

HPBA CODES & STANDARDS MEETING SCHEDULE 2017

	MEETING	DATE	PURPOSE	LOCATION	Staff	Role
January	BECS	9-14	Gas C&S Update	Austin	TS	CM
	ASHRAE	1/26-2/2	ASHRAE 62.2, 189.1	Las Vegas	TS	(VM)
February	HPBExpo	2/26-3/4	GAC, Board	Atlanta	GAD	
March	HPBExpo					
April	APGA	4/3-4/5	Gas Policy Conf.	Savannah		
May	NWHPBA	5/7-5/9	Annual Conference	Seattle		
	BECS	5/8-5/11	Gas C&S Update	Charleston	TS	CM
	OHPBA	5/16	Annual Conference	Portland		
June	HPBA	6/13-6/15	GAC, Board			
	CSA Canada	6/18-6/22	CSA Canada Week	Halifax, NS		
	CSA	6/21	Fuel Efficiency Meeting	Halifax, NS	TS	VM
	ASHRAE	6/23-6/29	ASHRAE 62.2, 189.1	Long Beach	TS	VM
July	DOE	7/17-7/20	National Energy Codes	Pittsburgh	TS	
August						
September	BECS	9/11-9/14	Gas C&S Update	Denver	TS	CM
	CSA	9/25-9/29	CSA-US Week	Cleveland	TSRC	TFM
October	ASTM					TFM
November	NFGC	11/14-15	Prep for next cycle	TBD	TS	VM
December						

TFM--Task Force Member
SH--Stakeholder
Pre--Presenter

CM—Committee Member
VM—Voting Member (SH)



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Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association Commends Representatives Collin Peterson and Bob Goodlatte for Introducing Legislation Crucial for Success of the Stove and Heater Industries

Arlington, VA – (January 11, 2017) – The Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association (HPBA) applauds Congressmen Collin Peterson (D-MN) and Bob Goodlatte (R-VA) along with six other members of the U.S. House of Representatives for introducing legislation today to ensure regulatory fairness for wood appliance manufacturers, retailers, and consumers—wood and pellet stoves, hydronic heaters, and wood furnaces.

The legislation, formally known as the “Relief from New Source Performance Standards Act of 2017,” would extend the May 15, 2020 effective date of the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) regulation for new wood and pellet stoves, hydronic heaters, and wood furnaces by three years to May 15, 2023.

“With an effective date just over three years from now, this regulation stands to put thousands of U.S. manufacturing, distribution, and retail jobs in peril. It would increase hardships in rural communities across the country,” said Jack Goldman, President & CEO of HPBA. “With only five labs in North America qualified to test all products impacted by this rule, there simply isn’t enough time for manufacturers to complete research and development, product testing, and have their completed test reports reviewed by EPA by the end of 2018 so that they’re in stores by 2020.”

The typical business cycle in the industry necessitates at least three years before a product can be sold at a specialty retail store. An extension is preferred over a complete repeal of the rule to avoid consumer choice becoming severely limited. If a federal standard is not maintained, state governments would likely establish different standards. This would affect the products that could be sold between different state markets. The effort to extend the New Source Performance Standards (NSPS) deadline has received bipartisan support from Congress.

“Our bill provides much needed relief for wood stove manufacturers and consumers alike. My constituents are tired of an overly aggressive EPA setting unachievable regulations that do nothing but hurt our employers and raise prices for those simply looking to heat their homes during cold winters,” said Congressman Peterson.

“Affordable heating solutions are important to many of my constituents, and federal regulations must take into account the real world needs and time constraints of industries, like wood stove manufacturers, that make these products. This bill is a simple one – it gives wood stove manufacturers the time they need to comply with federal regulations and develop new technologies. I’m pleased to join Rep. Peterson in introducing this bipartisan bill,” said Congressman Goodlatte.

HPBA and its members are encouraged by early support for this legislation, and look forward to working with the cosponsoring Representatives listed below to protect American manufacturing jobs and ensure common sense environmental policies.

