

Cleaning & Restoration™

\$9.00

December 2008 • Vol. 45 No. 12

Published by the Restoration Industry Association

Education Options



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The In's and Out's of RIA's Certification Program

For nearly 40 years, the Restoration Industry Association (formerly ASCR) has been developing and managing what are considered premiere certifications within the restoration industry. These certification programs help identify individuals within particular segments of the industry as having met a certain level of knowledge, skills and abilities in that industry, as identified by industry experts.

RIA's certification programs allow restoration professionals to establish practice standards, ensure recognition of competence, enhance credibility and prestige, provide a vehicle for professional development and adhere to a code of ethics.

Certification programs measure a person's commitment to a chosen field, whether it is disaster restoration, mold remediation or water loss. When a professional is on the path to certification or has already achieved an advanced certification, it's easy to become sidetracked in the

labyrinth of requirements, certification cycles and random questions that pop up and can't be easily answered on the spot.

In an effort to bring clarity to the overall certification process, the following article contains valuable information about RIA's pre- and post-certification requirements. For those wanting to become certified and for those who've attained their achievement, this review will provide the answers in order to keep you on the right track and in good standing.

Pre-Certification or the Pathway to Advanced Certification

For professionals who want to advance and expand their overall standing and knowledge within a chosen field of specialization, going through the process of becoming certified will be an education in itself, as well as a lifelong experience to remember.

Each of RIA's advanced certification programs require that candidates meet pre-qualifying requirements with the actual application process. Once the application has been accepted, the candidate begins a rigorous course of self-study and research, attends specific pre-certification education courses (which includes the actual certification school course), takes the standardized examination, and if they achieve RIA's 80 percent or better passing score, then completes the process with the creation and submission of a formal report and/or paper. Upon acceptance of the final report, candidates are

approved and receive the Association's appropriate advanced certification.

To recap, achieving RIA's advanced certifications is a stepped approach:

- Step 1: Submit the Application for Candidacy, which includes submitting to a background check and including a variety of work-related documents to show competency and understanding, among other specifications
- Step 2: Complete pre-requisite courses, and submit certificates of completion for your files. (Candidates **must** have the required pre-requisites courses completed **before** attending the actual Certification School.)
- Step 3: Attend your specific Certification School.
- Step 4: Take the certification exam.
- Step 5: Submission and approval of formal report and/or research paper.
- Step 6: Formal acknowledgement of achieving certification.
- Step 7: Maintain certification.

Post-Certification or "I've Made It...Now What?"

Once candidates attain their professional advanced certification, they



are known as “certificants.” There are two primary requirements to keep yourself in good-standing: obtain continuing education credits within your current three-year cycle and pay the certification renewal fee upon receiving the invoice.

Below are answers to the most commonly asked questions from RIA certificants.

I paid my recertification fee on time. Is that all I am required to do in order to maintain my certification?

Maintaining your RIA advanced certification requires two components:

1. Paying your certification renewal fee when it comes due every three years, and
2. Attending continuing education courses during your current three-year cycle that are related to your specific certification specialty — and submitting copies of the course certificates along with the CEC submission form to RIA. The CEC submission form can be downloaded from RIA’s website: www.restoration-industry.org.

Why must I submit continuing education credits? Isn’t it enough to pay the renewal fee?

Because you hold an advanced certification, you agreed to maintain a higher level of learning and accountability. The purpose of CECs within a three-year cycle is to ensure that RIA’s certificants are constantly obtaining updated and current knowledge and keeping themselves on the cutting edge of their field of specialization. Courses submitted for CECs must be obtained within the three-year cycle to be valid.

What is the CEC requirement for each cycle?

RIA’s CEC requirements are four CECs within a three-year cycle, which is essentially equivalent of up to 32 contact hours of continuing education.

Must I attend all live courses to get CECs?

Not at all. RIA offers a variety of ways to obtain CECs aside from “live” courses. Select from online courses, presentations at industry events, writing and submitting articles for publication, or staffing an RIA exhibit at an industry event — these are only some examples.

