



## Candidate Handbook

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## NATE Certification

To earn NATE Certification you must meet the exam criteria for each test specialty. The Knowledge Areas of Technician Expertise (KATE's) are outlines of the information covered in each exam, [www.natex.org](http://www.natex.org), click on Technicians, and then What Tests to Take/KATES. They should be used as reference materials while preparing for the NATE exams; they represent what knowledge, skills, and abilities a Technician should have before testing.

NATE's goal is to make exams readily available to technicians. Exams are offered year-round by approved NATE Testing Organizations. Testing Organizations include manufacturers, wholesalers/distributors, educational facilities, utilities, associations, and unions.

### Core Exam

The core exams cover the following topics: Safety, Tools, Basic Construction, Using Basic Science, Achieving Desired Conditions, Taking Temperature and Humidity Measurements, and Basic Electricity.

### Specialty Exam

The specialty exams cover various topics; please refer to the KATE's for the complete list.

NATE's Specialty Exams:

- Air Conditioning
- Air Distribution
- Air-to-Air Heat Pumps
- Gas Furnaces
- Oil Furnaces
- Hydronics Gas
- Hydronics Oil
- Light Commercial Refrigeration
- Commercial Refrigeration
- HVAC Efficiency Analyst(Senior Level)

### Other Certifications

Ground Source Heat Pump (GSHP) this is a test and certification for Technicians in the GSHP industry. This certification does not require a Core exam.

## Certification Types

### **Installation Technician**

This technician primarily prepares the installation site (including removal of existing HVAC/R equipment), fabricates connections, and assembles systems as specified in the installation instructions. The technician must be able to properly power up and set control positions to cycle equipment through primary heating, cooling, and blower operation under on-site or off-site supervision of a service or senior technician. The installation technician takes specialized readings, such as temperatures, refrigerant circuit pressure, and basic electrical readings, with both operating and non-operating equipment, as may be required by others.

### **Service Technician**

This technician must be able to accomplish the same tasks as an installation technician, as well as to independently power up and adjust control settings to cycle equipment through all designed-for sequences. A service technician must be able to acquire, evaluate, and interpret such readings as may be necessary to determine the adequacy and acceptability of system operation to meet specifications. This technician must be able to perform sufficient field diagnostic procedures as necessary to determine causes of inadequate performance and identify corrective actions as needed.

Note: Candidates earning the Heat Pump certification are automatically awarded Air Conditioning certification.

Candidates earning Service certifications are automatically awarded Installation Certifications in the same specialty area.

### **Senior Technician**

This technician must already have all the skills of an Installation Technician and Service Technician especially high level diagnostic capabilities.

## Eligibility for NATE Certification Exams

Anyone interested in obtaining NATE Certification may take the tests, provided they have

contacted and made arrangements with the Testing Organization and pay the appropriate fees.

The NATE exams assess the candidates' applied knowledge and experience, both are necessary to pass the stringent NATE exams. There are no formal educational requirements for certification, but NATE strongly suggests that examinees have some formal training.

The NATE Technical Committee oversees the Knowledge Areas of Technician Expertise (KATEs) and all test development. The KATEs are the statistically proven job task analysis from which all questions are developed. All exams are developed by subject matter experts from across the HVAC/R industry, representing a wide variety of perspectives including those involved in the contracting areas, technicians, distributors, educators, manufacturers, and utilities.

Below is the suggested work experience a technician should have prior to taking the NATE certification exams.

- Installation Technician: NATE recommends one year of field experience as an installation technician.
- Service Technician: NATE recommends two years of field experience as a service technician
- Senior Technician: NATE recommends that the candidate has at least 5 years of practical experience before sitting for this exam.

## Code of Conduct

**As a professional NATE certified technician in the fields of HVACR, I agree to the following:**

- I will deal with clients, consumers, and other professionals and professional organizations fairly and in a timely manner.
- I will provide safe and quality services to clients and consumers.
- I will maintain and improve my technical competence through continuing education, peer counseling and interaction with other professionals in my prescribed field.
- I will act in a manner free of bias with regard to religion, ethnicity, gender, age, national origin, or disability.
- I will not misrepresent or permit misrepresentation of my qualifications or the qualifications of my associates.
- Will have regard for the environment and for public safety, health, and the well-being of our clients.
- I understand that the NATE certificate, logo, and marks are property of North American Technician Excellence (NATE) and must be surrendered upon request.

