

**Forest Service Manual
National Headquarters - Washington Office
Washington, DC**

**Forest Service Manual 7100 – Engineering Operations
Chapter 7110 – Engineering Management**

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Approved by: Christopher French, Deputy Chief, National Forest System

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Responsible Staff:

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Digest: Following is an explanation of the changes throughout the directive by section.

Section 7115.01: Clarifies and adds sections on authority.

Section 7115.03: Adds policy that Federal Acquisition Certification for Contracting Officer's Representatives (FAC-COR) certification is required to administer construction contracts; and adds oral exam materials are confidential and are not to be released under the Freedom of Information Act.

Section 7115.04: Reorganizes, recodes, and revises responsibilities. Removes National Construction Certification Program Coordinator and Exam Proctor.

Section 7115: Changes section title from "Certification of Personnel Engaged in Forest Service Construction Projects" to "Certification of Personnel Engaged in Forest Service Construction Contracts" and sets forth direction.

Section 7115.1: Removes Exhibit 01.

Section 7116-7118: Removes obsolete direction.

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7111 - Studies [Reserved]

7112 - Engineering Skills Development And Workforce Utilization [Reserved]

7113 - Technical Data Systems [Reserved]

7114 - Multiple Activities Analyses [Reserved]

7115 - Certification of Personnel Engaged In Forest Service Construction Contracts

7115.01 – Authority

1. USDA Contracting Desk Book v3.4, Jan., 2023 (or most current version). This Contracting Desk Book is intended to be a depiction of departmental and subagency/Mission Area acquisition regulations, policies, procedures guidance and information. This Desk Book (also referred to as Procedures, Guidance, and Instructions (PGI)) The PGI is a web-based tool to simply and rapidly access guidance and information relevant to the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) and AGAR topics. The AGAR remains the source for regulations, which include the implementation of statutes and USDA-wide contracting authorities..
2. The Federal Acquisition Certification for Contracting Officer's Representatives (FAC-COR) is issued pursuant to the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) Act, 41 U.S.C. § 1101 et. seq., and OFPP Policy Letter 05-01, April 15, 2005, which established a requirement for federal acquisition certification programs.
3. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) policy letter of September 6, 2011, revises FAC-COR certification requirements and establishes three levels of certification with varying requirements for training, experience, and continuous learning, depending on the types of contracts being managed.

7115.02 – Objectives

The objectives of establishing and maintaining a National Construction Certification Program (NCCP) for administering Forest Service construction contracts are:

1. To ensure that the quality of construction work administered by Forest Service personnel meets or exceeds applicable legal and administrative standards and requirements.
2. To ensure that Forest Service personnel have the requisite skill and competence to administer construction contracts to the required standards (FSM 7313.4; FSM 7413.5; FSM 7721.3; FSM 7420.44; FSM 7611.3 and FSM 7611.4).

7115.03 - Policy

1. Ensure that Forest Service personnel assigned to administer construction contracts (FSM 7115.1) obtain and keep current the Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI), Federal Acquisition Certification for Contracting Officer's Representatives (FAC-COR) certification requirements.

The FAC-COR contains three levels of certification and is recognized by all Federal civilian agencies as evidence that an employee meets core requirements to perform Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) functions.

2. Ensure that Forest Service personnel assigned to administer Forest Service transportation, Facilities, Trails, and Watershed Rehabilitation construction contracts, complete the NCCP certification requirements.
3. Ensure that Forest Service personnel who intend to perform road construction inspection and oversight on timber sales complete the NCCP certification requirements for Timber Sale Construction Inspector (TSCI) and Timber Sale Engineering Representative (TSER).
4. Do not use NCCP certification, or the lack thereof, as an evaluation criterion in filling positions under competitive merit promotion procedures. Duties requiring certification may be used in the position description and as an element or standard in performance appraisals for positions involving contract administration of Forest Service construction contracts.
5. Provide and monitor an organized training and development program to improve skills within the Forest Service work force and to qualify and certify personnel to administer construction contracts.
6. Ensures that NCCP certification prerequisites are standard throughout the Forest Service and are based on training, experience, and performance.
7. The oral examinations, including all questions, notes, graphics, drawings, and other related materials, are to be treated as private by its owner and provided to the government under an assurance of privacy. Release of all or part of oral examinations must be in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) of 1966 as amended (5 U.S.C. § 552); and with the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. § 552a).

7115.04 - Responsibility

7115.04a - Deputy Chief for the National Forest System

It is the responsibility of the Deputy Chief for the National Forest System to issue minimum standards of performance, skill, and proficiency required for certification of personnel administering construction contracts.

7115.04b - Washington Office, Director of Engineering

It is the responsibility of the Washington Office, Director of Engineering to:

1. Direct the development and revision of the NCCP certification program's training requirements and training material.
2. Direct changes and/or revisions to certification procedures as needed.
3. Ensure that a nationally consistent database system for NCCP certified personnel is accessible, secure and kept current.
4. Designate the Washington Office, National Construction Certification Program Manager.
5. Coordinates with the National Engineering Leadership Team (NELT) to designate a NELT member to serve, on a rotational basis, as the NCCP representative and have responsibilities for COR and Timber Sale ER and CI certification of Enterprise, Job Corps, and National Technology and Development Program(NTDP) employees.
6. Designate the Washington Office, National Construction Certification Program Manager to serve in a RCCO (Regional Construction Certification Officer) level capacity for oversight and NCCP requirements of Enterprise, Job Corps, and NTDP employees who have responsibilities for construction contract administration, such as, COR, TSER and TSCI duties.

