

INFORMATION

for the

CERTIFIED FLOODPLAIN MANAGER PROGRAM (CFM® Program)

Administered by the

**NORTH CAROLINA ASSOCIATION OF FLOODPLAIN
MANAGERS, Inc.**



NCAFPM CFM Administrator:
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NCAAFPM CERTIFIED FLOODPLAIN MANAGER PROGRAM

I. BACKGROUND

The North Carolina Association of Floodplain Managers has established a state program for professional certification of floodplain managers. The program recognizes continuing education and professional development that enhance the knowledge and performance of local, state, federal and private sector floodplain managers. This certification program has been accredited by the national CFM program of the Association of State Floodplain Managers, Inc.

Since there isn't a formal degree program for floodplain management, floodplain managers come from a variety of curricula and backgrounds. At the same time the role of floodplain managers is expanding due to increases in disaster losses and greater emphasis being placed upon mitigation to alleviate the cycle of damage-rebuild-damage. There is a need for highly qualified professionals to adequately address these issues and stop the cycle of repetitive damages and its negative drain on human, financial, and natural resources.

The formation of a professional certification program is recognized as an effective means to:

- Formalize a procedure to recognize and provide an incentive for individuals to improve their knowledge of floodplain management concepts;
- Enhance individual professional development goals;
- Promote an understanding of relevant subject matter that is consistent statewide;
- Convey new concepts and practices; and
- Build partnerships among organizations and agencies that share the goal of advancing sound floodplain management.

The primary goal of the Certified Floodplain Manager (CFM[®]) Program is to help reduce the state's flood losses and protect and enhance the natural resources and functions of its floodplains by improving the knowledge and abilities of floodplain managers in the North Carolina. This goal will be achieved over time by:

- Encouraging self-study and attendance at training courses;
- Requiring testing to obtain certification; and
- Requiring continuing education as a condition for re-certification.

A second goal of the CFM[®] Program is to increase the prominence of floodplain management in decision making by local officials and the public. This goal will be achieved on a larger scale and over a longer time frame by:

- Improving the recognition of floodplain management as a specific discipline;
- Increasing the status of floodplain managers as knowledgeable professionals in a complex and important field;
- Providing greater visibility for the profession; and
- Increasing the educational and training opportunities for floodplain managers through partnerships with other organizations.

II. CERTIFICATION CLASSIFICATIONS

CFM® is a registered trademark of the ASFPM Certified Floodplain Manager Program and available only to valid CFMs.

The NCAFPM recognizes floodplain manager certifications in two categories.

A. NCAFPM Certified Floodplain Manager (CFM)

This certification is granted by the NCAFPM directly to individuals with a minimum of two years of floodplain management experience who demonstrate knowledge of the basic national and state standards and programs of floodplain management by passing a written examination, and pay the fees required under Section VII.

B. Certified Floodplain Manager Programs Recognized by the NCAFPM

Certifications granted directly by the Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM) or another state certification program will be recognized in North Carolina by the NCAFPM when the individual meets the minimum experience requirements, passes an examination covering North Carolina standards and programs of floodplain management, and pays the fees required under Section VII. The exam will include 25 questions and may be expanded as deemed necessary by the NCAFPM Professional Development Committee. The exam will be offered at the same times as the NCAFPM-CFM exam.

III. ELIGIBILITY

The NCAFPM CFM Program is directed toward individuals from widely varying occupations, interests, and educational backgrounds that have routine floodplain management duties. These include representatives from the following groups: community, state, and federal officials; the private sector; academia; interest groups; and private citizens. For the purposes of the NCAFPM CFM Program, floodplain management is defined as “Activities and efforts undertaken to reduce flood losses and human suffering and to protect the natural and beneficial values and functions of floodplains.” Except for those from a state with an accredited state certification program, anyone meeting the minimum 2 year experience requirements can apply and take the NCAFPM CFM exam. Anyone from a state with an accredited state certification program must apply for and take that state’s exam.

IV. APPLICATION PROCESS

The initial NCAFPM Certified Floodplain Manager certification will be granted upon:

- submission of documentation that the minimum experience requirements are met;
- submission of a completed application and payment of the required fees;
- submission a Professional Reference Form; and
- passing the certification examination.

