

NRMCA Pervious Concrete Contractor Certification Local Sponsoring Group Recommended Procedures

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to offer guidance to Local Sponsoring Groups that will sponsor NRMCA's Pervious Concrete Contractor Certification Program. In a perfect world, this would be a complete cookbook on how to run the program, but respecting local differences, this is more of a broad recommendation than a step-by-step guide.

As a first step, please review the Certification Policy of the program. The document lays out the Pervious Concrete Contractor Certification structure, rules, and responsibilities, as they relate to all parties involved. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact NRMCA Certification Department staff at any time. Although not a requirement of the program or for certification, it is recommended that a Local Sponsoring Group plan for a training session when they plan on offering a certification program. The training session should include both classroom time and demonstration of placement of pervious concrete. At the same time, the demonstration can be used to conduct a performance evaluation for those seeking Installer or Craftsman certification.

As a Local Sponsoring Group, your first step is to form a certification committee to oversee the program's administration. If your group is an industry association, then your committee will be made up of interested members. The certification committee will work with your staff to schedule certification sessions, generate attendees, and coordinate logistics for the training, demonstration, written examination and performance evaluation. Staff will handle paperwork, advertising, coordinating space, and communicating with NRMCA staff.

Once your group completes that process, please submit the appropriate forms to NRMCA. Those forms are:

Form PCC1: Sponsoring Group Application

Form PCC2: Certification Committee Member Qualification Statement, and

PCC3: Examiner Application

Setting up a program

There is a lot of work to set up a Pervious Concrete Contractor Certification program. As already mentioned, a coordinated effort between the committee and staff, planned well in advance, can help make the process run smoothly. To help your planning, Table 1 summarizes your key tasks.

Many of these steps will not apply if you only plan to offer the written examination.

There are several elements for your committee members to consider when figuring what to charge each attendee per session. Your group's costs will include the cost for the NRMCA text, written examination, performance evaluation, your staff time, speakers, examiners, supplemental examiners, proctors, the demonstration, concrete, rented space, and possibly food and beverage. To save your group's expenses and keep the cost of the certification reasonable for attendees, consider finding volunteers and sponsors to help carry as much of the load as possible. And remember, not all of these elements will apply each time you conduct a session so we recommend calculating hosting costs and attendee's certification fees in component parts.

The first step is to select a time frame to hold the program. Prototypes not only ran successfully as one-day sessions, but also as Friday afternoon/Saturday morning sessions. Your sponsoring group has a feel for your local market and the schedules the contractors like to keep. The best advice is to work around the typical contractor's schedule. The schedule for a typical session might look like the schedule presented in Table 2.

Table 1: Example Schedule of Tasks for Each Session

3 Months	2 Months	1 Month	2 Weeks	1 Week	Day After
Schedule Date	Release Ads	Order Exams from NRMCA	Check Exams	Order Concrete for Demo/Exams	Mail Exams to NRMCA
Coordinate Classroom Space	Order Books Find and price caterer (if needed)	Confirm registration with attendees and Mail Out Books	Confirm Speaker	Order Catering (if needed)	
Coordinate Demo/Exam Space		Mail Out Tool/Equipment Lists to attendees	Confirm Demo Crew		
Prepare Ads		Coordinate A/V. Order (if needed)	Confirm Proctors and Examiners		
Schedule Examiners					
Schedule Speakers					
Schedule Proctors					
Coordinate Demo Crew					

Table 2: Example Schedule for an Examination Session

Technicians and Craftsmen			Craftsmen Only			
Friday			Saturday			
1:00pm	2:30pm	6:00pm	8:00	10:00	10:30	12:30
Demonstration	Classroom Training Session Begins	Classroom Training Session Ends	Written Exam Begins	Written Exam Ends	Performance Evaluation Begins	Performance Evaluation Ends

Pervious Concrete Contractor Certification can be administered not only to contractors but many other job categories, including municipal and private inspectors, concrete producer quality control technicians or technical service managers, drivers, batchmen, engineers, architects, and testing lab personnel. Therefore, when scheduling sessions, remember the market for Technicians will probably be bigger than the market for Installers and Craftsmen, so try to schedule sessions with Technicians in mind, too. Designing a marketing piece for the Pervious Concrete Contractor Certification should start at least three months from the date of the program because whatever advertising medium you choose, it will take time to put it together. Advertising should hit your intended audience two months before the program date.

As each attendee registers with your organization, he/she should promptly be sent a copy of the craftsman text, with an accompanying note asking the person to begin reviewing before the program session. Additionally, tool and equipment lists should be sent to those seeking Installer or Craftsman certification. Your registration form should explain the three certification options as described in the Certification Policies. The form should have a place for the attendee to indicate whether he/she is seeking Technician, Installer, or Craftsman level certification.

Classroom Training Session

While not required for certification, it is recommended that your sponsoring group conduct a classroom review session in advance of administering a written examination and/or performance evaluation. The session should be conducted by a pervious concrete expert who can share his knowledge with those seeking certification. NRMCA has PowerPoint presentations that may be used to guide a three to four hour workshop. The presentation covers the critical information presented in the textbook. Additionally, if

your group would like to confer continuing education units (CEUs), this review session may be the opportunity to do so.

When planning for the space to hold a classroom review session, consider an area that is large enough to spread out all registered attendees during the written examination portion of the program. In prototype programs, both corporate conference rooms and rented hotel conference rooms were used successfully. The classroom A/V needs will depend on the size of the group to be certified. For a small group, the list might include simply a laptop, LCD projector, and screen. For a bigger group microphones and laser pointers should be added to the list.