- Rep. Collin Peterson (D-MN)
- Rep. Bob Goodlatte (R-VA)
- Rep. Billy Long (R-MO)
- Rep. Jason Smith (R-MO)
- Rep. Thomas Emmer (R-MN)
- Rep. Jason Lewis (R-MN)
- Rep. Ron Kind (D-WI)
- Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner (R-WI)

Extending the date that the NSPS requirements go into effect will not only provide manufacturers with equal opportunity and necessary access to testing labs, it will also ensure stability in the retailer market, an important staple to healthy local economies. Furthermore, additional time will allow for the development of more efficient and reliable woodburning heaters for American homes. The regulations only apply to woodburning appliances manufactured after May 15, 2015, not to existing products in homes.

HPBA and its members have been long-time champions of woodburning product innovation through more efficient and cleaner burning technology. Biomass, such as wood, is an important renewable home heating option. HPBA takes every opportunity to ensure the general public has a wide variety of woodburning appliances available.

The Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association (HPBA), based in Arlington, Va., is the North American industry association for manufacturers, retailers, distributors, representatives, service firms, and allied associates for all types of barbecue, patio and hearth appliances, fuels, and accessories. The association provides professional member services and industry support in education, statistics, government relations, marketing, advertising, and consumer education.

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November 10, 2016

The Honorable Orrin Hatch
Chairman
Committee on Finance
United States Senate

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Ranking Member
Committee on Finance
United States Senate

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United State Senate

The Honorable Harry Reid
Minority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Kevin Brady
Chairman
Ways & Means Committee
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Sander Levin
Ranking Member
Ways & Means Committee
U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Chairman Hatch, Ranking Member Wyden, Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Reid, Speaker Ryan, Minority Leader Pelosi, Chairman Brady and Ranking Member Levin:

As the trade association representing manufacturers, retailers, distributors, and servicers of wood and pellet stoves and inserts, in addition to other sectors of the hearth, patio and barbecue industries, we are writing to urge your support for an extension of the residential energy efficiency 25(C) tax credit that will expire December 31, 2016. More specifically, we support the provision for energy efficient building property that provides a \$300 dollar-for-dollar credit for purchasing, among other products, biomass-fueled stoves that are at least 75 percent efficient. There is an inherent up-front cost to purchasing a new biomass stove, but there also exists a long-term gain for homeowners and communities.

This federal tax credit incentivizes consumers to make energy-conscious purchases that they otherwise may not have made. Furthermore, in light of new Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations for new residential wood heaters – the first new regulations for this product category in over 20 years – this credit supports an industry that is making

significant adjustments to their businesses and investing in R&D to comply with new testing and performance requirements. A stable, reliable tax credit for biomass stoves would help struggling small businesses make their products more marketable to a customer base that very badly needs such an incentive to even walk through the front door.

The on-again-off-again nature of this credit has made it very difficult for manufacturers and retailers to market the credit's availability to their customers. As such, the tax credit has frequently acted less like an incentive and more like a happy accident for those who were made aware of the credit after having already made a qualifying purchase. The credit has only been available to promote in marketing efforts only three times in recent years – 2010, 2013, and 2016. With stability in this part of the tax code, more consumers, most of whom are purchasing decision makers for middle class households, would actually be incentivized to make a qualifying purchase which is the purpose of a tax credit. In addition, the credit is particularly useful in areas of the country that are encouraging residents to change out an older, non-EPA-certified stove for a new EPA-certified stove in order to help meet air quality standards for particulate emissions.

The Sec. 25(C) tax credit, first established by the Energy Policy Act of 2005, saw the addition of the provision for efficient biomass stoves upon passage of the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (the "Stimulus Bill") increased the credit amount from \$300 to \$1,500 making it a more robust credit for American taxpayers. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) data indicate that taxpayers reported spending \$25.1 billion in 2009 and \$26 billion in 2010 on remodeling costs associated with both qualified energy efficiency improvements and residential energy property costs.^{1,2} For small businesses, which make up the vast majority of this industry, that translates into more sales, service jobs, and satisfied customers – three key factors for growing a small business.

For tax years 2009 through 2012, over 92 percent of households that claimed the credit had an adjusted gross income (AGI) under \$200,000 and two-thirds of the households claiming the credit had an AGI of under \$100,000. During the same period, about 40 percent of households that claimed the credit had an AGI of under \$75,000.³ Clearly an incentive for middle class families, the credit helps reduce homeowners' energy use, lowering their utility bills and increasing their home's value.

