

# Industrial Security Professional Certification Program

## ***ISP Certification Program Manual***

***NCMS, Inc.***  
***The Society of Industrial Security Professionals***



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# NCMS Industrial Security Professional Certification Program Manual

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## **I. GENERAL**

### **A. Introduction**

NCMS created the Industrial Security Professional (ISP) Certification because the Society saw a need to focus specifically on the needs of the Industrial Security Professional, including their government counterparts. Other existing security-related professional certifications are not specific enough to target the industrial security specialist who must follow the National Industrial Security Program Operating Manual (NISPOM) and related government security requirements relative to the protection of classified information.

### **B. Goals**

1. Improve professionalism within industry and government security.
2. Enhance the recognition of experienced industry and government security professionals.
3. Increase the recognition of NCMS as a premier security organization.

### **C. Purpose**

The purpose of the ISP certification program is two-fold:

1. Provide recognition of the professional training and qualifications of experienced practitioners of industrial and government security, most specifically industrial security Facility Security Officers (FSOs) and their government equivalents.
2. Provide guidelines for maintaining up-to-date knowledge within the profession.

### **D. Eligibility**

1. Candidates must have at least five years experience in the industrial security field. NOTE: Military or police experience alone does not qualify; such service must include substantial industrial security experience within these professions to qualify for the five-year experience requirement. Each case will be determined based upon its merits. Final determinations will be made by the ISP Certification Committee.
2. Candidates must be working in industrial security at least part-time as part of their job description (normally a minimum of 10% of their total workload).

### **E. Certification Requirements**

1. Candidates must provide a written recommendation from their supervisor. If a candidate does not have a supervisor, a member of the NCMS Board of Directors may provide a recommendation.
2. Candidates must attain a score of 75% on the ISP Certification Examination. DOE candidates also have the option of substituting for the test written verification of completion of the DOE Professional Enhancement Program in the following tracks: INFOSEC, PERSEC, PHYSEC, or Program Planning and Management.

F. Examination Focus and Regulatory Basis

The examination focus is for security professionals who act as Facility Security Officers, or an equivalent, for facilities that protect classified government information and material. The technical basis of the examination is the NISPOM and the requirements of related government security programs, such as Operations Security (OPSEC), Communications Security (COMSEC), Counterintelligence, and Self-assessments.

G. Examination Composition and Administration

1. The ISP Certification examination comprises 100 questions covering the nine (9) primary areas of Industrial Security Management (Security Administration and Management, Document Security, Information Systems Security, Physical Security, Personnel Security, International Security, Classification, Security Education, and Audits and Self-Assessments) and ten (10) questions chosen from two (2) of the four (4) elective areas (OPSEC, COMSEC/TEMPEST, Counterintelligence, and Intellectual Property). Candidates must pre-select their two preferred electives and five (5) questions from each elective will be included on the individual's exam, whether administered in hard-copy or on-line.
2. The examination is open book, including the use of computer references.
3. The examination is two hours long and is designed so that the candidate will have time to look up some, but not most, questions.
4. The candidate may **not** consult with other individuals during the examination.
5. References are listed on the ISP page of the NCMS website ([www.classmgmt.com](http://www.classmgmt.com)).
6. The examination is given every year the day preceding the Annual Training Seminar. This examination is proctored by an ISP, or other qualified proctors. With permission from the ISP Committee Chair and with an ISP proctor, Chapters may administer a local ISP Examination, in either the hard-copy or the on-line formats.
7. If an applicant has special needs for the examination, the ISP Committee Chair will determine what, if any, accommodations will be made. As a general rule all applicants must comply with the time restraints of the examination and must answer the same percentage and number of questions.
8. The Executive Director verifies the accuracy of the information provided on the application, if there are questions, by consulting with the applicant and/or the applicant's supervisor. In addition, the Executive Director determines the applicant's qualifications to take the exam by consulting with the ISP Certification Committee Chair, as needed.