Individuals may apply directly to the ASFPM by obtaining an application packet, completing the application, and returning it to the ASFPM with the appropriate fee. The application will require basic information regarding the applicant's identity and one written reference. Optional information will be requested to help the NCAFPM maintain demographic information and determine the fairness of the exam. The application shall be signed by the applicant acknowledging that the award of a certification will be based upon meeting all the minimum qualification requirements and achieving a satisfactory score on an exam to be prepared and scored by the NCAFPM. The applicant shall further agree to abide by the Code of Professional Conduct

V. REFERENCES

A Professional Reference Form will be required as part of the application, preferably from the applicant's immediate supervisor. If the applicant is retired or self-employed, the reference should be from a colleague, client, or other professional knowledgeable about the applicant's abilities. In lieu of this Form, a letter of verification incorporating the information requested on the Form is acceptable. The contact on the Form or letter will be notified of applicant's successful certification.

VI. EXAMINATIONS

The NCAFPM CFM exam and the exam for applicants from other certification programs will be "closed book" and will be held in a proctored classroom environment. All examinations will be pass/fail and the results will be held in strict confidence. Examinations will be given at each NCAFPM annual conference and other locations as approved and specified by the NCAFPM Board of Directors.

Re-examinations will be granted at an approved location upon payment of the appropriate fee(s). The applicant will be required to only pay a re-examination fee if the exam is taken within one year of the initial examination or at the next annual NCAFPM conference, whichever is later. If the application for re-examination is later than the latest of these dates, the applicant will be required to pay the fees appropriate for a new applicant.

The examination will be approximately 126 questions. The questions will be multiple choice, fill in the blank and true/ false. It will take approximately 3 hours to complete. The exam covers the following categories in the proportions shown.

<u>Topic with examples</u>	<u>Percentage of Total Questions</u>
Overall Context of Floodplain Management	5-10%
Unified National Program	
NFIP	
Sanctions	
Floodplain Mapping	25-30%
Base flood concept	
Discharge, profiles, floodways	
Coastal flooding	
Reading/ using maps	
Revising FEMA maps	
NFIP Regulatory Standards	25-30%
“Development”, requirements for a permit	
Encroachment rules	
V Zone rules	
Building protection standards	
Substantial improvement/ damage	
Regulatory Administrative Procedures	20-25%
Inspections	
Elevation records	
Enforcement	
Variance rules	
Flood Insurance	10-15%
Coverage	
Rating	
Flood Hazard Mitigation	5-10%
Disaster assistance procedures	
Funding sources	
Natural and Beneficial Functions	5-10%
Wetlands	
Multi-objective management	
State Specific	5-10%

VII. FEES

To cover the costs of administering the NCAFPM CFM Program, fees will be collected for specific actions. All checks shall be made payable to ASFPM. The following fees shall be charged:

	Individual Members of the NCAFPM*	Others
Examination Fee	\$ 100	\$170
Biennial Renewal Fee	\$ 50	\$ 120
Re-examination Fee	\$ 50	\$ 50
North Carolina Specific Supplemental Exam- for national CFMs moving into North Carolina	\$ 25	\$ 100
Late Renewal Fee	\$ 75	\$ 75
Request for Appeal Fee	\$ 80	\$ 80

An applicant that cancels from taking the exam, with at least two weeks notice to the Administrator will receive a 50% refund. No refund will be given if the cancellation occurs with less than two weeks notice. The applicant will have up to one year to reschedule.

- **Corporation and Agency Memberships do not make an applicant eligible for the member rate in this certification process. The applicant needs to be an individual member of NCAFPM to get the member rate.** Applying to NCAFPM for membership at the same time as applying for the exam to ASFPM will reduce fees.

VIII. NOTIFICATION OF STATUS

Applicants approved for certification will be notified by mail. A certification number will be assigned to the individual and the appropriate certificate issued, designating the applicant an "NCAFPM Certified Floodplain Manager." Applicants who fail to pass the examination will be notified in writing. They will be eligible for re-examination within one year or at the next NCAFPM annual conference, whichever is later, by paying only the re-examination fee.

IX. APPEALS

If an application for certification or renewal is denied, the applicant may appeal the Administrator's decision to the NCAFPM Board of Directors, according to the established guidelines. An appeal is a request for review of a decision by the Administrator. An appeal may be made on the grounds that the decision was in conflict with the NCAFPM CFM Charter.