¹ IRS Statistics of Income (SOI) Tax Stats – Individual Income Tax Returns, Line Item Estimates. 2009 (p. 128, line 4), 2010 (p. 130, line 4). Downloaded from: <https://www.irs.gov/uac/soi-tax-stats-individual-income-tax-returns-line-item-estimates>

² The Sec. 25(C) tax credit, referred to by the IRS on IRS form 5695 as "Residential Energy Credits," is comprised of two provisions: the first, for "qualified energy efficiency improvements," and the second for "residential energy property costs." The biomass stove tax credit is part of the latter.

³ IRS, SOI Tax Stats – Individual Statistical Tables by Size of Adjusted Gross Income. Table 3.3: All Returns: Tax Liability, Tax Credits, and Tax Payments. Years 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012. Downloaded from: <https://www.irs.gov/uac/soi-tax-stats-individual-statistical-tables-by-size-of-adjusted-gross-income>

The tax credit for purchasing a qualifying biomass stove has the potential to not only help U.S. tax payers make an upfront purchase for a long-term investment, but also to help a well-seasoned industry that is addressing the multitude of challenges that come with a new regulation. Some may argue that energy tax credits only serve to artificially support fledgling industries. That is not the case with the biomass stove industry. Manufacturers and retailers of wood and pellet stoves are almost all small businesses that are proud of the long tradition of their company and role in the development of the biomass stove industry. Today's EPA-certified stoves are highly efficient, clean burning, are up to 50 percent more energy efficient than stoves made before 1990, and can use 1/3 less wood for the same heat.⁴ The biomass stove industry and the EPA both strongly agree that the investment in a new EPA-certified stove is well worth the cost and adoption of these new technologies would be accelerated with the existence of a strong, stable biomass stove tax credit.

We urge you to renew the biomass stove tax credit, part of Sec. 25(C), as you consider any year-end tax proposals. We believe strongly that action this year on energy tax credits will make them more effective and beneficial for U.S. tax payers. Thank you for your consideration of our request and we hope to be a resource to you and your staff as these discussions continue.

Sincerely,



Rachel Feinstein
Manager – Government Affairs
Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association

⁴ Environmental Protection Agency. Burn Wise Energy Efficiency. Accessed November 8, 2016 from <https://www.epa.gov/burnwise/burn-wise-energy-efficiency>.



MODEL REGULATORY & LEGISLATIVE LANGUAGE



HEARTH SYSTEMS SPECIALTY LICENSE

2017

ABOUT HPBA

The **Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association® (HPBA)**, a 501(c)(6) not-for-profit organization, is the North American industry association for manufacturers, retailers, distributors, representatives, service firms, and allied associates for all types of barbecue, patio and hearth appliances, fuels, and accessories. The association provides professional member services and industry support in education, statistics, government relations, marketing, advertising, and consumer education. HPBA serves the public by providing consumer safety information and educational materials for hearth, patio, and barbecue products.

ABOUT HPBEF

The **Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Education Foundation® (HPBEF)** is an independent, non-profit education foundation that serves as the education “arm” of HPBA which supports industry by providing technical training and educational products/programs that capture best industry practices and encourage professional achievement, certification (through the National Fireplace Institute) and continuing education.

ABOUT NFI

The **National Fireplace Institute® (NFI)** is the professional certification division of the Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Education Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit educational organization for the hearth industry. NFI’s objective is to increase public safety by establishing meaningful credentials for professionals involved in planning, servicing, and installing residential hearth appliance and venting systems. NFI, established in 2002, certifies planners and installers in three hearth product categories based upon fuel type:

- NFI Gas Specialist
- NFI Woodburning Specialist
- NFI Pellet Specialist

2017 Model Regulatory and Legislative Language, Hearth Systems Specialty License

Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association

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This document was revised in January 2017 and supersedes all previous editions.

2017

MODEL REGULATORY AND LEGISLATIVE LANGUAGE

HEARTH SYSTEMS SPECIALTY LICENSE

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WHY A HEARTH SPECIALTY LICENSE

Fireplaces, hearth products and systems are unique products that bring fire into the living area of the home. Potential problems related to improper installation may be concealed and may not manifest themselves for a considerable time after installation. There are a wide variety of fuels, appliances, venting systems, installation instructions, codes and standards that require specialized knowledge. Credentials establish a bar for qualifications and thereby help to prevent potentially dangerous practices.