- I will uphold and follow all policies and procedures required by the Candidate's Handbook.
- I will not knowingly violate safety-related regulations, warning, or instructions set forth by OSHA, recognized safety standards, or codes.

## Technician/NATE Agreement Statement

Upon completion of your exam you are required to sign your Answer Card agreeing to the statement below:

"By signing and submitting this form, I affirm that the test I received was sealed when received, opened and then resealed by myself, and the answers marked on the answer sheet are my own. I also affirm that I will not discuss any aspect of the exam after the test session. I understand that if I should become certified, the certificate is the property of NATE and I must surrender it if certification is revoked. I confirm that I have read the candidate handbook and agree to abide by the certification eligibility requirements and the NATE Code of Conduct."

## Test Session Types

### Paper and Pencil Test Sessions

- NATE suggests that you arrive at least 30 minutes before the scheduled exam time
- Each candidate **MUST** have a photo ID to present to the Proctor. No one will be allowed to take a NATE exam without it.
- Payment will be collected at this time, if other arrangements have not been made.
- Please be prepared to shut off all electronic devices and to leave them in a safe area designated by the proctor.
- For paper and pencil tests please bring several #2 pencils.
- The candidate may bring a non-programmable calculator into the testing area.
- The proctor will read an introduction to the testing group, there will be time for questions and answers concerning the exam and they will inform candidates how much time has been allotted for each test.
- Each candidate will receive an unopened/seal test packet, please read the cover and make

sure it contains the correct test you registered for.

- The proctor will tell you when to open the packet, please fill out the Answer Card completely.
- The proctor will then tell the candidates to start the tests.
- You will be asked to place your test, answer card, test survey, original envelope, and any scrap paper into the return envelope and seal it. You and the proctor will sign the label stating that the above has taken place.
- If you are taking more than one exam, take a short break and begin again.
- The proctor will return all examination materials back to the NATE Test Administrator within 48 hours. Test documentation will be sent within 2 weeks to the candidate.

### **Electronic Test Session**

- NATE suggests that you arrive at least 30 minutes before the scheduled exam time.
- Each candidate **MUST** have a photo ID to present to the Proctor. No one will be allowed to take a NATE exam without it.
- Payment will be collected at this time, if other arrangements have not been made.
- The candidate may bring a non-programmable calculator into the testing area.
- The proctor will have the Test Session ID number available.
- The proctor will tell the time allotted for each test.
- The proctor will then tell the candidates to start the tests.
- After the examination completion, the test results will be immediately available on your screen.
- The website will take about 5 business days to update with your new test credits or certifications as your results are verified.
- If you are taking more than one exam, take a short break and then begin again.
- The proctor will close the examination test session and test documentation will be sent within 2 weeks to the candidate.

### **Test Session Times**

Test session times for each exam is listed below. These times must be adhered to at all times. Test session times will be audited. TOs may hold more than one testing session in a single day. Simply indicate on the Test Session Scheduling Form the times for all sessions scheduled for a particular day.

- Core Exam: 2 hours
- AC-Install and Service-2.5 hours
- AD-Install and Service-2.5 hours

- HP-Install and Service-2.5 hours
- Gas-Install and Service-2.5 hours
- Oil-Install and Service-2.5 hours
- Hydronic Oil-Install and Service-2.5 hours
- Hydronic Gas-Install and Service-2.5 hours
- Light Refrigeration-Install and Service-2.5 hours
- Commercial Refrigeration-Install and Service-2.5 hours
- Efficiency Analysts-4 hours
- IGSHPA-4 hours

## Test Results

You can access your test results 5 business days after NATE has received the exams. If you have taken paper exams, this full process takes about 2 weeks including shipping time. You can access your results online at myNATE ([www.natex.org](http://www.natex.org), then click the “myNATE” link in the top right hand corner), using the myNATE login you created when you took the online exam, or by creating a myNATE login using the PIN number you set up on your paper exam. You will also receive results at the mailing address you provided.

### Authorization for Release of Pass/Fail to a Third Party

If you are required to have your Pass/Fail Information released to a third party, please complete the Authorization for Release of Pass/Fail to a Third Party form.