H. On-line testing

1. Although the on-line version of the ISP examination is available at any time, it must be proctored by a certified ISP, or other qualified proctor. Applicants must, therefore, coordinate with their Chapter Chair, or the Executive Director (if they are in the Virtual Chapter), to determine where and when they can take the examination under the supervision of an authorized proctor. Once a Proctor is selected and a time and place for the examination is determined, the Executive Director will provide the proctor with a Proctor Packet and log-in codes (see Proctoring Instructions for details).
2. Applicants must coordinate with their Chapter Chair to obtain a Proctor and then submit the standard application form at least four weeks prior to the examination date.

3. If the applicant is located a great distance from any available ISP Proctors, the Chapter Chair or Executive Director will attain the support of a proctoring agent in the area. Examples are universities, colleges, and professional on-line testing organizations. (See Proctoring Qualifications paragraph for details.)

I. Proctor Qualifications

1. Proctors will be an ISP, unless none are available.
2. Only ISPs may proctor a hard-copy examination.
3. Other Proctor Types:
  - a. Professional Proctor (company or individual)
  - b. Teacher/Trainer/Professor
  - c. Security Professional
  - d. Government Official/Representative
  - e. Certified Librarian
4. In all cases, the qualification must be verified in writing and sent in with the Proctor Affirmation Report.
  - a. There are no specific qualifications for each category of potential proctor; rather, the “reasonable person” theory will be used by the Chapter Chair or the Executive Director when determining the qualification of the proctor. We are looking for reliable professionals as a general rule.
  - b. Non-ISP proctors must be disinterested third parties, i.e., they must be totally dispassionate about the results of the examination. For example, a candidate’s supervisor/manager, relative, good friend, co-worker, or significant other would not be considered a disinterested third party.
  - c. Non-ISP security professionals who proctor the examination may not take the ISP examination for three years.

J. Re-testing

1. Candidates who fail the ISP Certification examination may re-take the test after a period of six months at a cost of \$75.
2. Candidates must notify the Executive Director in writing 30 days prior to the examination date. A new application and other materials are not required to be resubmitted, unless the base data or the supervisor has changed. In this case new materials will need to be submitted where changes have occurred.
3. Candidates waiting over twelve months before re-taking the test must resubmit all application forms and materials.
4. Candidates who fail the test a second time will have to wait six more months and re-apply as if he or she were a new candidate, including the full fee.

K. Cost

1. Cost of the ISP examination is \$200 for NCMS members.
2. Cost of the ISP examination is \$300 for non-NCMS members.

3. Cost of a re-test is \$75 for NCMS members.
4. Cost of a re-test is \$90 for non-NCMS members.

## **II. RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **A. Board of Directors**

1. Under the direction of the President, oversees the ISP Program, using the ISP Certification Committee Chair and Vice-Chair as the points of contact.
2. Provides budget support and oversight.
3. Reviews the program at least annually to ensure that it remains up-to-date and relevant.

### **B. ISP Certification Committee Chair and Vice-Chair**

1. Oversees and works with the Executive Director on the daily running of the ISP Certification Program.
2. Approves recommendations for eligibility of applicants/candidates.
3. Approves recommendations for awarding of ISP Certification.
4. Performs all ISP oversight duties outlined in the NCMS P&P Manual.
5. Ensures that the ISP Certification Program is maintained in an up-to-date, relevant, and professional status, which includes an annual review of the ISP program and examination.
6. Reports to the Board of Directors the status of the ISP Certification Program quarterly, to include recommended changes to the program at least annually.
7. Cooperates with the ISP Accreditation Committee as needed.
8. Performs surveillance of ISP compliance with NISPOM requirements through a random check of 5% of ISPs each year. The measure of compliance will be satisfactory ratings on the most recent security inspection by the appropriate government agency.
9. Ensures that all ISPs, ISP Committee members, Board members, proctors, and contractors sign the appropriate Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest Statement.