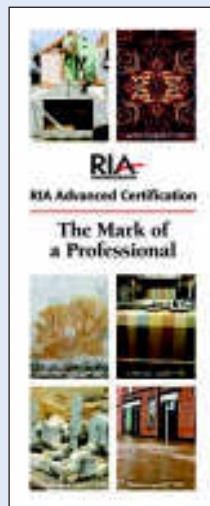
There is one caveat however: within a three-year cycle, you are required to attend at least one RIA convention or

conference. RIA leadership believes you should support the association from which you received your advanced certification.

When does my three-year cycle start and end?

Your three-year cycle always begins January 1 of your first cycle year and ends December 31 of your third cycle year.

For instance: A certificant whose certification cycle ends December 31, 2008, will begin his or her next cycle January 1, 2009 through December 31, 2011 — but only when the renewal fee is paid and the required four CECs are submitted by December 15, 2008.



RIA offers six unique advanced certification programs:

- CERTIFIED RESTORERSM (CR)
- Water Loss Specialist (WLS)[®]
- Certified Mold Professional (CMP)[®]
- Certified Rug Specialist (CRS)[®]
- Certified Mechanical Hygienist (CMH)[®]
- Certified Fabric Specialist (CFS)[®]

The Mark of a Professional

For certificants who want to expand their market share by promoting company services — which could include the services of a certified professional on staff — RIA’s certification marketing brochure can help.

RIA’s certification brochure was created to be used by our certificants as a marketing tool to promote their advanced certifications to their community — which will ultimately help the association and certificants spread the word about its many certifications at the grassroots level. Visit RIA’s website (www.restorationindustry.org) for pricing information.

For complete details on any of RIA’s advanced certification programs, contact Cynthia Hereth, RIA’s director of Education and Certification at chereth@restorationindustry.org or by calling 443-878-1008.

Will I receive a notice telling me where I am in the process?

RIA knows its certificants are busy restoring people’s lives, homes and businesses, so we give you ample time and notice. Here’s the schedule:

1. In February, a general “Advance Notice” is emailed **and** mailed to certificants whose certification cycles will be expiring in December of that year.
2. In June, the first certification renewal invoice is emailed and mailed (pay early and save money!)
3. In September, a second notice is mailed and emailed.
4. In November, a third notice is sent.
5. Certificants who do not submit their renewal payment and/or CEC submissions will be moved to a Lapsed Status after December and will pay a substantially higher fee for renewal and reinstatement.
6. Lapsed certificants who choose not to reinstate to an active status will be tagged as “inactive.”

I earned more than four CECs in my last cycle. Can these “extra” CECs be applied to my next cycle?

CECS obtained within a three-year cycle are applied to the current cycle and cannot be rolled over or “stockpiled” into the next cycle.

If you obtain more than four CECs within a three-year cycle that just means you received lots of knowledge and education (CECs) for that timeframe. This guideline isn’t meant to be punitive, but rather to ensure the certificants are always obtaining current education — thus the term, “continuing education.”

When can I begin submitting CECs?

You can submit CECs any time during the year. You begin accruing the next batch of four CECs when your new

three-year cycle begins, which is always January 1 of the new year and can submit using RIA’s CEC Submission Document (available online at www.restorationindustry.org).

Does RIA automatically log CECs to my record when I attend any education event?

It’s a partnership arrangement: RIA enters CECS of certificants who attend and *submit their CEC Tracking sheet* for the Fall Conference or March Convention. For everything else, certificants are required to submit their continuing education using RIA’s CEC Submission Document. Monitoring your advanced certification status is a partnership, with everyone doing their part!

I would like to market my advanced certification — how can I make that happen?

RIA makes available to its certificants-in-good-standing the opportunity to use its advanced certification logos. Specific usage application guidelines are given along with a usage agreement policy, which can be obtained by contacting RIA’s Communications Department.

Achieving your RIA advanced certification takes commitment, consistency, lots of self-control coupled with determination and dedication. Many within the rank and file of RIA’s advanced certificants will attest to the fact that the end result is well worth the effort. And maintaining one’s chosen certification takes the same effort. So whether you are a newcomer to the process, or a veteran certificant, RIA applauds those efforts regarding your professional development and looks forward to the exciting future growth of its certification programs. ■

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