The speaker for the classroom session should be your local expert on pervious concrete or a team of experts. This team might include contractors, engineers, or industry association staff. If you don't have local experts, NRMCA's staff can help you locate experts that might travel to your area. Keep in mind that the Certification Policy does not allow the Examiner to provide training for a certification written examination session of performance evaluation session he is administering.

Demonstration Session

The demonstration session is not a mandatory part of the program but should be included. Since pervious concrete is relatively new to contractors who might do conventional flatwork, it is important to organize a demonstration session to ensure they know the procedures that are unique to pervious concrete installation. Many procedures used in placing and finishing conventional flatwork should not be used in pervious concrete placements. The demonstration session is time for an expert in the field of placing and finishing pervious concrete to share his knowledge with those seeking certification.

The demonstration session is typically held wherever the performance evaluation will be conducted. Either may be held anywhere that has room (or need) for pervious concrete – such as your office, a concrete producer's yard, or existing construction site. In general, a certified Installer or Craftsman should conduct the demonstration. If there are no certified Installers or Craftsmen in your area, experienced Technicians may be utilized.

Common sense should prevail when selecting a site for the demonstration and performance evaluation. The site should be large enough for each crew to set up their forms and maneuver a ready mixed concrete truck easily. There should be no problem holding the session at a concrete producer's yard. When considering other locations, please give thought to the fact that examinees might not place the best piece of pervious concrete during their performance evaluation. Care should be taken to select a site that can tolerate a bad piece of pervious concrete without giving the industry a black eye. Simply select a site where the pavement cast during the evaluation can be easily removed if necessary.

Safety should be a primary concern when conducting the demonstration. All attendees should be notified when they initially register that they will need to bring appropriate safety gear to wear during the demonstration, including: hard hats, safety glasses, chemical resistant safety gloves, long pants, long sleeved shirts and steeled toed shoes or boots.

Selecting the suppliers for the demonstration should be done when the date of the session is selected (wouldn't want to schedule a Saturday demo only to find out no concrete plants are open on Saturday.) The laborer supplier for the demonstration should make sure he has his best crew available for the demo. The concrete supplier should also have experience batching pervious concrete. There's nothing worse than bringing out a load of concrete for a demonstration that's not batched properly or having a crew that doesn't know what they're doing.

When conducting the demonstration, the speaker should be familiar with the checklist that will be used to evaluate those taking the performance evaluation so that he can highlight those points as the crew performs each task. Additionally, the crew should be made aware of all of the points on the checklist so that they actually demonstrate each required element of installing a pervious concrete pavement. (See Form PCC10.)

Written Examination

For a detailed list of instructions, please see Form PPC4 "Examiner Step-by-Step Instructions." Each examinee must sign in before the exam. The examiner also signs the sheet at the end of the exam, noting

that all the exam pieces are turned in and the specific numbered exam components are in order. Please see Form PCC6: Written Exam Sign-in/Sign-Out Sheet.

To highlight the key components of the written examination process, please note that each examinee will receive two items, (1) an exam booklet and (2) a Scantron answer sheet. There are several different versions of the written exam; the version of the exam will be indicated on the exam cover. Examinees should be given a different version of the exam than the person sitting next to them.

Supplemental Examiners and Proctors may be used to help administer the written exam. They must meet the qualification mentioned in the Certification Policy. Questions may not be clarified or commented on by the Examiner, Supplemental Examiners, or Proctors. The exam is a timed test; each examinee gets two (2) hours to complete the exam. If an examinee cannot read the questions, the exam may be administered orally, with a notation made by the Examiner and signed by the Examiner on the test book cover.

It's probably a good idea for the Local Sponsoring Group to have supplies available for the examinees to help them take the exams. These might include #2 pencils, scratch paper, and erasers. If your budget allows, coffee and donuts might be appropriate too.

Performance Evaluation

For those taking the performance evaluation the examiner should pass out Form PCC10 along with Form PCC8 for Installer candidates and Form PCC9 for Craftsman candidates. The performance evaluation should be administered to individuals working together as a crew. The individuals may normally work together or be from different organizations. Either way, there must be at least a four-man crew to conduct the performance evaluation. As the examinees go through the evaluation process, they should rotate positions so that each examinee completes each element on the performance evaluation checklist. To help the examiner proctor all this, there should be a supplemental examiner for each examinee.

Safety is of critical importance in this process. Everybody involved must have the appropriate safety gear including hard hats, safety glasses, chemical resistant gloves, long pants, long sleeved shirts, and steel-toed shoes or boots. Each examinee must be made aware of the safety rules at the time of registration.

The examinees will typically be REQUIRED to bring their own tools and equipment to the performance evaluation. This includes forms, screed, roller, jointer, and curing materials. A tool and equipment list should be sent to each examinee when they register so that they know what they have to bring for the performance evaluation. The Local Sponsoring Group may choose the option of providing the needed tools and equipment for the performance evaluation.

Individual Results

Written examination and performance evaluations should be sent back no later than the next business day to NRMCA Certification Department for processing. Each examinee's exam materials should be kept together. Do not organize booklets, scanner sheets, and forms into separate stacks. Carefully repackage all materials and send via tracked delivery (such as UPS, FedEx, or DHL).

Exams will be graded within four weeks. Examination results will be sent to the examinee along with a certificate for those who pass directly from the NRMCA Certification Department. Pass/fail status of all the examinees in the session will be sent to the Examiner and the principal of the Local Sponsoring Group.