7115.04c - Washington Office, National Construction Certification Program Manager

It is the responsibility of the Washington Office, National Construction Certification Program Manager (NCCPM) to provide oversight and ensure the National Construction Certification Program objectives in FSM 7115.02 are being attained and recommend appropriate changes.

It is also the responsibility of the NCCPM to ensure that the Forest Service NCCP requirements, procedures, data management, and training is administered consistently and uniformly across all Forest Service units service-wide. The Washington Office will annually update and maintain a copy of all NCCP data and records assembled and maintained by each RCCO. The NCCPM will also oversee the development of summary reports and analysis of program status and certification numbers and capacity.

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The NCCPM will oversee and ensure that the NCCP portion of the Engineering Website is maintained, accurate and up to date. The NCCP website will link to the NCCP SharePoint site that will contain the bulk of the NCCP operational information (NCCP database, forms, instructions, reports, procedures, links to supporting information, and so forth).

The NCCPM is responsible for NCCP requirements and oversight of Enterprise, Job Corps, and National Technology Development Program (NTDP) employees who have responsibilities for construction contract administration, such as, COR, TSER and TSCI duties.

7115.04d – Deputy Chief for Research and Development

It is the responsibility of the Deputy Chief for Research and Development to:

1. Establish and maintain an inventory of personnel certified in the administration of construction contracts.
2. Designate a Research Construction Certification Officer

7115.04e - Regional Forester

It is the responsibility of the Regional Forester to:

1. Establish and maintain an inventory of personnel certified in the administration of construction contracts.
2. Designate a Regional Construction Certification Officer (RCCO).

7115.04f - Regional Director of Engineering (RE) and R&D National Engineer

It is the responsibility of the Director of Engineering and R&D National Engineer within their respective areas of jurisdiction, to carry out the following responsibilities:

1. Certify personnel are qualified for the administration of construction contracts.
2. Oversee that certification requirements may be waived when candidates demonstrate and document past relevant experience with other Federal or State Agencies, or private industry.
3. Revoke NCCP certification after consideration and consultation when issues are raised regarding performance of a COR's, TSER's or TSCI's duties by a Contracting Officer, RCCO and/or a Supervisor.

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7115.04g - Regional Construction Certification Officer

1. It is the responsibility of each Regional Construction Certification Officer (RCCO) to administer and coordinate the National Construction Certification Program in their region. Specific responsibilities include:
2. Reviewing that candidates for NCCP certification meet the minimum criteria.
3. Scheduling and administering oral examination panels and selecting panel members.
4. Scheduling and administering written exams for Timber Sale Engineering Representatives.
5. Assisting Forest, Enterprise Program employees, R&D, the National Technology and Development Program, and Job Corps in understanding, managing and implementing the program responsibilities that support the NCCP certification requirements and database requirements.
6. Issuing and validating National Construction Certification Program certificates.
7. Recommending to RE or R&D National Director that an individual's NCCP certification be revoked.
8. Maintaining regional NCCP certification records and data and forwarding certification data for transferred personnel.
9. Coordinating NCCP certification activities with appropriate staff specialists.
10. Developing or providing additional training as needed or requested by a Unit.

7115.04h – Forest Supervisor and Forest Engineer

It is the responsibility of each Forest Supervisor and Forest Engineer to:

1. Determine certification and training needs of individuals administering construction contracts. Coordinate with other resource staff officers as applicable.
2. Provide construction contract experience and training. Develop an Individual Development Plan (IDP) for employees seeking to become CORs, Timber Sale Engineering Representatives, or Timber Sale Inspectors.
3. Ensure that certification candidates can perform the duties and carry out the responsibilities in the job performance requirements.
4. Designate Forest NCCP Coordinator if deemed necessary.

7115.04i - Forest Construction Certification Coordinator

It is the responsibility of the Forest Construction Certification Coordinator to:

1. Maintain NCCP unit level records to assist RCCOs.
2. Assist NCCP candidates in understanding program and training requirements.

7115.1 - Construction Work Requiring NCCP Certification

The areas and categories of construction work listed below require NCCP certification. Knowledge, training, experience and skills in engineering disciplines and contract administration is important aspects of job performance requirements for an individual to be fully capable of accomplishing the duties of COR, Timber Sale Engineering Representative, and Timber Sale Construction Inspector. Updating and managing Forest Service training materials related to technical construction categories, timber sale and construction contract administration are the responsibility of RCCOs and the appropriate National Forest System program area.

Construction work categories (examples not all inclusive):

1. Transportation (roads, bridges, concrete, aggregate base and surfacing, asphalt paving and surface treatment, culverts, surveying, and so forth).
2. Facilities (buildings, water and wastewater treatment, water supply and distribution, vault toilets, parking areas, and so forth).
3. Trails.
4. Watershed rehabilitation (aquatic organism passage, wetland remediation, and so forth).