### **C. Executive Director**

1. Works closely with the ISP Committee to ensure the program is properly administered.
2. Follows the ISP Certification Program Manual.
3. Maintains the official ISP Certification files and records.
4. Reviews applications and determines eligibility to take the ISP Examination.
5. Provides ISP Certificates to recipients.
6. Provides notices for recertification.
7. Supervises the contractor providing IT support for the on-line ISP examination.
8. Provides proper security of all ISP files, records, examinations, and certificates.
9. Ensures that applicants who pass the examination are provided with their ISP Certificate and pin.
10. Receives and reviews recertification applications.
11. Ensures that ISPs who successfully recertify are provided with a new ISP seal indicating the term of certification.
12. Consults with the ISP Certification Committee Chair regarding any questions on an applicant's eligibility to take the examination or whether or not claimed recertification credits are acceptable.

D. Accreditation Committee Chair

1. Works with ANSI to maintain accreditation.
2. Coordinates with the ISP Committee Chairs to ensure the ISP Certification Program maintains accredited status.
3. Reports to the Board of Directors quarterly regarding the status of accreditation.

### III. APPLICATION

A. Application Form. The current ISP Application is included at the end of this Manual as Attachment 1. A copy can also be downloaded from the ISP page of the NCMS website ([www.classmgmt.com](http://www.classmgmt.com)).

### IV. CERTIFICATION

- A. Decision. The decision to certify a candidate for the ISP is made by the ISP Committee Chair based upon the recommendation of the Executive Director and the ISP Committee Member who grades the examination (if the test is a hard-copy version).
- B. Records. The Executive Director will keep records of all certifications and examination results.

### V. HISTORY

A. March 2001

The NCMS Board of Directors (hereafter referred to as the Board) agreed to pursue the creation of a professional certification for NCMS. The Chairman of the Training and Education Committee, Dr. Jim Hickok, agreed to spearhead this task and created an ISP Subcommittee (hereafter referred to as the Committee), which he chaired, to perform the task.

B. June 2001

The Committee Chair delivered a professional certification concept paper to the Board, which included milestones, target audience, recertification, and general eligibility requirements. The Board approved this general concept.

C. September-December 2001

The Committee researched certification programs and training programs that could be used for comparison and guidelines in developing the NCMS certification program. This research helped to form the basis of the program concept.

D. March 2002

1. The Board approved a detailed concept paper for the NCMS professional certification program, which included focusing on DOD Facility Security Officers with 5 years experience, requiring a supervisor recommendation, having a certification examination, accepting the DOE Professional Enhancement Program, and having a recertification program.
2. The Board approved the training topics to be covered in the certification examination.
3. The Board approved MMCO becoming the administrative agent for the NCMS professional certification program.

E. September 2002

1. Using the Board and Chapter Chairs as subject matter experts, the Committee produced a detailed outline of the Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs) that are required to attain the professional certification.
2. The Board approved the KSAs and the idea of having a special meeting of the Board and Chapter Chairs to assist in developing the list of specific examination topics following the December Board meeting.

F. December 2002

1. The Committee Chairman organized members of the Board and Chapter Chairs into topical subcommittees of subject-matter experts. Members were assigned topics in which they had demonstrated experience.
2. The Board approved the proposed administrative procedures for the professional certification.
3. The Board created a separate Professional Certification Committee because of the workload and the need to keep the certification program separate from Training and Education.

G. January-March 2003

The Committee, with the help of [Ink and Other](#) (an editing and test-writing firm), developed examination questions and conducted several quality reviews for these questions.

H. June-November 2003

The Committee Chairman conducted a successful Beta Test of the certification examination and refined the test questions based upon an analysis of the test results. The Committee also continued to refine the ISP program procedures and administrative rules.

I. December 2003

The Board approved the name of Industrial Security Professional (ISP) for the NCMS professional certification program, the final concept for the ISP, the code of ethics, and the schedule for launching the program.

J. March 2004

The Board approved the ISP Certification Program as proposed by the Committee Chairman and agreed to launch the program at the June 2004 National Training Seminar. The Committee continued to refine the examination questions and program policies.

K. June 2004

NCMS formally launched the ISP Certification Program and gave the first examination during the National Training Seminar.

L. Oct 2004

The Board agreed to pursue the creation of an on-line version of the ISP examination. At this time the Committee began to work with MMCO to get a vendor for supporting on-line testing.

