



# ACADEMY CERTIFICATION EXAMS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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## Academy Certification Exams (ACE)

At Academy Certification Exams (ACE), we are committed to upholding the highest standards of excellence in fire sprinkler system inspection, testing, and maintenance. Our rigorous requirements including training, experience and the successful passing of the exam ensures that certified professionals possess the necessary knowledge and expertise to safeguard lives and property through the proper inspection, testing and maintenance of fire protection systems.

ACE has implemented guidelines, processes, and fees/charges to oversee certification determinations, the utilization of certifications, and engagements with applicants and certificate holders. ACE reserves the right to modify these guidelines, processes, and charges without prior notice. They can be accessed freely on ACE's website ([www.acecertifications.org](http://www.acecertifications.org)). Any individual endorsing an ACE application acknowledges and consents to adhere to these guidelines and procedures in all interactions with ACE.

### ACE Code of Ethics

Both applicants for certification and those who are already certified must comply with the ACE Code of Ethics and widely recognized ethical norms. By following this Code of Ethics, you are dedicating yourself to cultivating an environment of safety, professionalism, and confidence within our industry and the larger community we engage with.

1. Our top priority is ensuring safety. All decisions and recommendations must adhere to the principle of preventing harm and minimizing risks to individuals, communities, and the environment. It's crucial to offer services only when you can make clear judgments that won't inadvertently cause harm to others.
2. Integrity and Objectivity: Uphold honesty, transparency, and impartiality. Offer services strictly within the scope of your experience, training, and expertise. Steer clear of conflicts of interest that might undermine the integrity of your work or your employer's work. Absolutely refrain from accepting any form of bribery.
3. Continuous Learning: Sustain your expertise through ongoing education and work experiences, ensuring you remain current with the latest best practices in your field.
4. Professional Competence: Uphold professionalism throughout your job responsibilities, proactively avoid conflicts of interest, and when inevitable, promptly seek guidance from your employer. Recognize your limitations and actively seek help when confronted with unfamiliar or intricate scenarios. Embrace accountability by openly acknowledging errors; never attempt to falsify information in an effort to conceal or rationalize mistakes.

5. Confidentiality and Privacy: Uphold the confidentiality of entrusted information throughout your job or job-related engagements. Refrain from misusing or disclosing sensitive data without proper authorization.

## Certifications

The ACE Inspection and Testing of Water-Based Systems certification program is for technicians working in the inspection and testing of existing water-based fire protection systems.

Eligibility for ACE Certification is based on different factors depending on which certification level is sought. Please note both training **and** work experience requirements must be met prior to being eligible to sit for an exam.

Certification is specific to the individual qualifying and not to the organization or employer.

### Water-based Inspector Level I

A Level I Inspector certification is designed for ITM technicians who perform ITM duties under supervision. The combination of training and the passing of the exam is designed to verify essential knowledge and skills required for entry-level inspectors.

#### Prerequisites for Certification

- A minimum of 16 hours of relevant training, specific to inspection and testing of fire sprinkler systems, taken the previous 24 months prior to the exam

### Water-based Inspector Level II

A Level II certification is designed for ITM technicians who work independently to perform normal ITM duties. The ACE Level II certification requires a more extensive commitment. Candidates must complete 32 hours of training, with a specific requirement of 24 hours dedicated to the inspection and testing of water-based fire protection systems.

In addition to the training, a Level II certification also requires at least 2,000 hours of work experience directly related to the inspection and testing of water-based fire protection systems. This practical experience serves as a crucial foundation, ensuring that candidates are not only knowledgeable but also capable of applying their expertise effectively in real-world scenarios.

#### Prerequisites for Certification

- A minimum of 32 hours of training taken in the previous 24 months prior to the exam. A minimum of 24 hours must be specific to the inspection and testing of fire protection systems. The additional eight hours can be made up of other industry related training such as OSHA, backflow certification training, alarm training, etc.
- A minimum of 2,000 hours of work experience in the field of inspection and testing of water-based fire protection systems in the previous 24 months.

All prerequisites must be met PRIOR to the exam date. If an applicant does not complete the prerequisites prior to the exam, a late fee may be assessed. ACE will allow a seven-calendar day grace period from the date of the exam to meet any outstanding prerequisites and upload documentation to their account. If the prerequisites are not provided within the grace period, the test will be void and the applicant will be required to register for a future test date.

## Recertification

ACE certifications require inspectors to recertify every two years. This process is essential to ensure that professionals stay up-to-date with the latest industry standards and maintain their proficiency.

To recertify, inspectors must accumulate 16 hours of continuing education during the two-year certification period and must have a minimum of 2,000 hours of work experience over the course of those two years. This work experience requirement ensures that certified inspectors remain actively engaged in their field, further honing their skills and expertise.