### Passing NATE Exams

When you have earned NATE certification you will receive a NATE patch, a wallet card, a certificate and a chevron reflecting the certification specialty for which you tested. Any additional patches and chevrons can be ordered at the NATE Online Store.

### Failing NATE Exams

If you fail the core (if required) or specialty test, certification is not awarded until you successfully retake the test you failed. If you have a Core without a Specialty or a Specialty

without a Core, those test credits are valid for two years.

## **Veterans Information**

The Veterans Administration (VA) provides a stipend to Veterans for testing. Failed tests are also eligible for payment. The number of tests you may take is unlimited. The VA pays only for the test and not other expenses associated with obtaining a license or certification. Contact your local VA for more information.

## **ADA Accommodations**

Testing Organizations must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990), the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (amended 1991) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (amended 1990). If candidates have special needs, they must fill out the Request for Non-Standard Test Accommodations, and submit it to NATE at least 45 days before the test session is scheduled. This will allow the NATE staff time to confirm that special accommodations are required and to notify the Testing Organization and Proctor of the required accommodation(s). NATE will consult with the Testing Organization as to the best way to meet the needs of the candidate. The form is available online as part of the Testing Organization & Proctor Guidelines and the Candidate Handbook. It is also available on the NATE website ([www.natex.org](http://www.natex.org)) under Resource Center and then Document Library.

## **Maintaining Your Certification**

Maintaining your certification is a requirement to continue to be NATE certified. Knowledge in the HVAC/R Industry changes constantly and advancements in engineering require you continually update your knowledge and information about the industry.

### **When to Recertify**

NATE requires maintenance every two years. The Ground Source Heat Pump Loop Installer

needs to be renewed jointly by NATE and IGSHPA every three years.

## **Two Methods to Renew**

The first method is to retake and pass the specialty test before your certification expires.

The second method is to apply for recertification by using Continuing Education Hours (CEH) and providing NATE proof of the 16 hours of continuing education. NATE recognizes HVAC/R continuing education and has set up a program to help technicians track their CEHs. Your CEHs must be relevant to your specialty. If you receive continuing education hours only relevant to a specialty you do not currently hold, they do not count toward recertification. Please be aware that some courses apply to only one specialty while others apply to all specialties.

Examples:

- Generally courses in electricity, safety, and controls will apply to all specialties
- Courses on compressors will only apply to Air Conditioning, Heat Pumps, and Refrigeration and not to Gas Furnaces or Hydronics Oil
- Oil Burners would only fit Oil Furnaces and Hydronics Oil

Note: Educators can earn 60 hours of CEHs for teaching by providing documentation of their teaching hours.

You are responsible for maintaining their certification(s).

NATE sends notices in writing and emails to the addresses in the NATE database. You will receive notices to remind you that your certification is expiring. If you have not updated your contact information through myNATE, or contacted the NATE office with changes, your renewal notices may not be received.

Please review the following prior to maintaining your certification:

1. Does NATE have all my correct contact information?
2. Do I have Continuing Education Hours(CEHs) that have been recorded from NATE recognized courses that can be applied to my specialty?
3. Do I have Continuing Education Hours(CEHs) that are not NATE recognized but I have documentation and can submit proof to NATE with my application?

You can check your tracked hours by going to [www.myNATE.org](http://www.myNATE.org).

## Expired Certifications

A certification that has passed its expiration date is expired at the end of the month of the date shown on the NATE ID wallet card. It is the technicians' responsibility to retain this wallet card and know when the certification(s) is about to expire.

If your certification expires, you can only recertify by retesting. This may require that you take both the Core and Specialty tests again. The new certification will date from the time you pass the new tests. There is a 120 day grace period in which you can still submit your hours or test.

Anyone whose certifications have expired are no longer NATE-certified and cannot represent themselves as such. Anyone with an expired certification who represents themselves as NATE-certified is behaving in a fraudulent and unethical fashion. These technicians may be denied future NATE Certification and be subject to legal action.

## Recognized Provider Training Program

NATE does not provide any training. NATE has established the NATE-Recognized Provider Training Program, a courtesy program, recognizing training that matches the KATEs, as a way to help technicians track Continuing Education Hours (CEHs). Be sure to check course alignment with your specialty before attending classes.

