

# **NEHA Food Safety Certificate Program Handbook**

Guide to Policies and Procedures for  
NEHA's Certificate Programs



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**NEHA's Mission is "to advance the environmental health and protection professional for the purpose of providing a healthful environment for all."**

In pursuit of its mission, NEHA sponsors a variety of Certificate programs. Today, the association offers four Certificate programs: the Food Handler, the Food Protection Manager, the HACCP Handler, and the HACCP Manager.

Congratulations on taking a step towards holding a NEHA Certificate. Holding a NEHA Certificate benefits not only you as an individual in proving your competency and capability in the field of food safety and protection, but also benefits the community and employers. It is through the device of a Certificate that a community gains assurance that the workforce handling this responsibility is *competent, properly trained, and equipped to carry out their responsibilities*. The Certificate serves to verify that a professional has achieved what is perceived as a baseline level of competence in this complicated subject area of food protection. By having staff that holds Certificates, employers are assured of having a workforce of employees that are reasonably capable of handling whatever challenges their job responsibilities and their employer present.

**The NEHA Food Handler Certificate Program objectives are:**

- 1. accomplished learning outcomes,**
- 2. stakeholder satisfaction, and**
- 3. employer satisfaction of increased skills and competency.**

The NEHA Certificate Program is administrated through NEHA's Entrepreneurial Zone, or EZ. The EZ Program Administrator oversees the program and implements all policies and procedures.

## 1. OVERVIEW

### Purpose

The NEHA food safety training programs have been designed for individuals working in a food facility to increase awareness of food safety hazards, learn how to control those hazards, and understand personal hygiene, handling food safely, the flow of food through a facility, and the basics of pest control. NEHA's courses enhance your knowledge and understanding, thus promoting the practice of food safety and protection. The advantages of NEHA's Certificate Programs are the nationwide recognition and reputation of NEHA, the consultation of food safety experts within NEHA's membership, and the continual update of food safety information based on the ongoing assessment of the dynamic food safety field.

### 1.1

#### Food Handler

The NEHA Food Handler Certificate is designed to provide individuals an understanding of foodborne illness and contamination, receiving, storing, preparing and serving food, personal hygiene, cleaning and sanitation, and pest prevention. A food handler is defined as any person employed in a food premise, who at any time may be involved in the manufacturing, preparation, packing or service of food for sale.

Scope The NEHA Food Handler program is designed to be a 2-hour introductory program including classroom instruction on foodborne illness and contamination, receiving, storing, preparing and serving food, personal hygiene, cleaning and sanitizing, and pest prevention.

Learning outcomes After completing the food handler course and successfully passing the course assessment, students will better be able to:

- Describe the importance of food safety
- Explain the causes and consequences of foodborne illness
- Describe how to handle food safely, from receiving through service
- Identify proper methods of personal hygiene when working with food
- Describe how food can be contaminated and how to prevent contamination
- Explain cleaning and sanitizing
- Describe pest control

### 1.2

#### Food Protection Manager

The NEHA Food Protection Manager Certificate is designed for individuals within the public and private sectors who oversee the protection and safety of food. This Certificate integrates management, food contamination, handling food safely, personal hygiene, cleaning and sanitizing, pest control, facilities management, legal and regulatory requirements, and inspections into a training program that encourages

problem solving skills and knowledge retention. A food protection manager is defined as any person who is responsible for managing the daily operations of the restaurant, including the selection, training and performance of employees. In addition, they oversee the inventory and ordering of food and supplies, implement food safety practices, and ensure that customers are satisfied with their dining experience.

Scope The NEHA Food Protection Manager program is designed to be an 8 to 16-hour program including classroom instruction on foodborne illness and contamination, receiving, storing, preparing and serving food, personal hygiene, cleaning and sanitizing, pest prevention, HACCP and inspections.

