



CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

Certified Wildfire Mitigation Specialist (CWMS)

Candidate Handbook

This Certified Wildfire Mitigation Specialist (CWMS) Candidate Handbook contains important program information for wildfire mitigation professionals, along with the following documents:

- Candidate Application Form
- Examination Retest Form
- Recertification Form
- Home Ignition Zone Assessment Form
- Verification Form

Please carefully review this handbook and retain it for future reference.



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ABOUT NFPA

Founded in 1896, NFPA is a global, nonprofit organization devoted to eliminating death, injury, property and economic loss due to fire, electrical and related hazards.

MISSION OF NFPA CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

The mission of NFPA's certification program is to enhance human and organizational performance as related to the use and application of NFPA codes and standards.

CERTIFIED WILDFIRE MITIGATION SPECIALIST PROGRAM

The NFPA Certified Wildfire Mitigation Specialist Program (CWMS) was created in 2018 after discussions with fire service and forestry professionals at the federal, state, and local levels. The CWMS credential offers professionals whose work involves wildfire hazard mitigation, the ability to demonstrate that they understand hazard mitigation measures, planning and preparedness strategies, public education practices, and wildland fire science.

PROGRAM GOALS:

- Recognize and provide evidence of competence
- Enhance professionalism within the wildfire mitigation community
- Ensure a uniform, fair process for certification that is accessible to everyone who is eligible
- Ensure proficiency in the use of NFPA codes and standards
- Facilitate success for those seeking certification
- Promote professional development through continuous learning

FEATURES & BENEFITS

CWMS credential holders receive the following benefits:

- A nationally recognized certification
- Recognition as an expert by your colleagues
- Greater confidence in your abilities
- Improved job performance
- Career advancement opportunities

Certificate holders also receive an NFPA certificate that highlights their accomplishment.

ELIGIBILITY

A candidate for the CWMS certification must have attained a high school diploma or equivalent before being allowed to sit for the exam.

STEPS TO CERTIFICATION

- Submit your application with the examination fee to NFPA Admin. & Support Services (see application form for details).
- **Examination** - You will have to sit for a computer based examination within four months of entering the CWMS program. If you fail your exam, you are permitted to retest two (2) additional times (*completing a retest application and paying a retest fee each time*) within twelve (12) months from the day your original CWMS application was accepted. If you fail the examination three (3) times within this period, you must wait until the twelve (12) month testing period expires before you will be allowed to restart the registration process.
- **Practicum** - Complete four required home ignition zone assessments. The completed practicum materials and assessment verification forms must be submitted to NFPA within twelve (12) months from the day your original CWMS application was accepted.

APPLICATIONS & FORMS

All CWMS applications may be found at www.nfpa.org/cwms.

APPLICATION ACCEPTANCE

An application is accepted only when both the completed and signed application is received by NFPA, and when the examination fee has been processed.

IMPORTANT: When emailing this application to NFPA, you must use the NFPA secure email server at <https://web1.zixmail.net/s/welcome.jsp?b=nfpa>. Once you access this server and create your NFPA secure email account, you should select OTHER from the "To" pull-down list, and then enter admins@nfpa.org in the address box. Complete the email process by attaching your personal documentation and clicking "Send."

Following the receipt of your CWMS application form and examination fee, the NFPA will send you an authorization letter with instructions on how to schedule your computer based exam. A list of test centers may be found at www.isoqualitytesting.com.

PROGRAM FEES

\$350 USD for the initial exam. \$150 USD to recertify at the end of each three (3) year certification period. The most up to date fee schedule may be found on the applicable forms at www.nfpa.org/cwms.

EXAM PREPARATION

Regardless of how long you have been on the job, you should still prepare for the CWMS exam. Candidates should have a strong working knowledge of the principles and practices contained in the reference materials listed below.

The NFPA 2-day seminar *Assessing Structure Ignition Potential from Wildfire* may help you prepare for the exam. There are also seminars offered by National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) that may prove beneficial, such as *S-190, Introduction to Wildland Fire Behavior*. While these seminars are not test preparation courses, they do cover material that may be found on the exam. Attending these seminars is **not** a prerequisite of the certification and does **not** guarantee success on the exam. More information on the NFPA seminar and other NFPA training solutions can be found at www.nfpa.org/training.

