

Recertification: A Crucial Element in NATE Success

EVERYONE INVOLVED HAS A VESTED INTEREST IN ENSURING THAT TECHNICIANS MAINTAIN THEIR CERTIFICATIONS.

NA TE certification conveys a wealth of benefits to HVACR technicians and the companies they work for. But, like all good things, it doesn't last forever. That's why recertification is so important.

Most people wouldn't go to a doctor who graduated from medical school and then stopped studying medicine, or a car mechanic who hadn't updated his knowledge since the days of carburetors. So once an HVACR technician has invested the time and effort into achieving the certifications that are recognized and respected throughout the industry, it should be a foregone conclusion for the technician to maintain those certifications throughout his or her career.

Yes, it will take time, effort, and determination, but it's absolutely worth it — just ask Gene Lockwood.

WORDS OF WISDOM

Lockwood has been in the HVACR industry since 1956. He graduated from the U.S. Navy's air-conditioning and refrigeration school, and spent 23 years keeping submarines cool. Over the next 33 years he owned his own company, Gene's A/C, in Virginia Beach, VA, and shared his knowledge as an air-conditioning instructor at a vo-tech school.

Lockwood first heard of NATE in 1994, when he was sent to a three-day workshop for air-conditioning

instructors sponsored by a number of air-conditioning industry associations, including the Refrigeration Service Engineers Society (RSES) and the Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors' National Association (SMACNA).

"NATE was a brand-new organization at the time," Lockwood says. "They offered the instructors the opportunity to take the core exam, and I remember it was a very tough test. But I passed it and then also earned my certifications in air-conditioning service and installation, and heat pump service and installation."

NATE certifications last five years, and Lockwood has always been very diligent about getting recertified on schedule.

"Getting recertified is a continuation of the respect that you earned by getting certified in the first place," Lockwood says. "I respect NATE certification because I know what it takes to earn it. You have to study hard and pass a difficult test that asks all the important questions. If you don't get recertified, why did you take it up in the first place? It doesn't make any sense to put in all that work and then just let it go."

Another reason to remain certified, according to Lockwood, is that it encourages technicians to continue studying and learning throughout their careers. Attending and graduating from an air-conditioning school is important, but it shouldn't convey a false sense of

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