M. December 2004

MMCO chose a vendor, [Thomson-Prometric](#), for the on-line examination capability, based upon budget and operating guidance from the Board.

N. January 2005

MMCO and the ISP Committee began work with the on-line testing company to create the on-line test using modified versions of the existing examination question bank.

O. September 2005

1. MMCO and the Committee began Beta-Testing the on-line examination.
2. The Committee began updating the examination questions to reflect new NISPOM and DSS policy. The Committee added questions on e-QIP and JPAS, which are required of DOD FSOs.
3. The Board approved creation of a new ISP Certification Certificate.
4. The Board approved creating and posting on the NCMS website of a list of ISPs.

P. January 2006

1. MMCO and the Committee completed beta-testing and reported to the Board that the on-line version of the test was ready for use.
2. NCMS activated the On-Line ISP Certification Examination.
3. The Board approved having a special meeting of ISPs at the national training seminar to recognize ISPs and further enhance the status of being an ISP.
4. The Board approved the concept of gaining accreditation for ISP Certification Program and authorized money for beginning the process.
5. The Committee developed new ISP examination questions to reflect changes to the NISPOM and other FSO references.

Q. March 2006

1. The accreditation process was delayed when the agency NCMS planned to use (NSSB) folded. Search for a new accreditation agency continued.

2. The Committee continued work on updating examination questions; the new questions were vetted and revised as needed.
3. The ISP Committee refined the recertification process.

R. June 2006

1. The ISP Certification examination was given at National Training Seminar.
2. NCMS sponsored an ISP recognition reception/meeting during the seminar. This was done to improve the visibility of the certification and to reward the ISP recipients.

S. September 2006

1. The Board selected ANSI as accreditation agency at recommendation of Accreditation Sub-Committee of ISP Committee.
2. The Board formally created the Accreditation Committee to ensure proper separation from both NCMS Training and ISP Committees.
3. The ISP Committee began its annual review and update of the ISP examination questions.

T. January 2007

1. The ISP Committee completed new and revised examination questions and began to validate and edit them.
2. The Accreditation Committee began work on creating an ISP Certification Program Manual and an ISP Examination Manual.

U. June 2007

1. The ISP Committee gave the ISP Certification Examination at the national training seminar.
2. The ISP Committee hosted an ISP recognition and update meeting.
3. The ISP Committee completed a rough draft of ISP Certification Program and Testing Manuals.
4. The Board and Chapter Chairs approved the concept of proctored on-line testing to comply with ANSI accreditation requirements.

## **VI. CODE OF ETHICS**

A. Requirements

ISPs and ISP candidates must always demonstrate the highest levels of professional behavior and integrity, which includes, but is not limited to, the characteristics listed below.

1. Act in an honest, forthright, and dependable manner.
2. Follow and enforce all applicable security laws, regulations, orders, rules, policies, and procedures.
3. Safeguard classified and proprietary information at all times.
4. Place national security above all other work priorities.
5. Maintain proficiency in the appropriate security fields.
6. Assist fellow security professionals who are in need.

7. Balance security needs with operational and research requirements.
8. Refrain from negative actions such as starting rumors, making slanderous statements, and embarking on character assassination.

B. Disciplinary Actions

Any NCMS member or ISP should submit in writing any instances of unprofessional or unethical behavior to the NCMS Executive Director. All disciplinary issues will be reviewed by the NCMS Board of Directors, who will determine what, if any, disciplinary actions are appropriate.

C. Reasons For Disciplinary Actions

The reasons for disciplinary actions include, but are not restricted to, the following actions:

1. Conviction on felony charges.
2. Failure to abide by the ISP Code of Ethics.

## **VII. RECERTIFICATION**

A. General

Recertification is required every three years to maintain the ISP Certification. The recertification requirement is designed to ensure that ISP's remain current and continue to develop their knowledge and skills in the field.