Learning outcomes After completing the food protection manager course and successfully passing the course assessment, students will better be able to:

- Define safe food
- Describe causes of contamination and prevention methods
- Describe the elements of a complete training program
- Identify food contaminants and methods to prevent them
- Describe employee hygiene and illness standards
- Identify TCS foods, their safety hazards, and prevention methods
- Describe how the proper design, construction, and layout of your premises can reduce the risk of contamination
- Describe the guidelines for cleaning vs. sanitization
- List best practices for pest control
- Describe food safety rules and regulations
- Explain the HACCP approach to food safety
- Describe the purpose of an inspection program

### **1.3**

#### HACCP Handler

The HACCP Handler Certificate is designed to provide individuals an understanding of foodborne illness and contamination, receiving, storing, preparing and serving food, personal hygiene, cleaning and sanitation, and pest prevention. The program is approved by the National HACCP Alliance. A food handler is defined as any person employed in a food premise, who at any time may be involved in the manufacturing, preparation, packing or service of food for sale.

Scope The NEHA HACCP Handler program is designed to be a 2-hour introductory program including classroom or online instruction on food safety hazards, foodborne illness, risk factors, risk control, and the 7 HACCP principles.

Learning outcomes After completing the HACCP handler course and successfully passing the course assessment, students will better be able to:

- Describe the importance of food safety
- Identify food safety hazards

- Explain how to avoid cross-contamination
- Describe the HACCP approach to food safety
- Explain prerequisite programs

## 1.4

### HACCP Manager

The HACCP Manager Certificate is designed to show competency in the principles of HACCP as related to the manufacturing and processing industries, as well as the process approach to HACCP used in the retail industry. The program is approved by the National HACCP Alliance. A food manager is defined as any person who is responsible for managing the daily operations of the food facility, including the selection, training and performance of employees. In addition, they oversee the inventory and ordering of food and supplies, and implement food safety practices.

Scope The NEHA HACCP Manager program is designed to be a 16-hour program including classroom or online instruction on prerequisite programs, the process approach to HACCP, and the HACCP principles: conducting a hazard analysis, determining critical control points, establishing critical limits, establishing monitoring procedures, developing corrective actions, conducting ongoing verification and keeping records.

Learning outcomes After completing the HACCP manager course and successfully passing the course exam, students will better be able to:

- Define active managerial control
- Explain prerequisite programs
- Create standard operating procedures for each of the prerequisite programs
- Describe the HACCP approach to food safety
- Describe and give examples of food from each of the food preparation processes
- Explain how to avoid cross-contamination
- List food safety hazards, their associated foods, and control measures
- Give examples of critical control points
- Define critical limits for common operational steps used in retail and food service, including receiving, storage, preparation, cooking, cooling, reheating, holding, set up, assembly, packaging and serving / selling.
- Develop corrective actions
- Create HACCP reports

## 2. INFORMATION

### 2.1 Definition of Holding a NEHA Certificate

NEHA has adopted the following definition for a Certificate Holder:

*A Certificate Holder is an individual who has completed a prescribed course of study designed specifically to meet predefined industry requirements.*

Individuals holding a NEHA Certificate are viewed as leaders and role models. Studying for and receiving a NEHA Certificate demonstrates your commitment to safe food.

### 2.2 Sponsorship/Administration

NEHA's Certificate programs are owned and sponsored by NEHA and run by NEHA's Entrepreneurial Zone. The HACCP Manager and Food Protection Manager courses are overseen by NEHA trainers at various sites around the country. These trainers must have, at minimum, a Certified Professional Food Manager (CPFM) certification by an ANSI-CFP accredited food protection manager program, or a Certified Professional of Food Safety (CP-FS) credential. The Food Handler and HACCP Handler courses are generally run by the Food Handler's employer, manager, or local health department.

### 2.3 Membership Requirements

Membership in any association or organization, including NEHA, is **not** required to participate in any of NEHA's Certificate programs.

### 2.4 Fees

NEHA Certificate Course costs will not exceed any price limitations as declared in state codes and/or laws. Any and all course refunds are at the discretion of the instructor. There is a cost of \$6.50 - \$7.50 per Food Handler textbook. Food Manager textbooks are \$22 - \$26 each. The HACCP Handler textbooks are \$15 each. The HACCP Manager textbook is \$24 - \$29. The HACCP Manager Certificate is an additional \$15 for the International HACCP Alliance seal.