A. Initiating an Appeal

The applicant must submit an appeal request in writing to the NCAFPM Board within 60 calendar days of being notified of the decision being appealed. The following materials must be enclosed with the letter requesting an appeal:

- (1) A copy of the Administrator's decision and any other pertinent documentation;
- (2) A statement clearly identifying the reasons for the appeal, along with the appropriate fee; and,
- (3) Written support and/or justifications of the reasons for appeal.

B. NCAFPM Board Review of Appeals

Upon receipt of a request for an appeal, the following actions will be taken:

- (1) The NCAFPM Board will acknowledge receipt of the appeal and indicate whether additional materials are needed. Such acknowledgment will occur within 60 days of the date of the receipt of the request for an appeal.
- (2) The NCAFPM Board Chair shall select three NCAFPM Board members to form an Appeals Panel for review of the case. NCAFPM Board members who reviewed the original application packet are not eligible to sit on the Appeals Panel.
- (3) The Appeals Panel will make its decision based on review of the materials. The appellant may request a teleconference interview with the Appeals Panel. All expenses involved in such an interview will be borne by the appellant.
- (4) The Appeals Panel will complete its review and make a decision to uphold or deny the appeal. If the appeal is upheld, the preceding Administrator's action is so modified. If the appeal is denied, the preceding Administrator's action stands.
- (5) The Appeals Panel will prepare a summary report of its findings. The decision of the Appeals Panel is binding. The final decision will be reported to the entire NCAFPM Board. The appellant will be notified within 10 days of the NCAFPM Board's decision.
- (6) If the NCAFPM Board upholds an appeal, the appeal fee shall be refunded in full.

X. MAINTAINING CERTIFIED STATUS

Certifications awarded by the NCAFPM will remain in effect for two years. At the end of two years, each Certified Floodplain Manager must submit a renewal application to NCAFPM and enclose the renewal fee. The application will be used to update the Certified Floodplain Manager's credentials and to document completion of the required continuing education credits (see below). When these conditions are met, a two-year renewal will be issued. If a CFM fails to make an application for renewal within 30 days of the expiration date, he/she may be required to complete a new application package, pay the appropriate fee, and take another test before being re-certified. If special circumstances prevent timely renewal, the NCAFPM Professional Development Committee will consider a waiver of these requirements.

An initial NCAFPM Certified Floodplain Manager certification will be valid indefinitely, *provided* the applicant complies with the biennial (every two years) renewal requirements, which are:

- Submittal of renewal application;
- Submittal of renewal fee;
- Submittal of proof of 16 Continuing Education Credits (CECs) within the previous 24 months, with a maximum of 12 CECs earned in any one year.

Approximately 90 days before their CFM expiration, NCAFPM Certified Floodplain Managers will be sent a notification for the biennial renewal, along with a form on which to record CECs earned. Those not fulfilling the requirements for renewal by the due date will be sent a letter of decertification, stating that the individual may no longer classify him or herself as an NCAFPM Certified Floodplain Manager (CFM®).

If a CFM makes an application for renewal within 30 days of the expiration date, he/she may still re-certify provided he/she does the following: (1) complete a CFM renewal form, (2) pay the renewal fee plus the late fee, and (3) submit proof of having earned the required 16 CEC's. In this scenario, the exam is not retaken. If the certification has been expired for more than 30 days, decertification is final. If special circumstances prevent timely renewal, the NCAFPM Board may consider an appeal of these requirements.

XI. CONTINUING EDUCATION REQUIREMENT

The continuing education requirement can be met through any combination of formal courses, university short courses, or home-study courses approved by the NCAFPM Professional Development Committee, or by attendance at technical portions of the NCAFPM annual conference, state, or other related technical meetings. The NCAFPM Professional Development Committee will publish a Guidance Document on CECs, which will include a listing of approved CECs. A copy of the Guide is available at www.ncafpm.org. Documentation of training and CECs will be reviewed and tabulated by the Administrator. CECs and related training could be obtained through:

- NCAFP/ASFPM conferences, workshops and training sessions;
- Related Emergency Management Institute (EMI) courses;
- Retrofitting/floodproofing workshops and training sessions;
- National Flood Insurance Program Community Rating System training;
- Disaster response training sessions;
- Continuing education units or training hours from other educational training;
- Selected state or federal agency training courses; or
- Other approved courses.

