

**STANDARDS FOR CERTIFICATION OF  
PROFESSIONAL SOIL CLASSIFIERS**

BY THE

ILLINOIS SOIL CLASSIFIERS ASSOCIATION

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**STANDARDS FOR CERTIFICATION OF PROFESSIONAL  
SOIL CLASSIFIERS**

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**ILLINOIS SOIL CLASSIFIERS ASSOCIATION (ISCA)**

A program to provide standards for the practice of professional soil classifying in Illinois; define terms; create a Certification Board, setting forth the terms, compensation, powers, and responsibilities of such board; establish procedures for application; establish fees; and to provide penalties for violations thereof.

Be it adopted by the membership of the Illinois Soil Classifiers Association:

SECTION 1.

**DECLARATION OF POLICY**

In order to safeguard life, health, and property; to foster wise use of the land and maintain quality in the environment; to foster maintenance of professional competency and provide credentials to practicing soil classifiers, the ISCA shall create an examining program to provide for Certified Professional Soil Classifiers.

SECTION 2.

**DEFINITIONS**

As used in these standards, unless the context otherwise requires, the terms specified in Section 2.01 through 2.06 have the meanings ascribed them in those Sections.

Section 2.01 "Board" means the Certification Board created by these standards.

Section 2.02 "Council" means the Executive Council of the Illinois Soil Classifiers Association.

Section 2.03 "Professional Soil Classifier" means a certified professional soil classifier as defined in subsection 2.04 of this section.

Section 2.04 "Certified Professional Soil Classifier" shall mean a person who by reason of special knowledge of the physical, biological, and chemical sciences applicable to soils and the methods and principles of soil classification as acquired by soils education and by soil classification experience in the formation, morphology, description, and mapping of soils is qualified to practice soil classifying and is certified to do so under these standards.

Section 2.05 "Practice of soil classifying" shall mean any service or work the adequate performance of which requires education in the physical, chemical, biological, and soil sciences and training and experience in the application of the knowledge of these sciences to soil classification. It includes the classification of soil by accepted principles and methods; investigation, evaluation, and consultation on the effect of measured, observed, and inferred soil properties on various uses; the preparation of soil descriptions, maps, reports, and interpretive drawings; or other such service or work, either public or private, requiring the education or training referred to above. A person shall be construed to practice or offer to practice soil classifying within the meaning and intent of these certification standards who by verbal claim, sign advertisement, letterhead, card or use of some other title represents himself/herself to be a soil classifier, but shall not mean or include the work ordinarily performed by persons who sample and test soil for fertility status or construction materials and engineering surveys and soundings to determine soil properties influencing the design and construction of engineering and architectural projects. Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions, he/she offers soil classifying services to or performs such soil classifying for the public. The practice of soil classifying shall not restrict other disciplines such as architects, structural engineers, professional engineers, geologists, and/or surveyors from classifying soils in the context of their respective disciplines.

Section 2.06 "Soil" shall mean the natural occurring accumulation of mineral and organic matter occupying the upper part of the unconsolidated portion of the earth's surface, in places reworked by people, and capable of supporting plant life. Soil has morphological and compositional properties developed

during its formation by the combined effect of climate and living organisms, as modified by topography, acting over time upon soil parent materials.

### SECTION 3.

#### **APPOINTMENT AND COMPOSITION OF THE CERTIFICATION BOARD**

- a. A Certification Board is hereby created within the Illinois Soil Classifiers Association. The Board shall consist of six (6) members nominated by the President and approved by the Council to serve staggered three (3) year terms.
- b. Eligible nominees must be citizens of the United States, and must perform the practice of professional soil classifying primarily in Illinois. Nominees must be ISCA Certified Professional Soil Classifiers. Any member of the Board who ceases to perform the practice of professional soil classifying primarily in Illinois shall be deemed to have resigned from membership on the Board as of the last date of their professional practice in Illinois.
- c. Members of the Board shall be Certified Professional Soil Classifiers and shall serve a term of three (3) years and until a successor has been appointed. Unfilled terms on the Board shall be filled within thirty (30) days by nomination by the President and approval by the Council at their next scheduled meeting. New members of the Board shall assume duties after being approved by the Council.
- d. The membership of the Board should represent governmental agencies, private sector and academic interests in approximately the same proportions as the certified membership of ISCA.
- e. The Board members shall receive reimbursement for necessary and reasonable expenses incurred in the performance of their duties to the Board, but shall not receive other compensation.