**Additional fees may be charged by the course trainer for their time, location costs, food, etc.**

### 2.5 Refunds

If the instructor cancels the Course, a full refund will be given to all paid participants.

If a participant is unable to attend the Course after making payment, the instructor must be notified in writing, by mail or email, at least 7 business days prior to the Course date for a full refund. Within 7 business days of the Course, a refund to the participant is not required, although an individual instructor may return all or some of the Course fee at his/her discretion. This prevents an instructor from ordering and paying for training books and materials that will not be used.

In the case of an emergency or if a student has to leave the class after beginning the course, a refund will not be given, however, the student will have the opportunity to attend another session of the same course by the same instructor at another time.

### 2.6 Name/Address Change

It is the Certificate holder's responsibility to notify NEHA, in writing or via fax or email of any change in name and/or address. Without this information NEHA is unable to send important information on courses.

### 2.7 Contacting NEHA

The NEHA Office may be contacted by writing, faxing, calling, or emailing:

NEHA

720 S. Colorado Blvd., Ste. 1000-N

Denver, CO 80246

(303) 756-9090 (ext. 337 or ext. 339 for Certificate)

Fax: (303) 651-9490

Email: [support@neha.org](mailto:support@neha.org)

Web: [www.neha.org](http://www.neha.org)

### 3. APPLYING FOR A CERTIFICATE

#### 3.1 Course Standards

NEHA is committed to offering fair, valid and reliable Certificate courses. A **fair** course is not biased for or against any groups because of ethnic background, geographic locale or any other demographic criterion. A **valid** course accurately reflects the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for competent practice. **Reliability** means the course is consistent in its presentation of the knowledge, skills and abilities of competent practice.

All training materials have been verified for accuracy and reliability and referenced to a published source.

#### 3.2 Application Procedures

No application is required to attend the NEHA Food Handler, Food Protection Manager, or HACCP Handler Certificate Courses. In order to participate in the HACCP Manager Certificate Course, the student must have, at the minimum, a CPFM certification.

#### 3.3 Non-Discrimination Policy

It is the policy of NEHA that no individual shall be excluded from the opportunity to participate in NEHA's Certificate programs on the basis of ethnic origin, national origin, religion, sex, age or disability.

#### 3.4 Foreign Applicants

All NEHA Certificates are available to all those who are able to attend the NEHA Certificate Courses. Training materials are currently available in English and Spanish.

## **4. COURSE PROCEDURES**

### 4.1 Course Administration

Students must be registered with a NEHA trainer to participate in a classroom course. (Online students may register online at the time of their course.) Once registered to take the course, students will be sent confirmation by the trainer. The confirmation will contain the student's name, the course location, and the date of the course. Organization of students, distribution of test materials, and testing instructions will begin promptly at the posted start time.

### 4.2 Seat Time Requirements

For an instructor-led course:

The Food Handler Certificate course requires a minimum of 2 hours of seat time.

The Food Manager Certificate course requires a minimum of 8 hours of seat time except where specified otherwise in jurisdictional requirements.

The HACCP Handler Certificate Course requires a minimum of 2 hours of seat time.

The HACCP Manager Certificate Course requires a minimum of 15 hours of seat time.

### 4.3 Course Security

The NEHA Certificate Courses are the exclusive property of NEHA. Students who take a NEHA Certificate Course acknowledge that they understand the following:

- Federal copyright law protects the course and information contained therein. No part of the course may be copied or reproduced in part or whole by any means whatsoever.
- The theft or attempted theft of NEHA copy written material is punishable as a felony.
- Individual participation in any reproduction of the course may be sufficient cause to terminate the individual's participation, invalidate the Certificate, or take other appropriate action deemed necessary.

### 4.4 Student Identity

At the test site, students must present a government-issued photo ID (such as a valid driver's license) along with their registration confirmation.

### 4.5 Special Accommodations for Students with Disabilities or Impairments

NEHA is committed to ensuring that no individual is deprived of the opportunity to take a Certificate course solely by reason of a disability or impairment. All classrooms must be fully accessible and compliant with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA).

### 4.6 Assessment Requirements

Students must receive a 70% or higher score on the course assessment in order to be eligible for a NEHA Certificate Program Certificate.