B. Requirements

1. Candidates must recertify every three years by the last day of the month in which the candidate originally became certified.
2. Six (6) recertification credits are required for certification.
3. All requests for credits to be used for recertification will be adjudicated by NCMS.
4. Some or all activities may qualify for credit under more than one professional certification.
5. No more than 50% of the claimed recertification credits can come from Membership and Voluntary Service activities. At least 50% of the credits must come from Educational Programs and Courses, Instruction, Speeches, and Other Presentations, or Publications.
6. The same activity may not be counted under more than one category. (For example, a presentation originally given orally cannot be published and counted both as a presentation and as a published article.)
7. Documentation to support claimed recertification credits is required.

C. Recertification Credit Guide

Current Recertification Credit Guide is included at the end of this manual as Attachment 2. A copy can also be downloaded from the ISP page of the NCMS website ([www.classmgt.com](http://www.classmgt.com))

D. Recertification Application

Current Recertification Application is included at the end of this manual as Attachment 3. A copy can also be downloaded from the ISP page of the NCMS website ([www.classmgt.com](http://www.classmgt.com))

E. Recertification Cost

A fee of \$60 shall be sent to NCMS with the recertification application to cover the administrative costs of recertification.

F. Recertification Lapse Policy

Recertification candidates must submit their recertification credits and payment to the NCMS Headquarters not later than one month past their original recertification date. All credits claimed for recertification must have been earned within the original recertification period. If both the recertification application and payment are not received by the end of this time, the ISP's certification will lapse.

NCMS will allow one additional month for the reconciliation/acceptance of claimed recertification credits. If all submitted credits are not accepted by the end of the second month beyond the original certification date, the ISP's certification will lapse.

NCMS, Inc. will send formal notice to the individual that his/her certification has been withdrawn for failure to recertify in accordance with policy and that he/she may no longer use the ISP designation. To regain ISP certification once the original certification has lapsed, an individual must reapply for and retake the ISP examination at full cost.

## **VIII. LIFETIME CERTIFICATION**

A. Requirements

NCMS, Inc. will confer a Lifetime Certification designation upon an ISP who wishes to maintain his/her ISP certification when the individual:

1. Has maintained his/her ISP certification for at least 12 consecutive years.
  - a. For ISPs who retire within 12 years of the start of the ISP Certification Program, this requirement will be waived.
  - b. For ISPs who retire fewer than 12 years after attaining their certification, but have recertified at least twice, this requirement will be waived.
2. Has fully retired from all employment in the security field, including employment as a consultant and part-time employment for which some form of remuneration is accepted/given.
3. Has paid the recertification fee for the current term.
4. Submits an application for Lifetime Certification and signs the agreement to notify NCMS, Inc. should he/she return to employment in the security field.

B. Privileges and Responsibility

An individual upon whom Lifetime Certification is conferred:

1. Will receive a new certificate that states “Lifetime ISP.”
2. Will continue to be able to use the ISP certification letters after his/her name.
3. Will continue to be subject to the ISP Code of Ethics.
4. Will not be required to earn recertification credits or apply and pay for recertification.
5. Must immediately notify NCMS, Inc. should he/she return to part or full time employment in the security field. Such a return will negate the lifetime certification designation.

**IX. EXAMINATION FACTS**

A. Examination Topics:

For Industrial Security professionals, the skills required for certification fall into the following areas:

1. Security Administration & Management
  - a. National Industrial Security Program
  - b. Records & Documentation
  - c. Required Reports
  - d. Facility Clearances
  - e. Oversight & Audits
  - f. Incidents of Security Concern
2. Document Security
  - a. Creation & Marking
  - b. Accountability
  - c. Transmission & Receipting
  - d. Retention
  - e. Reproduction
  - f. Destruction
3. Information systems Security
  - a. Administrative & Procedural Controls
  - b. System Security Plans
  - c. Accreditation
  - d. Audits
  - e. Physical Protections
4. Physical Security
  - a. Storage and Lock Requirements
  - b. Closed & Restricted Areas
  - c. Intrusion Detection Systems (IDS)
  - d. Central Alarm Stations & Requirements