### SECTION 4.

#### **PROCEDURES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CERTIFICATION BOARD**

- a. At the first meeting of the Board, following the annual meeting, officers for the coming year shall be selected from within the Board as follows: the office of chair shall be filled by the vice-chair from the previous year, the office of vice-chair shall be elected each year from a second-year member of the Board, and the office of secretary-treasurer shall be elected on alternating years to serve a two-year term. The duties of the chair shall be to preside at all meetings of the Board. The vice-chair shall preside in the absence of the chair. The secretary-treasurer shall keep all records and files of the Board.
- b. The Board shall hold an organizational meeting annually within thirty (30) days after the annual meeting of ISCA, and as many other meetings as may be necessary to conduct the business of the Board. It shall process applications and examine candidates seeking certification. Applications shall be processed within reasonable time and no later than six (6) months after they are received. Notice of all meetings of the Board shall be given by the chair, at least thirty (30) days in advance, to each member of the Board.
- c. The Board shall maintain a current roster of the names and addresses of Certified Professional Soil Classifiers, and a confidential file for each one that contains (1) the application and supporting documentation that qualifies him or her for certification, and (2) date of certification and current status such as good standing, revoked, or suspended.
- d. The Board shall issue a certificate suitable for framing to each Professional Soil Classifier that it certifies, and annually, upon renewal, shall issue membership cards to each.

## SECTION 5.

### **STANDARDS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATION**

In order to be eligible for certification as a professional soil classifier in Illinois, applicants must subscribe to the Code of Ethics of the Illinois Soil Classifiers Association and meet the following.

- a. Education Requirements

Possess a minimum of a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution and at least 15 semester credit hours in soil courses or

closely related courses. Related courses can account for only 20% (3 hours) of the required 15 credit hours.

b. Professional Experience

1. Must be or have been engaged in the practice of Soil Classifying set forth in Section 2.05.
  - A. Professional experience will be evaluated by the Board.
  - B. Work experience will be summarized on the ISCA application for certification form. The applicant will provide examples of soil classification work to the board for evaluation upon request.
  - C. Professional experience should enable the applicant to practice soil classification competently without supervision.
2. Applicants are required to demonstrate soil classifying experience over a 4 year period, or:
3. Possess a master's degree from an accredited institution and at least 15 semester credit hours in soil courses or closely related courses. Related courses can account for only 20% (3 hours) of the required 15 credit hours. Have 3 years of professional experience working in soil classification, or:
4. Possess a doctoral degree from an accredited institution and at least 15 semester credit hours in soil courses or closely related courses. Related courses can account for only 20% (3 hours) of the required 15 credit hours. Have 2 years of professional experience working in soil classification, or:
5. Be certified or licensed by a state, regional, or national association as a soil classifier or pedologist, or:
6. Have 2 years of professional experience working in soil classification and accumulate 250 experience points or 3 years of professional experience and accumulate 125

experience points. Experience activities and associated points are determined by the Ethics, Certification, and Membership Committee in conjunction with the Certification Board, and are subject to approval by the Council. See the Application for Certification of Professional Soil Classifiers for the list of activities and associated points.

c. References

Applicant must submit three references that are familiar with their professional experience in soil classifying.

d. Core Requirements

Applicants must meet the minimum education and experience requirements set forth to be eligible to take the Illinois Soil Classifier's written exam.

e. Exam Requirements

1. Applicants are required to pass:

A. The Illinois Soil Classifiers written exam.

1. Applicants shall have one year from the date of determination by the board that the requirements for education and experience have been met to take the examination. Applicants that do not take the examination within one (1) year must reapply following the procedures described in Section 6, and pay the application fee as described in Section 7.
2. Applicants shall receive ten (10) sample questions at least two (2) weeks prior to examination. A Board member shall monitor written examinations. A passing grade on an examination shall be a score of seventy (70) percent or higher. Applicants failing the written exam may be re-

examined once within two years without submitting an additional fee.

B. The ISCA Field Practicum

1. Applicants passing the written exam are eligible to take the ISCA field practicum.
2. Applicants shall have one year from the date of passing the written examination to take the field practicum. This deadline will be extended in the event that the field practicum is not administered within the deadline period to the next date the practicum is administered. Applicants that do not take the field practicum within one year or at the earliest date after must reapply following the procedures described in Section 6, and pay the application fee as described in Section 7.

SECTION 6.

**PROCEDURES FOR APPLICATION**

Applications for certification may be submitted at any time and shall be of a format prescribed and furnished by the Board. Such application shall contain a statement of the applicant's formal education, a copy of all transcripts of formal academic studies, a detailed summary of his or her work experience, the names and addresses of three (3) references who have personal knowledge of the applicant's classifying experience and shall provide a written statement of the technical skill level of the applicant. The application shall also include a narrative summary of soil classifying experience showing the type, dates and amounts of experience, i.e. soil mapping, soil descriptions, on-site investigations or other related work as defined under the practice of soil classifying, and the proper fee as prescribed in Section 7.

## SECTION 7.

### **FEES**

To pay the expenses of the operation of the certification process, the Board shall, at the time an application for certification is submitted, collect from the applicant a fee of forty dollars (\$40.00). If the applicant fails to qualify, such fee shall not be returned. Such applicant is eligible to re-apply after one (1) year of failing the written exam twice or failing the field practicum.