REFERENCE MATERIAL

The exam content is found within the following documents. The NFPA standards listed below are available for purchase, or may be viewed for free on the NFPA website. The remainder of the documents may be downloaded for free at www.nfpa.org/cwms.

- *NFPA 1141, Standard for Fire Protection Infrastructure for Land Development in Wildland, Rural, and Suburban Areas (2017)*
- *NFPA 1143, Standard for Wildland Fire Management (2018)*
- *NFPA 1144, Standard for Reducing Structure Ignition Hazards from Wildland Fire (2018)*
- Community Guide to Preparing and Implementing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (2008),
- Fire Communication and Education (NWCG 458, 1999)
- Establishing Fire Prevention Education Cooperative Programs and Partnerships (NWCG 463, 1999)
- Introduction to Wildland Fire Behavior (NWCG S-190, 2008)
- Reducing Wildfire Risks in the Home Ignition Zone (Firewise USA™)
- Safer from the Start, A Guide to Firewise-Friendly Developments

It is the candidate's responsibility to obtain these references for study purposes. If you would like to purchase the NFPA standards listed above, please go to the NFPA website at www.nfpa.org/catalog.

EXAM FORMAT

The CWMS exam is a three-hour, closed-book examination, containing 100 multiple-choice questions. The examination is only available in English. It is designed to evaluate the candidate's knowledge of wildfire mitigation principles and application skills. The examination is available in a computer-based format at test centers throughout the world. Upon receipt of the CWMS examination application and test fee, the candidate will receive their authorization letter with instructions on how to schedule the computer based examination. A list of computer based test center locations is available on the test administrator's website at www.isoqualitytesting.com.

EXAM RULES AND PROCEDURES

The following suggestions, regulations, and procedures pertain to every candidate taking the examination:

- You must present a valid photo ID at the test center.
- Smart phones and other electronic devices are not permitted in the testing area.
- You will not be permitted to continue the test beyond the established three-hour time limit.
- You will not be allowed to bring any printed or electronic materials into the exam room.
- If you wish to leave the room during the test, you must secure the proctor's permission. You will not be allowed to make up lost time.
- Visitors are not permitted at the test center.
- Smoking is not permitted in the testing area.
- Candidates may provide comments on exam items by entering them directly on the computer screen. All comments will be reviewed by NFPA certification staff. Candidates will not receive responses to their comments.

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

NFPA provides special accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1991 (ADA). If a disability prevents you from taking the examination under standard conditions, you may request special accommodations. Written requests explaining the nature of the disability (i.e., the diagnosis), the type of accommodation you feel is appropriate, and any supporting documentation of the diagnosis from a qualified healthcare professional must accompany the registration application. NFPA reserves the right to request reasonable documentation from healthcare or other professionals to support requests for special accommodations.

FAILURE TO APPEAR FOR EXAM

No application fees will be refunded if you fail to appear on your registered examination date. See Cancellation and Rescheduling Exceptions below.

EXAM CANCELLATION

If you must cancel your exam and you have no plan to reschedule that exam for another date, you may be eligible for a partial refund of your application fee. In this situation, you must contact the NFPA certification office (in writing) at least seven (7) business days (U.S. New York time) prior to your previously scheduled examination date. All refund requests must be made in writing and you will be assessed a \$50.00 USD non-refundable administrative fee. You will forfeit your entire application fee if you fail to contact the NFPA certification administrative office at least seven (7) business days (U.S. New York time) prior to your previously scheduled examination date. See Cancellation and Rescheduling Exceptions.

EXAM RESCHEDULING

You may reschedule your computer-based examination for a different date and time by notifying the NFPA test delivery partner (ISO Quality Testing) at least five (5) calendar days (U.S. New York time) prior to your previously scheduled examination date. You will be assessed a \$25 rescheduling fee (IMPORTANT: See related computer-based exam rescheduling instructions located in your *ISO Quality Testing – Candidate Admission Letter*). You will forfeit your entire application fee if you fail to contact ISO Quality Testing at least five (5) business days (U.S. New York time) prior to your previously scheduled examination date. See Cancellation and Rescheduling Exceptions.

