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CERTIFIED OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY SPECIALIST RECERTIFICATION GUIDELINES

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General Rules and Procedures

This guide covers the Recertification procedures for Certified Occupational Safety Specialists (COSS). This guide supersedes any and all previous recertification guidelines issued by the Safety Council of the Louisiana Capital Area (SCLCA), and is effective as of January 1, 2009. These guidelines are written into the COSS Student Workbook.

Purpose of COSS Recertification

The COSS Recertification process helps ensure that COSS graduates maintain the necessary safety and health training to remain current in their field and/or profession.

Participation and General Requirements

As a COSS Graduate, you **must participate** in professional development activities after your initial certification, and report such activities every three years. *You must earn 6.0 CEUs or 60 contact hours every three years, in the area of safety and health and/or management. All CEUs or contact hours must be earned within the Recertification cycle to which they apply. CEUs and contact hours will be discussed further in the “Understanding CEUs” and “Understanding Contact Hours” sections of this guide. Failure to meet this requirement will result in loss of certification.*

CEUs or contact hours in excess of those required for renewal for a current Recertification cycle cannot be carried over to the next recertification cycle. CEUs or contact hours must be issued during the current three-year Recertification cycle.

Recertification Schedule

Your COSS certification will be renewable every three years. Your first initial certification will actually extend beyond three years. It will expire on December 31 of the third full year following the beginning of your certification. See Table 1 for illustration.

Table 1

DATE COSS CERTIFICATION WAS RECEIVED	COSS CERTIFICATE EXPIRATION DATE
January 1, 2005 – December 31, 2005	December 31, 2008
January 1, 2006 – December 31, 2006	December 31, 2009
January 1, 2007 – December 31, 2007	December 31, 2010
January 1, 2008 – December 31, 2008	December 31, 2011
January 1, 2009 – December 31, 2009	December 31, 2012
January 1, 2010 – December 31, 2010	December 31, 2013

You must report your CEUs or contact hours by December 31st of the third full year of-your Recertification cycle. Recertification Worksheets must be postmarked or received by fax no later than December 31st of the year your certificate expires.

Tracking and Reporting CEUs

COSS graduates must keep track of their own Recertification CEUs or contact hours, compile all supporting documentation, and report at the end of the Recertification cycle. Safety Council of Louisiana Capital Area (SCLCA) will keep certificants informed about Recertification requirements, notify them when their cycle will end, and provide the Recertification Worksheet and instructions. Any Recertification changes will appear on the COSS website (www.coss.net) under “Recertification”.

Detailed Procedures

Notification and Recertification Fee

- ***The Recertification Cycle end date appears on the annual reminder.*** Each year, around August, you will receive a reminder letter that will state when your recertification cycle ends. Each year you will also receive a contact information update sheet, which you will use to notify SCLCA of any updated contact information, such as address, phone number or email address changes. On your third full year of certification, you must submit a recertification worksheet and a recertification registration form (discussed herein). On, or before, December 31st of your expiration year, you will need to submit a total of \$135 for recertification, along with the other required documents as discussed within these guidelines.

Keeping Track of Recertification CEUs or Contact Hours

- ***Keep track of your own Recertification materials.***
It is very important to set up a personal procedure for tracking Recertification CEUs or contact hours. You will want to keep this Recertification Guide, original (or copy of) supporting documents, and a running list of Recertification CEUs or contact hours earned.
- ***At least once a year you should review and update your records.***
A good time to check your records is when you receive the annual reminder letter for your certification. Keeping accurate records will make it easy to prepare the Recertification Worksheet at the end of your three-year Recertification cycle, and will make it easy to verify CEUs or contact hours claimed, should you get selected for an audit. At this time, it is also important to update any changed contact information so we may notify you of any COSS related information.
- ***Keep original documents that verify CEUs or contact hours***
Information about what documentation SCLCA will accept to verify CEUs or contact hours claimed appears in this document under “Understanding CEUs”. Be sure to keep documentation supporting your claim for CEUs or contact hours. **You will have to submit supporting documentation only if you are audited, at which point, SCLCA will request supporting documents to verify the CEUs or contact hours you claim.**

Reporting for Recertification

- ***At the end of your Recertification cycle, you must report using a COSS Recertification Worksheet; other forms are not accepted.***

Copies of the latest Recertification Worksheet may be downloaded at www.coss.net under "Recertification".