#### 4.7 Certificates

A NEHA Certificate will be issued upon successful completion of the NEHA Certificate Program Courses that applies to that specific Certificate. Successful completion of a NEHA Certificate Course includes course seat time, as specified by the individual Certificate being awarded, as well as a score of 70% or higher on a Certificate course assessment.

#### 4.8 Scoring and Results

If the Course trainer has the scoring sheet available and the time to accurately score the assessment without student interruptions or other distractions, the trainer may choose to score the assessments in the classroom as students complete their assessments. Scoring is done by matching a student's Scantron answer sheet with NEHA's master answer key for that Certificate Course.

Assessment results may be communicated to the student directly following the Course, and must be communicated to the student and NEHA within 2 weeks of the Certificate Course, by the Course trainer.

The Course trainer may choose to mail, fax, phone, or email the student's assessments results to him/her and NEHA.

When NEHA receives the assessment results, the EZ administrative assistant enters the results into the student's record in the NEHA database.

#### 4.9 Complaints and Appeals

- Writing Complaints - All complaints and appeals shall be submitted, in writing, to [support@neha.org](mailto:support@neha.org). NEHA Board of Directors is responsible for final determination of complaints and appeals.
- Submission and Review - These complaints and appeals shall be forwarded to the appropriate personnel assigned to monitor all complaints and appeal. This individual will conduct the appropriate review of the entry and elevate the issue according, ultimately making recommendations for action to the Board of Directors.
- Tolerance - Complaints and appeals are resolved in an unbiased and timely manner.
- Duration - Complaints and appeals shall be reviewed within five (5) business days from written receipt and recommendations for action are submitted to the Board of Directors within ten (10) business days from receipt.
- Final Determination - Final determination and notification are made by the Board of Directors within fifteen (15) business days from BOD receipt; 30 days total.

## 5. CERTIFICATE PERIOD AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

### 5.1 Certificate Cycle

All of NEHA's Certificates run on a three-year cycle. The cycle is based upon the updating of the FDA *Food Code*. The *Food Code* is fully updated every four (4) years, with supplements available every 2 years. NEHA will assess the *Food Code* supplements and update the course within 1 year of the updates, making the NEHA course material new every 3 years. The first day of your Certificate period is the day you pass the Certificate course assessment.

### 5.2 Certificate Renewal

At the end of the three-year Certificate cycle, individuals must retake the Certificate course in order for their Certificate to remain valid.

### 5.3 Continuing Education Contact Hours

Continuing education is not necessary or valid for maintaining or renewing a NEHA Certificate. Continuing education hours will not be earned for participating in one of NEHA's Certificate Programs.

### 5.4 Uses for the NEHA Food Safety Certificate

The NEHA Certificates show that the student has completed a prescribed course of study designed specifically to meet predefined industry requirements. The Certificate is not an attestation of qualification, competence, or authority on a subject. There are no acronyms or other marks associated with the Certificate.

## 6. CODE OF ETHICS FOR PROFESSIONALS HOLDING A NEHA CERTIFICATE

Individuals holding a NEHA Certificate must acknowledge, accept and abide by the NEHA Code of Ethics for NEHA Professionals. All individuals sitting for a NEHA Certificate must agree to and sign the statement below as part of their course after they have achieved Certificate status:

- As long as my Certificate is in an active status, I shall endeavor to keep myself current and informed in the subject matter covered under my Certificate.
- I will proudly represent my Certificate status and the Certificate itself to my professional peers, and to the public I serve.
- In the course of performing my duties, I will conduct myself in a professional manner befitting of my Certificate status.
- For the sake of elevating the recognition and status of my field, I will actively encourage my professional colleagues to consider earning this Certificate for themselves.
- I will do nothing to undermine, detract from, or otherwise cause to develop any damaging associations with respect to this Certificate. I accept that any activity on my part that will cause this Certificate any measure of injury serves as a breach and a failure on my part to uphold this code of ethics.
- I commit that my professional goal is to serve humankind by doing whatever I am able to do in the course of carrying out my professional responsibilities to maintain and provide a healthful environmental for all.

*Please sign and return this page to course trainer prior to receiving your certificate.*

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Student signature

Date