To view training providers in your area, go to [www.natex.org](http://www.natex.org), click "Find a Training Organization" under the Quick Links menu, You can search your area for training providers by entering your zip code and a mileage radius.. To find specific courses, click on the link at the end of the line that reads "To locate training providers for CEH course click here." Use the drop down menus to select the areas of training, technician type, training organization (optional) and then enter a zip code. The search can take up to two minutes to complete. The detailed list that is generated gives information on the course name and the course recognized specialties. Clicking the Course name generates the information on the training organization, their location, contact information and the course description.

You should always refer to this listing when selecting a course to be taken to make sure its alignment matches your specialty. NATE cannot change the submittals (nor will the technician receive credit hours) if the recognized provider doesn't provide the information for their course to be recognized under all applicable specialties.

These NATE-Recognized Training Providers align their classes to the KATEs. These courses are reviewed by NATE in an attempt to make sure that all applicable specialties are attached. However, it is ultimately up to the Recognized Training Provider.

When you attend a NATE recognized class make sure you sign the NATE Recognized Provider Attendance Record and put your NATE ID number on the record. Without this information NATE cannot help track your continuing education hours. You are responsible for having your NATE ID number with them when attending classes. It is also recommended that you obtain a Certificate of Completion as a back-up measure if the attendance form is not recorded.

## Non-recognized Courses

Many technicians attend courses to stay current with industry trends and many of these courses relate to their specialties. If the courses, even though they are not NATE Recognized Courses, apply to your specialty, at the time of application for recertification, you may submit these courses for consideration. NATE does not track these hours; that is the your responsibility. In order to have your hours approved, NATE also requires you to provide a Certificate of Attendance or other form of documentation from the training provider. NATE will not accept self attestation for courses.

The documentation must have your name, class hours, training provider, contact information and a description of the course to be accepted.

Remember, you are responsible for maintaining these certificates until applying for recertification.

To apply for recertification, before your certification expires, submit the Recertification Application and a copy of your records from the NATE system.

You may also include copies of all certificates from courses that were taken at a NATE recognized training organization but do not show up on your record as a credit in your specialty, and/or copies of certificates from all courses for your specialty, from training organizations that are not NATE recognized, but align with KATE specialty descriptions.

NATE recertification fees using continuing education hours are located on the NATE website under Technicians, then Recertification, then under the Recertification fees submenu.

These recertification fees only apply to recertification using Continuing Education Hours. If recertifying by testing, the fee is determined by the Testing Organization.

## Appeals

A candidate may request redress for issues concerning their certifications status including but not limited to:

- Exam Pass/Fail
- Denial of certification/recertification
- Redress for continuing education hours

The candidate must request, in writing, an action for review. Once the review is complete, a letter is sent to the applicant explaining the status of the review.

Denial of certification and/or recertification by testing is based on the passing score of the exam. If the candidate requests a review in writing, then their exams will be reviewed.

If redress for continuing education hours is requested in writing, then all files for recertification using continuing education are reviewed to determine if the submitted hours are documented and authentic. A candidate may request the hours be reviewed if they are denied for any reason.

## Formal Test Review Policy and Procedure

1. Candidate must request in writing (within 60 days of posted mailing date) a review of exam and questions. Candidate provides the following:

- Name
- Contact Information
- NATE ID#
- Test Date
- Location and Time of Exam
- The test being appealed
- Exam proctor
- Explanation of why the specific exam is to be reviewed

2. The NATE test administrator will send a copy of the test answer sheet to the NATE office along with the candidates' Test Survey if one was completed

3. The exam is re-graded.

4. All incorrectly answered questions will be reviewed and compared to the statistical evidence used by NATE Technical Committee to validate that the correct answer in the data bank truly is correct. If the "correct" answer is found to be incorrect, credit will be issued to the candidate.

5. Upon completion of the review, the current head of Certifications notifies the Appeals Committee, comprised of members of NATE's technical committee, of their findings. If they agree, the candidate is notified of the results of the audit.

6. If the candidate's test review is successful and a passing grade is achieved the candidate is sent a letter of notification, is granted certification, and will receive certification documents.