Appropriate and effective credentials should be specific to the product. Competence cannot be reliably predicted by general qualifications that include dissimilar products and that do not adequately cover knowledge of fireplace products installation. Exclusion of demonstrably appropriate fireplace-specific qualifications unfairly prevents highly-qualified professionals from practicing their trade, earning a livelihood, and contributing to the economic welfare of the region/state.

The National Fireplace Institute (NFI) exams are singularly focused on fireplace products. The exams are developed and maintained in accordance with national testing standards, including a job analysis basis.

Public safety and confidence are best served by well-developed installer qualifications and requirements. Using an existing program eliminates considerable expense and effort for state and local agencies to develop defensible exams. Appropriate, meaningful qualifications lead to a reduction in errors in installation and thereby reduce difficulty and time spent on inspections and warranty claims. With continuing education courses widely available for NFI-certified specialists, policymakers and the public may rest assured

knowing that their NFI-certified installer or servicer are receiving the most up-to-date technical information.

INTRODUCTION

The below model language is a proposal for establishing a hearth specialty license requirement under a state or local jurisdiction's HVAC-R, mechanical, or other code. The proposal consists of:

- a. Definition of a "hearth systems specialty license;"
- b. Requirements for licensure; and
- c. Scope of work permitted under the license

LANGUAGE ORIGINS

Section 1 is adapted directly from the Iowa Plumbing & Mechanical Systems Board's sublicense, under HVAC, for a "hearth systems specialty license."¹

Section 2 is adapted with very few edits (noted) from the Iowa Plumbing & Mechanical Systems Board Hearth Systems Specialty License.

Section 3 is adapted from the Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection's Occupational Licensing sublicense for "Hearth Product Work."²

EFFECTIVE DATE

The effective date should be fixed and in the future to allow for compliance time and adjustments. Notice should also be given to all Authorities Having Jurisdiction (AHJs).

¹ See Iowa Department of Public Health; Iowa Plumbing & Mechanical Systems Board; Hearth Systems Specialty License; Accessed Sept. 26, 2016, at <http://idph.iowa.gov/pmsb/licensure/hearth-systems>

² See Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection; Hearth Product Work – License Types and Scope of Work. Accessed Sept. 26, 2016 at <http://www.ct.gov/dcp/cwp/view.asp?a=1624&q=461590>

MODEL LANGUAGE

1 SECTION 1. DEFINITIONS

2 “*Hearth systems specialty license*” means a sublicense under an HVAC license to perform work
3 in the installation of gas burning and solid fuel appliances that offer a decorative view of the
4 flames, from the connector pipe to the shutoff valve located within 3 feet of the appliance. This
5 sublicense is further allowed to perform work in the venting systems, log lighters, gas log sets,
6 fireplace inserts, and freestanding stoves.³

7 SECTION 2. REQUIREMENTS

8 *Hearth systems specialty license*. An applicant for a hearth systems specialty license shall
9 provide the board with evidence that the applicant:

- 10 a. Is at least 18 years old;
- 11 b. Possesses a valid certification issued by
 - 12 i. the National Fireplace Institute;
 - 13 ii. Equivalent authority approved by the board;⁴ and
- 14 c. Files an application and submits appropriate fees

15 SECTION 3. SCOPE OF WORK PERMITTED

16 The holder of this license may perform only work limited to "Hearth product work." "Hearth
17 product work" means the installation, service or repair of a biomass-fueled or propane or
18 natural gas-fired fireplace, fireplace insert, stove or log set and associated venting and piping
19 that fuels or simulates a flame of a solid fuel fire.⁵

20 "Gas hearth product work" does not include (A) fuel piping work, (B) the servicing of fuel piping,
21 or (C) work associated with pressure regulating devices, except for appliances gas valves. And
22 shall include accessories for use with LP gas supplied by gas containers and/or natural gas.

³ Lines 2-6 are excerpted from the Iowa Plumbing & Mechanical Systems Board Hearth Systems Specialty License.

⁴ Line 14 added to allow for flexibility in adoption of this language by jurisdictions.

⁵ In line 17, "biomass-fueled" added to original Connecticut language to include work on biomass appliances. In line 19, "fuels" was added to include biomass appliances.