- e. Access Controls
- 5. Personnel Security
  - a. Clearances
  - b. Forms
  - c. Adjudication
  - d. JPAS
  - e. e-QIP
- 6. International Security
  - a. Disclosure Policy
  - b. Foreign Classified Contracts
  - c. Access, Marking, and Handling Foreign Classified Information
  - d. Export Control Regulations
  - e. International Visits
- 7. Classification
  - a. Classification Policy
  - b. Classification System
  - c. DD Forms 254 & Security Classification Guides
  - d. Subcontracting
  - e. Downgrading & Declassification
- 8. Security Education
  - a. Requirements
  - b. Content
  - c. Techniques
  - d. Records
- 9. Audits & Self-Assessments
  - a. Government Audits
  - b. Facility Self-Inspections
  - c. Other Required Audits
- 10. Electives
  - a. COMSEC/TEMPEST
  - b. Counterintelligence
  - c. Intellectual Property
  - d. Operations Security (OPSEC)

**B. Exam Grading Criterion**

1. The minimum passing grade is 75%. Note: there is no rounding of final scores.
2. Each question is equally weighted and graded on a best-answer basis; there is no partial credit.
3. Questions with two or more answers marked will be considered incorrect.
5. No questions answered after the proctor calls “stop or cease work,” will be counted.

**C. Possible Cheating Incidents**

1. If the proctor detects/suspects cheating, the proctor will inform the candidate and submit a formal written report of the incident, as a part of the Proctor Affirmation Report, to the Executive Director.
2. If possible cheating is reported, the ISP Certification Committee Chair will conduct an inquiry into the situation, which will include a review of any written statements from the candidate, and make a formal decision in writing. This decision will be sent to the NCMS President, proctor, chapter chair, and candidate.
3. If the candidate protests the decision, then the President will review the incident, collect additional information as required, and make a final decision.

**X. STUDY REFERENCES AND SOURCES**

Please refer to the current list of references and sources on the ISP page of the NCMS website ([www.classmgmt.com](http://www.classmgmt.com)).

**XI. CERTIFICATION EXAM PREPARATION PROGRAM**

1. This voluntary program is related to, but separate from, the ISP Certification Program. It is an informal program, run by ISPs, that is designed as a method of assisting candidates in preparing for taking the ISP Certification Examination. This program does not provide “answers” to the ISP Examination questions. Rather, it provides a structured approach to studying, a platform for discussions that will assist the candidate in confirming the accuracy of their knowledge, and test-taking tips.
2. Candidates may join the ISP Certification Exam Preparation Program by registering on line at [isp-mentor@hotmail.com](mailto:isp-mentor@hotmail.com).
3. Once in the program, the candidate will purchase a workbook, perform the study assignments, and attend conference calls wherein the study topics are discussed.
4. The workbook contains a syllabus that provides a schedule of events and an outline of the topics to be covered.

## **XII. APPEALS PROCESS**

- A. Appeals of eligibility for taking the ISP Certification Examination will be send to the Executive Director, who will collect the appropriate information and pass to the Chair of the ISP Certification Committee, who will make a ruling.
- B. Appeals of specific examination questions or total grade will be brought to the Executive Director, who will collect the appropriate information and forward to the Chair of the ISP Certification Committee, who will make a ruling.
- C. Appeals of the decision not to award the ISP Certificate to a candidate will be made to the Executive Director who will collect the appropriate information and pass to the Chair of the ISP Certification Committee, who will make a ruling.
- D. Appeals of any other aspects of the ISP Certification Program will be made to the Executive Director, who will collect appropriate information and pass to the Chair of the ISP Certification Committee.
- E. All rulings by the Chair of the ISP Certification Committee may be appealed by requesting a final ruling from the NCMS Executive Board. In this case the Chair of the ISP Certification Committee will submit the appropriate information to the Executive Board for a final determination.
- F. All appeal actions will be handled within 30 days, unless there are extenuating circumstances. The ISP Certification Committee Chair has 30 days for their ruling and the NCMS Executive Board has 30 days to make a final ruling on any appeals.
- G. Copies of all appeals and final rulings will be maintained in the ISP Program files by the Executive Director for 7 years.