- ***The Recertification Worksheet must be postmarked or received by fax no later than December 31 of the end of your Recertification cycle.***
SCLCA will notify you with your results following an evaluation of your Recertification Worksheet. If you are selected for an audit, you'll be notified and given instructions about what you need to do.
- ***Do not report until your Recertification cycle ends.***
Forms, requirements, and procedures may change from time to time, and you will want to meet all requirements and take advantage of rule interpretations in place at the time you report. Recertification forms will not be accepted any earlier than August 31st of the year you are up for recertification. Current information appears at www.coss.net under "Recertification".
- ***Send in Recertification Registration Form with Recertification Worksheet.***
In order to recertify, you will need to register and submit the recertification payment of \$135.00. You may request a Recertification Registration Form by either:
 - emailing info@coss.net,
 - calling (225-766-0955 x 3289), or
 - downloading the Registration Form at www.coss.net under "Recertification".

Complete the Recertification Registration Form and fax it, or mail it (along with your Recertification Worksheet) to SCLCA, at the following address:

Fax: 225-766-1099	Address: 8180 Siegen Lane
Phone: 225-766-0955, 3289	Attention: COSS Operations Supervisor
	Baton Rouge, LA 70810

- ***Do not send supporting documents with your Recertification Worksheet.***
Proof of CEUs or contact hours earned is **not required** with the original Recertification Worksheet. Documentation of CEUs or contact hours earned will be required **only if you are notified that your Worksheet is being audited.**

Recertification Auditing

The auditing process ensures that a certificant verifies the CEUs or contact hours claimed on a Recertification Worksheet. SCLCA will randomly select 25% of the total Recertification reports that year for audit. Individuals selected will receive a notice that will explain how to submit verification, and when it is due.

Counting Recertification CEUs or Contact Hours

- ***Keep track of CEUs or contact hours accurately as they are earned.***
Total points for a Recertification cycle are not rounded upward. For example, you may have a total of 5.5 CEUs or 55 contact hours at the end of your Recertification cycle. This does not meet the Recertification requirements. You must meet the minimum 6 CEUs or 60 contact hours within your recertification cycle.
- ***CEUs or contact hours must come from any safety council, training institution, post-secondary institution, conferences, seminars, etc.*** The course or seminar must be safety and health and/or

management related. This may include properly documented online or CBT training (pending SCLCA's approval), or classes you attended while at a professional conference or seminar. Courses you have developed and/or taught do not count toward the required minimum CEUs or contact hours. You may check the website at www.coss.net for a list of approved courses; however, this list is not inclusive of all acceptable classes.

Understanding CEUs

Continuing education courses provide one of the main methods for keeping up with professional practice. Both the length and rigor of a course contributes to its value.

The Recertification program for COSS uses the recognized continuing education credit system. For many continuing education courses, the providers ensure that they comply with national standards for continuing education courses established by the International Association for Continuing Education and Training¹. Courses complying with IACET standards can award Continuing Education Units (CEUs). SCLCA does not evaluate courses for CEU credit. SCLCA relies on compliance with IACET standards to help ensure quality in educational offerings and recognizes the CEU as a measure of course credit.

IACET publishes the rules for CEUs. CEUs are widely used and accepted in continuing education in the U.S. Training providers are responsible for meeting the rules associated with CEUs when awarding them for continuing education courses.

Understanding Contact Hours

Some safety and health classes or seminars that you participate in may not offer official CEUs. In these instances, you will need to accurately record the number of contact hours you spend in the training. For example: you attended a fall protection seminar at an expo from 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m., but you were not issued CEUs for the seminar. In this situation you would count the number of actual hours you were in the training. In this example, you would be credited for 2 contact hours. As documentation of your attendance (if documentation is requested), you would need to provide a signed roster or attendance sheet and an agenda (or other meeting information) as proof of your attendance.

College Credits also count as contact hours. For example, if you take one 3 hour college class for 15 weeks, that would give you 45 contact hours (3 hours x 15 weeks). A passing grade on an end of semester report card would serve as proof of your attendance (if documentation is requested).

Leave of Absence Request

SCLCA may grant a leave of absence for up to three years if you are temporarily absent from the safety and health practice. You must submit your request for a leave of absence in writing to SCLCA's COSS Operations Supervisor. If you find during your leave of absence that the interruption will be longer than expected, SCLCA may grant an extension to the leave upon your written request to SCLCA's COSS Operation Supervisor.