APPENDIX A: ABOUT NFI

The National Fireplace Institute® (NFI) is the professional certification division of the Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Education Foundation, a 501(c)3 non-profit educational organization for the hearth industry. NFI's objective is to increase public safety by establishing meaningful credentials for professionals involved in planning and installing residential hearth appliance and venting systems. NFI, established in 2002, certifies planners and installers in three hearth product categories based upon fuel type:

- NFI Gas Specialist
- NFI Woodburning Specialist
- NFI Pellet Specialist.

Since 1981, the Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Education Foundation® has conducted certification programs for the industry. In 2001, the move was made to update the certification program into one that meets the stringent national standards for certifying agencies. Doing so was a challenging and expensive process that included job analysis, exam blueprint and validation, and scoring methodology. The result however, has been a program that serves to greatly advance the credibility of the hearth industry and offer a basis for states and jurisdictions where licensing may be considered. NFI was assisted in the process by a nationally-recognized testing psychometrician, and in March 2002 the first NFI exams were administered.

NFI recognizes individuals who have successfully gained all three NFI Certifications as **Master Hearth Professionals (MHP)**.

Since its inception, and to this day, NFI retains the services of a psychometrician. Every trade, every industry has a list of best-practices. A psychometrician is the guide that makes sure the NFI certification follows the best-practices of the certification industry. Every question on every exam is monitored to separate those individuals that know the material from those that simply do well on exams. The goal is to uphold the program's credibility to ensure that certified individuals have the knowledge necessary for a proper installation and service.

Another safeguard necessary for a credible certification program is to make sure the training material doesn't just teach what is on the exam. The Job Analysis is an industry-wide survey that spells out what knowledge you need and what tasks you need to do in order to properly plan and install hearth appliances. The Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Education Foundation uses that information as the basis for all the training classes and materials. The National Fireplace Institute is only responsible the actual exam. The division between the two helps maintain the separation between the training and the exam.

How is the program governed?

NFI is ultimately governed by the 10-member Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Education Foundation (HPBEF) Board of Governors. However, numerous committees fulfill the crucial tasks of the ongoing development and maintenance requirements for each of the three NFI certifications:

- NFI Certification Committee: Oversees and directs the various NFI sub-committees and reports directly to the HPBEF Board
- Job Analysis Committee: Composed of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), this group surveys and identifies specific job tasks and required knowledge necessary for safe and correct installations
- Manual Review Committee: Using Job Analysis survey information, this group contributes, reviews, and edits the HEARTH Reference Manuals, the official study guides for the NFI exams, every other year allowing for continuous coverage of new products.
- Exam Writing Committee: Also using the data gathered by the Job Analysis survey process, they prepare exam questions under the guidance of a professional consultant
- Cut-score Committee: Using the Modified Angoff Procedure, this group reviews each exam question performance from a pilot over length exam to ultimately determine the passing score and eliminate poorly performing exam questions
- CEU Committee: The Continuing Education Unit (CEU) Committee is responsible for reviewing and accrediting educational sessions across the industry and makes policy recommendations on certification renewal to the Board

What is the value of having the credential?

The value of certification in any industry is well documented with positive implications in consumer satisfaction, employee retention, defined career paths, and job performance. NFI Certification provides value specific to the hearth industry in numerous ways, such as:

- NFI Certification increases public safety through the proper training and qualification of planners and installers
- Hearth manufacturers experience reduced callbacks and customer complaints due to faulty installations
- Hearth retail owners and managers can increase public awareness and consumers' confidence in their products and services
- Hearth professionals have a credible, nationally-recognized credentialing program through which they can validate their knowledge and advance in a career path

Thanks to these efforts, NFI is now recognized as the basis for licensure in the states of Iowa, Idaho, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and Connecticut; the counties of New Castle, DE and Pitkin, CO; and the municipalities of Lawrence, KS; Salina, KS; and Lincoln, NE.

Who is eligible for the credential?

Anyone seeking a career path in the hearth industry is eligible and welcome to take an NFI exam. While there is no experience requirement for testing, NFI does recommend that anyone testing have at least two years of experience in the industry. NFI exams are offered by Hearth Patio & Barbecue Association (HPBA) regional affiliates, National Chimney Sweep Guild (NCSG) chapters, industry manufacturers and distributors, and specialty trainers.

How is the credential earned and renewed?