### Prerequisites for Recertification for all Certification Levels:

- A minimum of 16 hours of relevant continuing education since the last certifying exam or recertification
- A minimum of 2,000 hours of ITM of Water-based Fire Protection experience from the previous certification.

Those seeking recertification must upload all the necessary documentation and apply for recertification prior to the expiration date. Late fees will be assessed if the application for recertification is not completed, with all necessary documentation, prior to the certification expiration date.

## Training Requirements

Training is essential to growing within the industry. Good training can provide an increased knowledge and improved job performance. This continuing education serves as a means to stay informed about changes in standard and code requirements, industry advancements, and emerging best practices. ACE places a high value on training and requires training for certification and recertification.

ACE does not require a specific training provider or training program. We do partner with several training organizations to provide testing opportunities following a training course. ACE does not review or approve training courses.

ACE recognizes industry approved training credits towards certification or recertification. Proof of completion is required for all continuing education credits used for certification. ACE reserves the right to request the course description and learning objectives for training submitted.

Training / continuing education should be specific to Inspection, Testing or Maintenance (ITM) of Water-based Fire Protection Systems or NFPA 25. For those *testing for Level II only*, a maximum of eight of the 32 hour prerequisite, can be fulfilled through related training in areas such as backflow training, OSHA regulations, alarms, etc. ensuring a well-rounded skill set. For example, if a fire alarm course is 16 hours, only a maximum of 8.0 continuing education credits could be applied to the 32-hour training requirement. **Those testing for Level I must have 16 hours of training specific to ITM or NFPA 25.**

1 Contact Hour = 1 Training / Continuing Education Credit

At a minimum, training documentation should include:

- Date(s) attended,
- Location of the training
- Name of the company or organization that sponsored the sessions,
- Total hours of training or ceus awarded
- Title and/or Subject matter of the sessions
- Signature of the training provider
- If necessary, a brief description of the subject matter’s relevance to the practice area if it is not clear from the title of the session.

## Work Experience

ACE requires work experience to test for an Inspector II or higher as well as for all recertifications. Work experience must be directly related to the inspection and testing of water-based fire protection systems. This practical experience serves as a crucial foundation, ensuring that candidates are not only knowledgeable but also capable of applying their expertise effectively in real-world scenarios.

Work experience is documented using the Work History Validation Form. The Validator signing the form must be able to verify and confirm that the applicant has met the necessary qualifications and shows understanding in the use of NFPA 25. A Validator can be a work manager, immediate supervisor, human resources representative or in some exceptions the applicant if they are the owner of the company.

## Exam Information

Exams consist of multiple-choice questions. Each exam is automatically generated from a test bank containing hundreds of exam-level appropriate questions and electronically graded.

Refer to the content overview for topics covered for each certification.

Certification	Exam Questions	Time
Inspector I	75 questions	100 minutes
Inspector II Next Step	125 questions	170 minutes
Inspector II Direct	145 questions	195 minutes

A score of 70% or higher is required to pass all ACE certifications.

### Materials Permitted in the Exam

Due to the nature of both the profession and the assessment, Academy Certification Exams’ Inspector I and Inspector II exams are “open-book”, allowing the use of various materials for reference. Exam takers will receive a list of allowed materials, including those specific to the State where applicable. Unless otherwise indicated in the confirmation email, only official bound or copies in binders, of the materials listed will be allowed into the exam room.

ACE allows the following materials to be used during the exam:

-  NFPA 25 Standard for the Inspection, Testing, and Maintenance of Water-based Fire Protection Systems
-  State specific Reference Materials (Available on the ACE website and provided onsite)

Please refer to the ACE website “About the Exam” page to ensure you have the correct edition of the NFPA standard for the exam.

NFPA Handbooks are not permitted. Only bound copies of the NFPA codes and standards books will be allowed. Any employer-issued copies of these materials MUST be spiral bound or in a binder. NO LOOSE PHOTOCOPIES. Books may contain *minimal* handwritten notes. Highlighted passages and *permanent* tabs are allowed.

You will also be allowed to bring in one calculator. You will NOT be allowed to use the calculator function on cell phones, laptops, tablets, or other media-devices. Any electronic device other than the allowed calculator must be powered down and put away during the entirety of the exam.

ALL materials will be checked for appropriateness by the proctor prior to AND following the exam. No notes or comments about the exam, topics, questions, format, scoring, etc., will be allowed to leave the exam room. The exam and details surrounding it are confidential. This will be outlined in our Academy Certification Exams Non-Disclosure Statement, which must be signed before turning in your exam. Without your signature on this agreement, your exam will not be graded.

## Proctoring

Integrity of the Exam and the process is of the highest priority. Exams are administered by Academy Certification Exam staff or a neutral third-party proctor. Proctoring during the exams will be multi-level and thorough. Proctors will require valid state-issued photo identification, check all reference material coming in and leaving the site, employ the use of seating charts, and physically supervise the testing site.