Applicants for certification renewals may request the NCAFP Professional Development Committee to review training courses or conferences not on the list of approved programs. The NCAFP PDC will evaluate these requests to determine the quality of training and their relevance to floodplain management. If a training course is deemed to meet the training requirements of the CFM Program, the NCAFP PDC will determine the number of CECs to be granted (depending upon the floodplain management content) and notify the applicant.

XII. DISCLAIMER OF LIABILITY

Professional certification is a peer review process administered through the North Carolina Association of Floodplain Managers. Participation in the Certified Floodplain Manager Program is strictly voluntary. The program is designed to establish educational, training, and experience criteria related to floodplain management, hazard mitigation, and the National Flood Insurance Program, and to certify that an individual applicant has met these criteria.

The North Carolina Association of Floodplain Managers assumes no liability for any action or decision made by individual Certified Floodplain Managers during the normal course of performing their prescribed duties and responsibilities of managing development within the identified floodplains, as established by criteria of the NFIP or state and mandated by their respective employer or local government agency. Furthermore, any list of Certified Floodplain Managers should be used with care. The North Carolina Association of Floodplain Managers has not attempted to independently verify the information submitted by certification applicants. We strongly recommend that anyone using the professional services of any NCAFP CFM listed individual or firm contact that individual or firm directly and request and verify their references and credentials. Further, the NCAFP assumes no liability for any action or decision made by an NCAFP accredited state entity in accepting, denying, certifying, or re-certifying CFMs.

XIII. CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Certified Floodplain Managers will agree to follow the Code of Professional Conduct, below.

As a Certified Floodplain Manager, I agree to abide by the following tenets of the Code of Professional Conduct in all of my professional responsibilities. I will

- *Practice honesty and integrity in all of my professional relationships with the public, peers, and employer;*
- *Be truthful and accurate in my professional communications;*
- *Be fair and considerate of all persons;*
- *Foster excellence in floodplain management by staying abreast of pertinent issues;*
- *Enhance individual performance by attention to continuing education and technology;*
- *Avoid conflicts of interest resulting in personal gain or advantage;*
- *Be economical in the utilization of the nation's resources through the effective use of funds, accurate assessment of flood-related hazards, and timely decision-making;*
- *Maintain the confidentiality of privileged information;*
- *Promote public awareness and understanding of flood-related hazards, floodplain resources, and flood hazard response; and*
- *Be dedicated to serving to the profession of floodplain management and to improving the quality of life.*

Decertification

A CFM may be decertified for failure to fulfill the requirements specified in Section V A.4 of the NCAFPM CFM Charter by the renewal date.

A CFM may be decertified for unprofessional conduct if he/she has:

- *Been convicted of a crime or any felony directly related to his or her professional duties;*
- *Falsified, intentionally destroyed, or modified official records or documents relating to his or her professional duties, or otherwise knowingly provided misleading information related to his or her duties or floodplain management;*
- *Received or solicited money or anything of value directly or indirectly that may be expected to influence his or her actions or judgment in a matter outside of commonly acceptable practices or values;*

- Used his or her position in an illegal, dishonest, or unprofessional way to influence or gain financial or other benefit of his or her immediate family or organization with which he or she is associated; or
- Violated the Code of Professional Conduct listed in the NCAFPM CFM Charter.

Information on a CFM's unprofessional conduct must be submitted to the NCAFPM Administrator's office in writing. No anonymous submittals will be accepted. If the NCAFPM CFM Program Administrator determines that consideration of decertification may be warranted, the charges and all supporting documentation will be provided to the CFM by certified mail. The CFM shall have 30 days upon receipt thereof to respond in writing to the charges.

If a CFM has not fulfilled the renewal requirements by the renewal date or has not responded to the charges of unprofessional conduct by the specified deadlines, he or she will be sent a registered letter of decertification, stating that he/she may not classify him or herself as an "NCAFPM and/or ASFPM Certified Floodplain Manager" or use the ASFPM Registered Trademark CFM in any way for a period of time specified in the letter. He/she may reapply to take the CFM exam after that date. If the CFM does submit the appropriate papers by the deadline, the procedures in Section V.A.6.b of the NCAFPM CFM Charter shall be followed.