CANCELLATION AND RESCHEDULING EXCEPTIONS

NFPA may waive the rescheduling fee or cancellation penalties in the event of one of the following emergency or special circumstances:

- Jury duty
- Death of an immediate family member
- Military deployment
- Serious illness or injury

If you experience any of the above, you must provide relevant documentation (doctor's note, military orders, death certificate or obituary, jury summons, etc.) to NFPA Admin. & Support Services and ISO Quality Testing before you will be allowed to reschedule your exam.

EXAM SECURITY

Failure to follow candidate instructions regarding examination security will result in your application being voided and forfeiture of your application fee. Conduct that results in violation of examination security or disrupts the administration of the examination could result in cancellation of your examination and dismissal from the testing center. In addition, your examination will be considered void and will not be scored.

Examples of misconduct include, but are not limited to, the following: looking at another candidate's examination, or talking with other candidates anytime during the entire examination period. You are particularly cautioned not to do so after you have completed the examination, as other candidates in the area might be taking a break and still have not completed the examination. You may not attend the examination only to review or audit test materials. You may not copy any portion of the examination for any reason. No examination information may leave the test room under any circumstances. This includes memorizing questions for distribution to any other person. No unauthorized persons will be admitted into the testing area. It is very important for you to note all examination content is strictly confidential. You may only communicate about the test, or questions on the test, using the appropriate means provided within the examination delivery system.

At no other time, before, during or after the examination, may you communicate orally, electronically or in writing with any person or entity about the content of the examination or individual examination questions.

The NFPA shall have the right to revoke or invalidate any examination score with or without a finding of fault or misconduct if data forensic analysis or other credible evidence establishes a reasonable possibility that a score is not valid or the integrity or security of the examination was compromised.

COPYRIGHT

Exam questions are copyrighted by the NFPA. All rights reserved. Reproduction, distribution or display in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical or otherwise, is strictly prohibited.

RESULTS

The computer based examination allows candidates to receive their results immediately upon completion of the examination. The CWMS exam is a pass/fail exam. Your actual exam score will never be reported to you for either a passing score or a failed score. If you pass the exam, you will only be told that you passed. If you fail the exam, you will be provided with a list of the four exam domains and the percentage of items you answered correctly within each domain. Note: This is not your exam score – it is just a percent correct value for each domain. This domain percent correct information is provided so you may focus on areas of improvement for your retest. See the CWMS exam weighted criteria table in the appendix section of this handbook for a listing of the CWMS exam domains.

RETEST

If you fail your exam, you are permitted to retest two additional times (*completing a retest application and paying a retest fee each time*) within 12 months from the day your original CWMS application was accepted. If you fail the examination three times within this period, you must wait until the 12 month testing period expires before you will be allowed to restart the registration process. The retest application is found in the appendix of this handbook as well as online at www.nfpa.org/cwms. The cost to retest is \$175 USD.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The identity and information concerning all candidates is confidential. Information regarding exam results are only communicated in writing from NFPA Admin. & Support Services directly to the candidate. Exam results are never provided over the phone.

PRACTICUM PHASE

Candidates are required to complete four home ignition zone assessments. Candidates may use the *home ignition zone assessment form* provided in this handbook, or a comparable assessment form if approved by their jurisdiction. Candidates must also complete a signed verification form for **each** home ignition zone assessment. The home ignition zone assessment forms and verification forms are found in the appendix of this handbook, and are also available

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online at www.nfpa.org/cwms. The completed forms must be sent to the NFPA Admin. & Support Services to fulfill the certification requirements.

USE OF YOUR CWMS CREDENTIAL

Once granted the CWMS credential, the certified may refer to themselves as a CWMS credential holder as long as the certified has an active certification status. The certified is authorized to use the CWMS designation after their name on business cards, personal letterhead, resumes, websites and in their email signature.

RECERTIFICATION

Once a candidate has been certified, to remain active, they must recertify every three years. In order to maintain currency and relevancy with wildfire mitigation challenges, CWMS certification holders are required to demonstrate their continuing participation in professional development activities.