## Exam Registration

To register for an exam, applicants are required to create an account with ACE at [www.acecertification.org](http://www.acecertification.org). The applicant will use this account to schedule exams, apply for recertification, provide any necessary required information and to update contact information.

**Please note:** The email address provided in the Account Profile will be the email address ACE uses to communicate important information to the applicant. This includes exam results and other exam-related correspondence. Using a generic work email or someone else's email address may result in giving other people access to private information regarding exam performance.

Upon registration, an Exam Enrollment File will be created in our database and the information provided will be used to determine eligibility for the exam selected. The eligibility review will not be started until payment is received. As previously noted in the Certification section, if verification of both training hours and required work history are not completed by the date of the exam, the exam will NOT be graded until all eligibility requirements have been met. If the eligibility requirements are not provided by the date of the exam, the applicant will be required to pay a late fee of \$150.00 and will have seven calendar days to provide all required information or the exam will be void.

All fees must be paid in full by the exam date to sit for the exam. If payment is not received by the exam start time, the applicant may not be able to take the exam and may be required to reschedule.

By remitting payment, the applicant agrees to the terms and conditions outlined in this document, as well as to the process discussed in previous sections. We recommend reviewing the entire Policies and Process document and submit any questions to ACE before remitting payment.

## Official Results and Certificates

### Exam Results

Certification requires valid continuing education, valid work verification (if required) and at least a 70% passing score on the exam.

Exam results will be provided within 3 – 5 business days of the completion of the exam as long as all required documentation has been submitted and approved. Upon successfully passing the exam, an official results letter and certificate will be mailed to the address provided in the Account Profile. Electronic copies of the certificate are available, under the participants ACE account to download immediately. Official certificates will be mailed to the physical address on file.

Official results and certificates, all bearing a unique ACE certificate number, will be sent by mail. Once these documents are received, the passing score will have been confirmed and recognition as an Inspector I or Inspector II is official. It is important to note that all ACE issued certificates are property of ACE and may be revoked and recovered for misuse or misrepresentation. (See more on this below in “Cheating, Misrepresentation, and Falsification”).

If a passing score was not achieved, applicants can retake the exam. If the applicant does not pass the exam after three attempts, the applicant will not be permitted to take the exam for 90 days from the latest attempt. A applicant may not test more than four times in a 365-day period.

ACE considers exam results to be private and confidential. The certification is specific to the individual and not the organization/employer. Exam results will only be provided to the test taker. Certain metadata will be retained to provide AHJ’s, trainers, and others with high-level information not able to be connected with any individual.

### **Maintaining Certification**

ACE certification will expire on the date specified on the certificate. In most cases, both ACE Inspector I and Inspector II recognitions are valid for two (2) years from end of the month of issue. Certification-holders are responsible for keeping certifications up to date. Prior to the end of the expiration month, certification-holders must present proof of continuing education, work history, and other required information necessary for recertification and complete a recertification process online. Visit [www.academyexams.com/recertify/](http://www.academyexams.com/recertify/) for details.

Certifications which have expired will be permitted to recertify until the certification is cancelled. Certifications will be cancelled if the process for certification has not been *completed* within one year of expiration. Once a certification expires, late fees will be assessed for recertification.

### **Academy Certification Exams Recognition of NICET Certification**

If a valid NICET certification is currently held, ACE will accept this certification as a prerequisite of a Level I or Level II, depending on the requirement, to test for an ACE certification.

Additionally, with valid documentation of certification, ACE will recognize your NICET Level I or II with an equivalent ACE certificate. The fee for certification is the same as sitting for the exam.

All other rights and responsibilities outlined in this document regarding ACE Certificate holders will be applicable.

## Exam Integrity

To maintain the validity and effectiveness of our exams, ACE requires that applicants, exam-takers, and anyone else involved to agree to hold the content of the exam confidential. On exam day, the exam packet will include an agreement to this end, and the agreement must be signed for ACE to process the exam. The content of our exams is considered the intellectual property of ACE, and it is made available to the exam-taker solely to test their knowledge for the purpose of certification. No part of the exam may leave the testing site or may be reproduced elsewhere without the express permission of ACE.

### Challenging Exam Questions

If during the exam, an applicant comes across a question they feel is improperly worded or without an available correct answer, he/she may make a challenge. Any challenge shall be made within the pages of the test and shall consist of an explanation of why the applicant feels the question, or its answers, are not appropriate. The applicant must describe their understanding of the question's topic and/or provide an answer that they feel is accurate. All challenges will be reviewed individually by ACE and reviewed by Subject Matter Experts typically made up of current or past members of the NFPA Technical Committees. If it is determined that the challenge has validity, the question will be omitted from the test and not considered when calculating the final grade. If the challenge is not found to be valid, but the applicant describes a complete understanding of the topic, credit will be given. If the challenge is not found to be valid, and the applicant does not demonstrate a complete understanding of the topic, no special considerations will be made regarding the question or grading.