7. If the candidate's test review does not produce any credits that raise the score to passing, the candidate is notified that the review has not changed the outcome of their exam.

## Complaints

NATE has received complaints about testing organizations, proctors, candidates, and/or the contractors who employ those candidates, for any number of reasons. Each complaint is reviewed after receiving the complaint in writing. The party complained about is given the opportunity to answer the complaint. After review of the information from both entities, NATE makes a decision based on the evidence presented and the request received. The decision can be:

- No action taken
- Removal/Suspension of Certification
- Removal/Suspension of a Testing Organization or Proctor
- Removal/Suspension of the contactor from the locator system

## Suspension and Revocation of Certification

In the event NATE receives a request for the suspension/revocation of an individual's certification, NATE will follow the following process:

1. If not already received, NATE will require a formal written request for suspension and/or revocation. The request must contain an original signature from the complainant. The request must detail the reasons for the request, including the facts and circumstances of any alleged improper conduct on the part of the certified individual. The request must be addressed to the acting head of the certification department.
2. NATE will review and acknowledge receipt of the request within 30 days of receipt.
3. NATE will inform the certified individual in writing of the nature of the request and of any allegations of improper conduct made by the complainant, and allow the certified individual 30 days to respond in writing to the request.
4. Copies of all written communication and supporting documentation will be provided to the certified individual.
5. If the certified individual does not respond within the allotted time frame, the certification will automatically be suspended/revoked per the requested complaint. The certified individual and the complainant will be notified in writing of the suspension/revocation.
6. If the certified individual provides a response within the allotted time frame, NATE will review the response and determine whether there is a sufficient basis for further consideration of the request.

7. NATE will establish a subcommittee of the NATE Technical Committee to review suspension/revocation requests determined to warrant further review. The subcommittee will be comprised of at least 6 active Technical Committee members and the Technical Committee Secretariat. The committee will review documents sent electronically. No individual on the subcommittee will reside or provide services to consumers in the same geographic area in which a party to the process resides or provides services to the consumer
8. The decision to suspend/revoke the certification of the certified individual will be made by the Technical Committee Subcommittee based solely on the written response of the certified individual, the written information supplied by the complainant and review of the knowledge area of the certification to be suspended/revoked.
9. The decision rendered by the Technical Committee Subcommittee will be provided in writing to the certified individual and the complainant within 30 days of receiving a response from the certification holder. The decision by the Technical Committee subcommittee will be considered final unless the certified individual appeals as shown below.
10. The decision may be appealed to the full Technical Committee at a regular scheduled committee meeting. Full Technical Committee meetings are held twice a year in the winter and summer. Any decision rendered by the full Technical Committee will be provided in writing to the certified individual and the complainant within 30 days of the decision made at the regularly scheduled Technical Committee meeting. The complainant and certified individual may appear at the regular Technical Committee meeting, at their own expense. The complainant may provide testimony, but may not be present during the Technical Committee's deliberations. The certified individual may present evidence in his or her behalf; may summon fact witnesses to appear on his/her behalf; and will be allowed to confront and cross-examine the complainant, if present, and any other witnesses present providing testimony in support of the request for suspension/revocation of certification. Suspension/revocation of certification of the certified individual will be upheld only where there is proof based on clear and convincing evidence that the certified individual has engaged in improper conduct warranting suspension or revocation of certification, except in cases where certification is suspended/revoked under paragraph 5, above.

The decision, if required, by the Technical Committee may be appealed on procedural grounds only to the full NATE Board of Trustees at a regular scheduled Board meeting. The Board will not review the reason for the suspension/revocation. Full Board meetings are held twice a year in the spring and fall. Any decision rendered by the full NATE Board of Trustees will be considered final and will be provided in writing to the certified individual and the complainant within 30 days of the decision made at the regularly scheduled Board of Trustees meeting. The complainant and certified individual may appear at the regular Board of Trustees meeting, at their own expense.

## NATE Online Store

Technicians can purchase patches and chevrons and copies of their certificates and wallet cards. Please visit the store for other NATE products such as hats, shirts, decals, etc.

If you have question after reading these guidelines, please call the NATE office at 1-877-420-6284

## Sealed and Tampered Test Packets



**Untampered test packet**



**Tampered test packet**