NFI Certification is based upon the successful completion of one of the three NFI exams. Each NFI exam is a 100-question, closed-book, multiple-choice exam based on the recognized knowledge for planning and installing appliances in that fuel category. To prepare, applicants must study the

current edition of the Hearth Systems Reference manual(s). Due to the constant changes in the industry, the manuals and the exams are updated on a regular basis.

Each certification is valid for three years. A certification may be renewed by re-testing or by accumulating the appropriate number and category of continuing education units (CEUs), and paying a renewal fee. The requirements to renew a single certification by CEUs are 12 Technical CEUs, 4 Safety, Health & Liability (SHL) CEUs, and 8 Elective CEUs for a total of 24 CEUs. If a Specialist has two or three certifications, they are required to earn 16 Technical, 4 SHL, and 12 Elective CEUs for a total of 32 CEUs.

TECHNICAL - 12 Credits

- Product Knowledge
- Codes and Standards
- Venting Principles and Design
- Ventilation (House Pressure)
- Fuel Knowledge
- Installation Planning
- Installation Guidelines and Techniques
- Tools and Gauges
- Troubleshooting and Repair

SAFETY, HEALTH & LIABILITY - 4 Credits

- Workplace Safety
- Consumer Health and Safety (Hearth Product Issues)
- Liability

ELECTIVES - 8 Credits

- Additional Technical or Safety, Health & Liability sessions OR
- Business Management
- Sales & Marketing
- Service Department Organization and Management
- Communication Skills

TOTAL = 24 Credits

If a person holds 2 or 3 certifications, a total of 32 credits of continuing education will be required:

- TECHNICAL - WOOD/GAS/PELLET - 16 Credits**
- SAFETY, HEALTH & LIABILITY - 4 Credits**
- ELECTIVE - 12 Credits**
- TOTAL = 32 Credits**

NFI EXAM DEVELOPMENT- Validity & Reliability

The National Fireplace Institute® (NFI) certification exams were and continue to be developed through a process based on national testing standards that include a job analysis, exam blueprint, exam validation, and scoring methodology.

Job Analysis Study

The role of a hearth planner/installer in residential hearth product installations was carefully analyzed by Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) and hearth industry professionals who identified specific job tasks and areas of required knowledge necessary for safe and correct installations. Following the identification of job tasks and knowledge by SMEs, validation surveys based on the study were created and sent to over 8,000 hearth practitioners. The survey provided data that prioritized knowledge areas based on their relative importance to hearth products installation.

Development of a Exam Blueprints

The results of the industry survey provided a guide for determining exam content and appropriate percentages of questions in specific categories of job knowledge. An exam blueprint was developed for each category of hearth products, based on the fuel for the products: Gas, Woodburning, and Pellet.

Content and Exam Production

Specific questions relating to areas of performance, outlined in the job analysis study, were developed and written by industry subject matter experts who were trained by a consultant in exam question writing. Questions were then reviewed by the testing consultant for clarity and format and also by industry experts for technical accuracy. Pilot exams with extra questions are administered. These over length exams allowed a final opportunity for review of every question.

Passing Score

Passing scores are determined through the modified Angoff Procedure, a nationally recognized method to set the score that distinguishes performance that indicates possession of knowledge needed for minimum competence. The process involves subject matter experts reviewing the relative difficulty of each question and the performance statistics from the pilot over length exam. The psychometrician then processes a statistical calculation to determine the passing score.

Credentialing and Recognition

Each certified hearth professional passing their respective NFI exam is acknowledged by a certificate, a photo I.D., and a listing on the NFI website, www.nficertified.org. The NFI website is used by consumers, builders, and building officials to identify certified hearth installers nationwide.

Summary

The need for a credible certification program can be summed up in two words: public safety. Hearth products, because they involve flame, heat and venting of combustion products, require specialized knowledge for planning and installing. The NFI exams are the only exams that test the knowledge needed to properly plan and install hearth products and their venting systems.

The importance placed upon NFI by the hearth industry has been the key to its success. With the implementation of the NFI Advocate program in 2003, about 50 of the industry's largest manufacturers now recommend in their product operational manuals that their products be installed by NFI Certified Specialists. These credible, comprehensive certifications have successfully gained the recognition of building officials, legislative and regulatory agencies, and the general public.

APPENDIX B: NFI EXAM DEVELOPMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

