



## **NCRWA Cross Connection Certification Program Policy and Reciprocity**

**Policy effective date: January 1, 2021**

The North Carolina Rural Water Association (NCRWA) exists to provide our water and wastewater membership with the highest quality support services possible. In doing so, NCRWA recognized the challenges water and wastewater systems (Systems) face with maintaining a highly trained and qualified group of backflow (BF) testers to assist their customers in complying with the systems' BFCC ordinances. In the early 2000s, NCRWA developed the NCRWA Cross Connection Certification Program. These policies are intended to guide the quality, effectiveness and fairness of our BFCC program and ensure that NCRWA certified testers continue to be a valued resource to our Systems.

Any System may accept the NCRWA BFCC Tester Certification for compliance with their BFCC Ordinance by incorporating it by name into their ordinances or policies for their program. Likewise, any system may choose to accept NCRWA-recognized testers through our reciprocity with other training and certification providers by such statement in their ordinances or policies for their program.

### **Section 1. NCRWA BFCC Tester Certification Program Policy**

1. **Qualification of Course Instructors.** Examination Coursework, as defined below, and all written and practical examinations and any wet lab requirements that are required for the issuance or renewal of a certificate, and relating grading and administration, shall be provided by a qualified instructor. Any employee or contracted trainer of NCRWA may qualify to provide and conduct the Examination Coursework, provided that a course instructor, to be so qualified, shall hold an active and current Cross Connection Control Operator in Responsible Charge certificate issued by the North Carolina Water Treatment Facility Operators Board of Certification and either (i) provide documented proof of teaching at least 60 classroom hours of backflow cross connection instruction at an NCRWA recognized school or approved North Carolina Cross Connection Control Operator in Responsible Charge (ORC) school or, (ii) hold an instructor certificate issued by The University of Florida Training, Research, and Education for Environmental Occupations (UF/TREEO).

2. **Requirements for Initial Certification/Renewal of Certification.** NCRWA tester certifications shall require not less than 27 hours of documented classroom training, education and instruction ("Examination Coursework") as a condition for an applicant to sit for the written and practical examination which if successfully passed (which shall not be less than 70% of correct answers) results in the issuance of a certificate to test backflow assemblies. NCRWA tester certifications shall require not less than four (4) classroom hours of tester recertification training and require that attendees pass (which shall not be less than 70% of correct answers) both a written and practical examination as a condition for an applicant to renew a tester certification.

3. **Record Keeping.** NCRWA shall retain all records, applications, test scores and related communications and papers relating to its administration of its backflow certification program for a minimum of four years.

4. **Re-testing.** NCRWA may permit, upon request, an applicant who has passed the written examination but failed the practical examination the opportunity to sit for the practical examination, one additional time at an NCRWA school within 30 calendar days of the course completion date.

5. **Certification and Renewal.** An initial certificate, once issued by NCRWA, shall be valid for 2 years from the date of issuance. A renewal certificate, once issued by NCRWA, shall be valid for 2 years from the date of issuance. NCRWA shall issue a physical certificate to the certificate holder that contains at least the name of the certifying entity, the name of the certificate holder, tester number, certificate expiration date and course ID number. NCRWA shall maintain records of the issuance of, or renewal of, a certificate. NCRWA shall have no duty to affirmatively contact any certificate holder to notify the holder of any upcoming expiration of a certificate or need to renew a certificate. NCRWA may notify any certificate holder of any upcoming expiration of a certificate and need to renew a certificate. Upon expiration of a certificate, the certificate holder remains eligible for the renewal of the certificate for a period of 12 months from the date of expiration. Failure to renew within 12 months from the date of expiration shall result in the certificate holder having to apply for an initial certification.

6. **Training Materials and Testing.** NCRWA currently uses The University of Florida Training, Research and Education for Environmental Occupations (UF/TREEO) and/or NCAWWA-WEA materials and backflow testing procedures for initial certification and renewing certificates, and hereby acknowledges the validity of such testing materials and agrees to continue to use the UF/TREEO and/or NCAWWA-WEA materials and backflow testing procedures, as it exists or as it may be updated from time to time except as otherwise provided herein. NCRWA shall use at least 80 questions from the applicable test bank(s) for initial certification and at minimum 35 questions from the applicable test bank(s) for renewal certifications and agrees to select different questions for different test dates. Each examination shall include a minimum of 10 application questions relating to degrees of hazard and types of backflow. NCRWA shall monitor and police its test sites, ensure that test takers are applicants by verifying identity by a drivers' license or other government-issued picture ID, and ensure that no test taker is permitted to have or gain possession of a test or copy thereof except during the course of the test.

7. **Disciplinary Procedures.** NCRWA retains the independent right to accept or reject applicants for certificate issuance and renewal, and the authority to discipline its certificate holders upon any grounds, including but not limited to the grounds stated in this paragraph. NCRWA may, after providing to the tester a notice of charges and an opportunity to be heard, issue a reprimand to a tester, or suspend or revoke the certificate of a tester, or refuse to renew a certificate, when it finds any of the following:

- a. The applicant/certificate holder has practiced fraud or deception;
- b. The applicant/certificate holder has failed to comply with the requirements for certification or renewal of certification;
- c. The applicant/certificate holder has violated the NCRWA Tester Code of Ethics set forth in Exhibit 1 which is attached hereto; or
- d. The applicant/certificate holder has violated any ordinance or other lawful authority of a System's BFCC Ordinance or Policy that relates to the testing of backflow assemblies.

Any certificate holder has the right to appeal any disciplinary action by NCRWA to the NCRWA Board of Directors or other lawful authority that provides for a right of appeal. NCRWA may provide for a process for such an appeal but is not required to do so pursuant to this Policy. Any System may complain, in writing, to NCRWA regarding any certificate holder regarding any potential grounds for disciplinary action.

However, NCRWA shall have no duty or right to discipline any certificate holder or applicant to become a certificate holder.

## **Section 2. NCRWA BFCC Tester Certification Program Reciprocity**

1. **Reciprocity for Recertification.** NCRWA will recognize Certified Backflow Assembly Testers (Testers) seeking recertification, who were previously trained and passed a similar written and practical examination process by another certifying entity. Applicants for recertification must register through the NCRWA website at [www.ncrwa.org](http://www.ncrwa.org), adhere to the NCRWA BFCC Tester Certification Program Policy and pay applicable fees prior to attending an NCRWA recertification training and examination.

2. **Unsuccessful Reciprocity.** Any tester that cannot successfully pass the written and/or practical examinations, described earlier, will be required to attend a full certification school if they wish to acquire an NCRWA BFCC Tester Certification.