NFPA awards points towards recertification for various activities. Sixty (60) points of professional development activities related to wildfire mitigation must be earned and submitted during the recertification cycle. Certification holders must complete the Summary of Recertification Points Form, and submit it to NFPA for processing. This form is available at www.nfpa.org/cwms. It is important that you begin accumulating the required points as soon as possible. If college courses are declared for training hours, the same course cannot be taken twice within the 3-year period, and the candidate must convert credit hours to actual hours spent in the classroom.

Recertification Audit

Certification holders will be subject to a random audit of their CWMS recertification documentation for a period of up to six months after their recertification date. Accordingly, certification holders are expected to retain recertification documentation in their possession for six months beyond their recertification date. Back up documentation is not required when submitting the Summary of Recertification Points Form.

RENEWAL

If subject to the random recertification audit and NFPA does not receive the necessary recertification materials, the certification holder will no longer be considered a Certified Wildfire Mitigation Specialist (CWMS), and will no longer be entitled to use the CWMS credential in professional communications. To regain certification, the candidate must successfully complete the entire CWMS certification program (subject to the applicable application fees).

RECERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS CHART

In order to maintain currency and relevancy in wildfire mitigation, certificate holders are required to submit a minimum of 60 points of documented professional development. The 60 points must have been acquired in the three year recertification cycle and must be related to wildfire mitigation.

DEVELOPMENT CATEGORY	POINT ALLOTMENT	MIN. POINTS	MAX. POINTS
Training received by certificate holder	1 point per contact hour	15	60
Professional practice of certificate holder	1 point per hour dedicated to a home assessment or CWPP	0	30
Association membership of certificate holder	1 point per related membership per year	0	3
Instruction provided by certificate holder	2 points per contact hour	0	30
Publication by certificate holder	5 points per article 10 points per book	0	10

Note: *NFPA reserves the right to alter any recertification requirements as deemed necessary*

CERTIFIED WILDFIRE MITIGATION SPECIALIST (CWMS)

NFPA offers wildfire related training options, including the two day seminar, *Assessing Structure Ignition Potential from Wildfire* and sessions at the annual NFPA conference. For more information, go to www.nfpa.org/training, or call NFPA toll free at 1-800-344-3555.

DOCUMENTATION

Reasonable proof of attendance/participation in the described categories will be accepted. Reasonable includes copies of agendas, rosters, or other descriptive program materials which have been signed and dated by the presenter/sponsor indicating the certificate holder's attendance. The certificate holder is required to sign the descriptive materials as an attestation of their attendance.

NON-DISCRIMINATION

NFPA evaluates all CWMS candidates without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, age or disability.

REPLACEMENT CERTIFICATES

Replacement certificates are available at a charge of \$15.00 per certificate by contacting NFPA Admin. & Support Services at adminsvcs@nfpa.org.

CONTACT INFORMATION

NFPA Admin. & Support Services
11 Tracy Drive
Avon, MA 02322

Email: adminsvcs@nfpa.org

CWMS Exam Weighted Criteria Table

The following table indicates the percentage (%) of exam content (exam items) for the four (4) major domains of the CWMS exam, and lists the sub-components of each of those domains:

I.	Wildland Fire Science	27%
A.	Identify wildland fire fuel types and associated concerns and hazards to the built environment	
i.	(A) Requisite Knowledge - Commonly used wildland fire fuel models, fire behavior characteristics, and mitigation techniques	
ii.	(B) Requisite Skills - Identify hazards associated with wildland fuels and the impacts to the built environment	
B.	Determine anticipated wildland fire behavior based on site conditions	
i.	(A) Requisite Knowledge - How fuel, terrain, and weather influence wildland fire behavior	
ii.	(B) Requisite Skills - Make mitigation recommendations based on wildland fire behavior	
C.	Analyze structure ignition potential in the wildland/urban interface using a science-based approach	
i.	(A) Requisite Knowledge - How structures ignite in wildland/urban interface fires	
ii.	(B) Requisite Skills – Accurately assess the potential for structure ignitions in wildland/urban interface fires, using scientifically-based analysis	
II.	Planning & Preparedness	24%
A.	Identify appropriate construction materials, material ratings, and techniques for the wildland/urban interface	
i.	(A) Requisite Knowledge - Construction materials, material ratings, and appropriate construction techniques for use in the wildland/urban interface	
ii.	(B) Requisite Skills - Identify appropriate construction methods and materials to reduce the risk of structure ignition in the wildland/urban interface	
B.	Determine the hazard, risk, and values-at-risk rating, for a wildland/urban interface jurisdictional area	
i.	(A) Requisite Knowledge - Appropriate hazard assessment systems, wildland urban interface risks, and values at-risk ratings	
ii.	(B) Requisite Skills - Apply a hazard assessment system to a project, property, or jurisdictional area	
C.	Assist in the planning phase of homes and subdivisions within the wildland/urban interface	
i.	(A) Requisite Knowledge - Subdivision planning and jurisdictional guidelines, applicable policies, procedures, codes, standards, and best practices	
ii.	(B) Requisite Skills - Make observations and recommendations based on wildfire concerns and mitigation techniques	
III.	Hazard Mitigation	31%
A.	Create a mitigation plan using treatments appropriate for the wildland/urban interface	
i.	(A) Requisite Knowledge - Applicable and effective mitigation treatments, the application of relevant policies, procedures, codes and standards, and best practices	
ii.	(B) Requisite Skills - Apply effective mitigation treatment techniques based on wildland fire behavior	
B.	Implement fuel modification plans in order to reduce wildland/urban interface hazards	
i.	(A) Requisite Knowledge - Techniques pertinent to selective tree thinning, brush disposal, pruning, grazing, mowing, prescribed fire, and chemical treatments	
ii.	(B) Requisite Skills - Prepare clear written treatment prescriptions, and initiate and sustain required fuel modification activities	
C.	Recommend appropriate mitigation strategies for the wildland/urban interface	
i.	(A) Requisite Knowledge - Fuel types, wildland fire behavior, building construction, defensible space, landscaping, mitigation strategies, and planning documents	

- ii. (B) Requisite Skills - Select an effective wildland/urban interface mitigation strategy

IV. Public Education

18%

- A. Assist with development and implementation of a wildland/urban interface public education program
 - i. (A) Requisite Knowledge - Wildland/urban interface fire issues, fire prevention goals, public education delivery methods, and tools
 - ii. (B) Requisite Skills - Identify fire education needs and to recognize effective tools necessary to implement and measure success of delivery strategies
- B. Assist with development of written, and audio-visual materials, on the wildland/urban interface fire environment and mitigation techniques
 - i. (A) Requisite Knowledge - Data resources, information systems including format and materials, learning theory, computer, writing, and editing
 - ii. (B) Requisite Skills - Collect information in a specific format, generate written or audio-visual materials, recognize and use powerful images, and identify and organize outreach to affected audiences and the community at large
- C. Coordinate or provide presentations on wildland/urban interface and wildland fire issues
 - i. (A) Requisite Knowledge - Awareness of potential community partners, community concerns, and available community resources
 - ii. (B) Requisite Skills - Prepare presentations, facilitate meetings, and motivate partners to achieve goals

CWMS PRACTICUM PHASE



The practicum is at the core of certification programs that seek to recognize competence. The practicum is designed to ensure that candidates are able to demonstrate competency in the field prior to becoming certified. A competency-based certification program without a practicum holds little weight with regard to determining whether or not a candidate should be deemed capable of executing their duties correctly.

This practicum helps demonstrate that candidates are able to identify risks for home ignition when exposed to a wildfire, and are able to develop mitigation recommendations for homeowners or occupants prior to a wildfire emergency. It not only ensures that you have the relevant job experience, but also provides additional learning opportunities for any deficiency.

Practicum Requirements:

Candidates are required to complete four (4) home ignition zone assessments. Candidates may use the *Home Ignition Zone Assessment Form* which is included in this handbook, or any comparable assessment form if approved by their jurisdiction. Supporting documentation, such as field notes and photographs of the property being assessed, must be included with the assessment forms. Candidates must also include a completed and signed verification form for each home ignition zone assessment form. This form is used to verify that the required home ignition zone assessment has been completed and that it represents the professional work of the candidate.

