the following:**

- Appeal denied
- Appeal approved - In such cases, a new Appeals Panel will be assigned to consider the full appeal again.
- Appeal was delayed to provide time to gather further information

Written notice of the Certification Committee determination (appeal denied or appeal approved) or a progress notice (of appeal delayed) will be provided to the appellant within 30 business days of the determination.

## **Program Complaints**

Individuals with concerns regarding the certification program materials, personnel or activities are encouraged to discuss these with the individuals involved to try to resolve the matter informally. In some cases, however, informal resolution is not possible, and individuals may wish to file a formal complaint.

### **Submission of Formal Program Complaints**

A formal complaint will be submitted electronically on the NCSG website via this link: [APPEAL & COMPLAINTS FORM](#) within 90 days of the incident's occurrence. In the case of complaints related to exam administration, those must be submitted within two weeks after the applicable exam administration. The submission will include sufficient objective evidence to substantiate the claim(s) and appropriate action. Dissatisfaction based on hearsay will not be considered as a complaint. Anonymous complaints will not be considered.

## **Staff Level Review**

The NCSG Associate Director or assignee will serve as the first level of complaint consideration to determine its validity. They will investigate the circumstances of any valid complaint and take one of the following actions:

- Determine and implement corrective action
- Refer the complaint to a different suitable staff member to determine and implement corrective action
- Escalate the complaint to the Certification Committee for review

If the complaint is not immediately resolvable, written notice of progress (of a referral or escalation) will be provided to the complainant within 10 business days of the complaint receipt. In all cases, The NCSG Associate Director or assignee will communicate the proposed resolution to the complainant within a period of no longer than 30 days.

If the target deadlines in this policy cannot be met for any reason, a progress notice will be sent to the complainant, outlining when the findings will be communicated.

## **Procedure: Certification Committee Review**

If a complaint is found to warrant escalation, the Certification Committee Chair will be notified, and the complaint will be reviewed by the Certification Committee or its designees. A decision will be communicated to the complainant within a period of no longer than 30 days.

If the target deadlines in this policy cannot be met for any reason, a progress notice will be sent to the complainant, outlining when the findings will be communicated.

## **Procedure: Appeal of Complaint Determinations**

The determination of staff or the Certification Committee is appealable, and the Appeals policy will apply.

# **Complaints Against Candidates or Certificants**

NCSG candidates and certificants commit to adhering to the standards set out in the NCSG Code of Conduct. NCSG shall have a process for handling complaints against certificants in a constructive, impartial, and timely manner.

## **Complaints**

A complaint against a candidate or certificant must be submitted electronically on the NCSG website, and a complaint must meet four criteria:

- Specific to a section of certification rules
- In writing by the individual lodging the complaint
- Supported by specific evidence of the such accusation
- Made against a current candidate or holder of an NCSG certification

## Complaint Handling and Communications

The complaint and all related documentation will be dealt with in a strictly confidential manner.

The complaint form on The NCSG website will include a statement that the complainant must agree to hold in strict confidence the filing of the complaint. They will not announce or promote in any manner or use personal or institutional communication vehicles to announce the filing of a complaint.

If a preliminary investigation of the information/evidence reveals a valid complaint, the individual(s) named in the written complaint will be sent a "Notice of Complaint." The Certification Committee will also request any additional information needed and a specific time frame for providing such information. If this additional information is not received, a decision shall be rendered based on the information initially provided.

If it is determined that no further action is warranted, the complainant will be advised in writing of the outcome of the initial assessment. The target date for this communication is within 30 days after receipt of the complaint.

If the initial investigation supports the complaint, an independent investigation will commence, and the information shall be handed over to the Certification Committee.

The Certification Committee will issue a written report of its findings within 60 working days of receiving all further requested supporting information.

The final disposition will be communicated to the complainant. The target date for this communication is within 10 working days of the written report findings being accepted.

If, for any reason, the target deadlines in this procedure cannot be met, a progress notice will be sent to the complainant, outlining when the findings will be communicated.

## Potential Disciplinary Actions

If a complaint is found to have valid grounds, the Certification Committee may recommend one of the following disciplinary actions depending on the severity of the infraction:

- **Warning.** A written warning could be issued outlining the consequences if the situation occurs again or another violation occurs.
- **Suspension.** CCP, CCR and/or CCJ certification or eligibility to become certified could be suspended.
- **Revocation of Certification.** CCP, CCR and/or CCJ certification could be revoked.

## Appeals of Certification Committee Findings

The subject of the complaint may appeal the disciplinary actions. The Appeals policy will apply.



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# CONTACT

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