## Cheating, Misrepresentation, or Falsification

### Cheating

If during an ACE exam there is conduct, or appearance of conduct considered by the proctor to be suspicious, cheating-related behavior (including copying exam questions), examinees involved may be asked to leave the exam site immediately. Examinees will be subject to administrative actions and a full review by ACE. Refunds will not be provided for participants found cheating, misrepresenting or falsifying information.

If cheating-related behavior is discovered, those effected will be formally notified by ACE. Exam scores will be nullified, all exam related payments forfeited, and those caught cheating will be

ineligible for future ACE assessments. Those involved will have 14 calendar days from receipt of formal notification to appeal ACE’s decision.

Appeals must be in writing. Those affected are responsible for ensuring any email correspondence is received by ACE. Failure to follow the appeal process will forgo rights to an appeal. No refunds will be issued.

### **Falsification**

The accuracy and completeness of the information the applicant provides is his or her responsibility. If it is found that any of the information has been falsified, the applicant risks forfeiting their opportunity to take an ACE exam now or in the future and will lose any current ACE certification. Please be sure that all information given on the application is true and verifiable.

### **Professional Conduct**

Should ACE receive reports or complaints about behavior that we feel does not represent our objectives or that could undermine our reputation, we reserve the right to investigate the conduct in question. Certification-holders will be formally notified if an investigation into their conduct is to be initiated. Along with formal notification, ACE will provide the procedures for responding.

If it is determined that work ethic, work quality, or compliance with recognized codes is unacceptable, or that the certification-holder is not representing themselves in a professional manner, we reserve the right (pending a formal investigation) to take appropriate actions, which may include revocation of ACE certification or conferring ineligibility for future ACE certifications.

### **Fee Structure**

<b>Certification</b>	<b>Exam</b>	<b>Recertification</b>
Inspector I	\$400.00	\$250.00
Inspector II Next Step	\$300.00	\$250.00
Inspector II Direct	\$600.00	\$250.00

### **Late Exam Registration**

Registrations should be completed at least seven days prior to the exam start date. Any registrations received after this point will be charged a late fee.

### **Cancellations, Rescheduling and Refunds**

ACE understands that unexpected conflicts may come up. ACE will make every effort to transfer participants to new test dates should the applicant be unable to take the exam as scheduled. Participants can transfer the registration to a future exam date at no fee. Please note, that dates/exam transfers are subject to availability. Transfers should be requested at least three business days prior to the exam if possible. One transfer per applicant is permitted. Additional transfers may result in a change fee being applied. Please note, if any of the verified eligibility terms change prior to the next exam date, the applicant must requalify for the exam and may be required to pay an assessment fee.

Cancellations made ten or more business days prior to the exam will receive a full refund. Cancellations made after ten days prior but at least three business days prior to the exam date will be refunded minus a \$50 cancellation fee. **No refund will be provided if cancelled within the three business days of the exam date, however, the registration can transfer to a new test date or tester at no charge. No refunds will be provided for No Shows.**

No refunds are provided for recertifications. Additionally, if a applicant fails to provide the necessary support documentation for a recertification and the recertification expires, any required late fee or re-take requirements will apply.

### Expired Certification

All Academy Certified Inspectors are responsible for recertifying before their certification expiration date. This date is printed on your Certificate and your official results letter in addition to being available on the participant’s ACE dashboard. Once a certification expires, late fees will be assessed as follows:

Certification Status	Timeframe	Eligible for renewal?	Recertification Fee
Active - Eligible for Renewal	Effective 90 days prior to certification expiration	Yes	\$250.00
Expired - Eligible for Renewal	1 - 60 days from expiration	Yes	\$350.00 (\$250 recertification fee + \$100 late fee)
Expired - Eligible for Renewal	61 days - 364 days from expiration	Yes	Inspector I: \$400.00 Inspector II: \$600.00
Canceled – Not eligible for Renewal	Over 1 year from expiration	No	Must recertify through the certification process

### Insufficient Funds

Any checks or payments returned for insufficient funds will be assessed a fee equal to the amount charged to ACE by the banking institution. At the resolution of the situation, an additional processing fee of \$100 may be charged.

Pending the outcome of any payment dispute, certificates and wallet cards may be withheld or repossessed, eligibility for future ACE assessments may be denied, and charges for additionally incurred processing and service fees may be imposed.

*Terms & Conditions: By remitting payment, you agree to the process, policies, terms and conditions outlined. Questions about any portion of Academy Certification Exams (ACE) process or policies must be submitted to ACE in writing before accepting terms and processing a payment.*