Submittal:

1. Perform the required four home ignition zone assessments, filling out the home ignition zone assessment form included in this handbook, or a comparable assessment form approved by your jurisdiction. Include all notes, supporting images, and mitigation recommendations with your assessment forms.
2. Secure a completed and signed verification form for each of the four home ignition zone assessments. Each verification form must refer back to a specific home ignition zone assessment form. The verification forms may be signed by a fire chief, fire marshal, chief building official, supervisor, academic advisor, or property owner with adequate knowledge of the candidate's activities to the verify work is/was solely that of the candidate.
3. Submit the required home ignition zone assessments and verification forms to the CWMS program administrator. They should be scanned and emailed to adminsvs@nfpa.org, or mailed to NFPA Admin. & Support Services at 11 Tracy Drive, Avon, MA 02322.

The submitted forms are audited in order to verify that the candidate performed the required home ignition zone assessments. Once the audit of the forms is complete, and all certification program requirements are met, you will then receive your certification by mail from NFPA.

The home ignition zone assessment form and verification form are available on the following pages of this handbook and also online at www.nfpa.org/cwms.

HOME IGNITION ZONE ASSESSMENT FORM

Date of assessment: _____ Assessor: _____

Property address: _____ Property owner: _____

1. OVERVIEW OF SURROUNDINGS (Include supporting images) <i>Possible considerations: structure position in relation to severe fire behavior and type of construction</i>	
<i>Items Assessed:</i>	<i>Mitigation Recommendations:</i>
2. CHIMNEY TO EAVES (Include supporting images) <i>Possible considerations: the roof, and gutters</i>	
<i>Items Assessed:</i>	<i>Mitigation Recommendations:</i>
3. TOP OF THE EXTERIOR WALL TO FOUNDATION (Include supporting images) <i>Possible considerations: attic; eaves; soffit vents; crawl spaces; windows; decks; fences; flammable and combustible materials stored on, under, or near structure; nooks and other small spaces</i>	
<i>Items Assessed:</i>	<i>Mitigation Recommendations:</i>

4. IMMEDIATE ZONE 0-5 feet from structure (Include supporting images) <i>Possible considerations: landscaped vegetation – hardscape materials, plant selection, propane tanks, vehicles, lawnmowers</i>	
<i>Items Assessed:</i>	<i>Mitigation Recommendations:</i>
5. INTERMEDIATE ZONE 5 – 30 feet (Include supporting images) <i>Possible considerations: ladder fuels and crown separations, lawns mowed and watered</i>	
<i>Items Assessed:</i>	<i>Mitigation Recommendations:</i>
6. EXTENDED ZONE 30 – 100 feet (Include supporting images) <i>Possible considerations: ladder fuels and crown separations, accumulation of litter/debris and dead plant and tree material,</i>	
<i>Items Assessed:</i>	<i>Mitigation Recommendations:</i>

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Copy as needed and submit with the corresponding verification form

CWMS Practicum Phase Verification Form



NFPA Certified Wildfire Mitigation Specialist Program

Applicant Name: _____

Date of Assessment: _____ Property address: _____

The National Fire Protection Association administers the NFPA Certified Wildfire Mitigation Specialist program. As part of this program, applicants are required to complete practical exercises. The above named applicant must provide verification that four home assessments were conducted as part of the certification program requirements.

You are not asked to verify the accuracy, quality, or comprehensiveness of the report or the underlying home assessment, nor will this be taken as any verification that you have read the report, as this is only an exercise for a certification program. By signing below, you are only providing the requisite verification that the above named applicant conducted a home assessment for the identified property and that the work performed was solely that of the candidate.

Name (print): _____

Relationship to applicant: _____

Agency: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State/Prov: _____ Zip/Country Code: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Copy as needed and submit with the corresponding home ignition zone assessment



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(CWMS) Certification Program

NFPA Admin. & Support Services
11 Tracy Drive
Avon, MA 02322

Email: adminsvcs@nfpa.org
Website: www.nfpa.org/cwms