During an approved leave of absence, the number of Recertification CEUs or contact hours required will be reduced by 1 CEU or 10 contact hours per year. The reduced CEUs or contact hours may apply to more than one cycle. The leave of absence will not alter the cycle periods and schedule for reporting. To retain your certification, you must

¹ International Association for Continuing Education and Training, 1620 I St. NW Suite 615, Washington , DC 20006; Phone: 202-463-2905; Web: www.iacet.org.

continue to pay your renewal fee during a leave of absence. The Leave of Absence Request form may be downloaded at www.coss.net under "Recertification".

Extension of Time Request

An extension allows you to add an additional year to your Recertification cycle for the purpose of obtaining CEUs or contact hours. However, extending your present Recertification cycle will shorten your next Recertification cycle to 2 years (instead of 3) and will still require the minimum 6 Recertification CEUs or 60 contact hours. You must submit all extension requests in writing to SCLCA's COSS Operations Supervisor, prior to the end of your Recertification cycle. The Extension of Time Request form may be downloaded at www.coss.net under "Recertification".

Full or Partial Exemption Request

An exemption reduces the total time and corresponding CEUs or contact hours of a Recertification cycle. Factors which may justify an exemption include hardship, incapacity, disability, and other extenuating circumstances affecting your ability to comply with the Recertification requirements. A full exemption waives the CEUs or contact hours required for the entire cycle and a partial exemption covers a portion of the cycle. An appeal seeking an exemption must provide suitable justification. All exemption requests must be submitted in writing to SCLCA's COSS Operations Supervisor, prior to the end of your Recertification cycle. The Exemption Request form may be downloaded at www.coss.net under "Recertification".

Notification of Recertification Results

SCLCA will review each Recertification Worksheet to determine if the 6 required CEUs or 60 contact hours were achieved.

- **Recertification Met**

If you meet the minimum of 6 CEUs or 60 contact hours requirement, SCLCA will send you a written notice stating that the COSS Recertification requirements have been met. You will also receive a Recertification certificate with your new expiration date on it. SCLCA will mail your new Recertification certificate to the address you provided on the Recertification Registration Form and Recertification Worksheet. You will begin a new Recertification cycle and will be allowed to retain certification for another 3 year cycle.

- **Recertification Not Met**

If SCLCA finds that you have not acquired the minimum of 6 CEUs or 60 contact hours, SCLCA will notify you. You can provide additional information to justify CEUs or contact hours claimed, or work with SCLCA to resolve the shortage of CEUs or contact hours. If you do not respond or seek to resolve the shortage of CEUs or contact hours within 30 days of notification, SCLCA will notify you, in writing, that your certification is no longer valid.

Reinstating an Expired COSS Certification

COSS Recertification Guidelines

Effective: 1/1/09

Last updated: 11/17/08; BG

If SCLCA notifies you that your COSS Certification is invalid because you have not met the Recertification requirements, there are two options for being reinstated as a COSS in good standing.

1. You will have 30 days from the date of the notice to fully comply with Recertification requirements. You must submit a Recertification Worksheet AND supporting documentation, and pay a nonrefundable Recertification reinstatement fee of \$25.00, in addition to the Recertification Fee (\$135) (for a total of \$155.00).
2. Retake the COSS class, at the then current rate, and meet all requirements to achieve the COSS designation. By retaking the COSS class, a student's expiration date will be adjusted accordingly.

Example 1: If a student had an original expiration date of December 31, 2008, but retook the COSS course on December 15, 2008; his/her new expiration date would be December 31, 2011.

Example 2: If a student's certification expired on December 31, 2008, and then he/she retook the COSS course on February 15, 2009; his/her new expiration date would be December 31, 2012.

Appeals Procedures

Should SCLCA notify you that you are not in compliance with the Recertification requirements and your COSS designation is invalid, you have six months from the date of notification to file an appeal. SCLCA will review and act on the appeal. An Appeal form may be downloaded at www.coss.net under "Recertification".

An appeal must be submitted to SCLCA's COSS Operation Supervisor in writing. An appeal must provide information and supporting documentation to justify having SCCLA waive or modify any Recertification rules and procedures, or to provide evidence that compliance with Recertification requirements was not possible due to extenuating circumstances.

SCLCA's Review of an Appeal

Your appeal will be reviewed by the COSS Support Team, on a case by case basis. Once a decision has been made by the COSS Support Team, you will be notified of the decision in writing. All decisions made by the COSS Support Team are final.