The fee for annual renewal of the certificate shall be twenty-five dollars (\$25.00).

The fee for restoration of a certificate which has lapsed shall be fifteen dollars (\$15.00).

The fee to be paid for a duplicate certificate shall be five dollars (\$5.00).

These fees may be adjusted as necessary by action of the Council of the Illinois Soil Classifiers Association.

## SECTION 8.

### **RENEWAL, EXPIRATION, AND RESTORATION OF CERTIFICATION**

#### a. Introduction

Each Professional Soil Classifier who continues in active practice shall renew certification annually for five (5) years by the payment of the required renewal fee on or before January 1. At the end of five (5) years, renewal requires the payment of the required fee, and meeting the specified requirements for re-certification, including submission of documentation of continuing professional education meeting the requirements of this Section.

#### b. Definition of Terms

1. Professional Development Hour (PDH) – Contact hour consisting of not less than 50 minutes each of instruction, presentation, composition, participation, or service.

2. College/Unit Semester/Quarter Hour – Credit assigned by a college or university for a completed course.
3. Activity – Any activity or course with a clear purpose and objective that maintains, improves, or expands the skills, knowledge, and abilities of the Professional Soil Classifier.
4. Sponsor – An organization or individual that has supplied a course or activity.
5. Certification Renewal Period – The period for accumulating the required PDHs shall be five (5) years.
6. Activity Category – A generalized classification of the type of activity satisfying the PDH requirement.

c. Requirements

Every Professional Soil Classifier shall meet both of the following requirements:

1. Participate in an ISCA-sponsored field exercise or practicum at least once during each of their respective 5-year certification renewal periods.
2. Obtain sixty (60) PDHs during each 5-year certification renewal period. Selection of courses and activities which meet the requirements of this Section shall be the responsibility of the Professional Soil Classifier. PDHs shall be earned in at least three (3) different categories with a maximum of 30 PDHs being earned in any individual category. Continuing education activities for which PDHs may be earned include, but are not limited to, the following activity categories:
  - A. Completing or auditing college or college-sponsored courses. One (1) college or unit semester hour shall be equivalent to fifteen (15) PDHs. One (1) college or unit quarter hour shall be equivalent to ten (10) PDHs.
  - B. Completing self-study college or professional society sponsored courses, seminars, or symposia presented by correspondence, internet, television, video, or audio, and ending with examination or other verification

processes. PDHs shall be earned for the actual time of each program with a maximum of fifteen (15) PDHs for a given activity.

- C. Attendance or participation in seminars, tutorials, clinics, workshops, symposia, in-house courses, field tours/exercises, or technical presentations made at meetings, conventions, or conferences. PDHs shall be earned for the actual time of each program with a maximum of fifteen (15) PDHs for a given meeting.
- D. Teaching of or providing instruction in Items (A) through (C), above. PDHs shall be doubled for this activity, and shall be applied for the initial presentation only.
- E. Technical field mapping, onsite investigations, formal reports of investigations, soil correlation and interpretation of properties, legal depositions, and expert witness testimony. A maximum of thirty (30) PDHs shall be applied for this activity.
- F. Authoring published papers, articles, blogs, books, or book chapters. PDHs earned may equal preparation time spent and shall be claimed only following publication. A maximum of twelve (12) PDHs shall be applied per paper, article, blog, book, or book chapter for this activity.
- G. Active participation in professional or technical societies as an officer, committee chair, or committee member. A maximum of four (4) PDHs per year in each office or committee shall be applied for this activity, and PDHs shall not be earned until the end of each year.
- H. Participation in professional examination grading or writing. A maximum of twelve (12) PDHs shall be applied for this activity.
- I. Providing professional service to the public on boards, commissions, committees, school programs or non-work related volunteer service which draws upon their

professional expertise. A maximum of twenty-four (24) PDHs shall be applied for this activity.

- J. Self-training such as book or journal reading. A maximum of six (6) PDHs shall be earned for this activity.
- K. Patents, after they are granted. A maximum of twenty (20) PDHs per patent shall be applied for this activity.

d. Criteria

Continuing education activities shall meet the following criteria:

1. There must be a clear purpose and objective for each activity which will maintain, improve, or expand skills, knowledge, and abilities prior to the initial certification or develop new and relevant skills, knowledge, and abilities.
2. The content of each presentation must be well organized and presented in a sequential manner.
3. There must be evidence of pre-planning which must include the opportunity for input by the target group to be served.
4. The activity must be led by persons who are well qualified by education or experience.
5. There must be provision for documentation of the participation of the CPSC in the activity.

e. Determination of Credit

The Board shall have the final authority with respect to approval of activities, sponsors, credit, PDH value for courses, and other methods of earning credit. PDH credit shall not be considered earned until the activity is completed or until the end of each year of service is completed.

f. Record Keeping

Each Professional Soil Classifier shall maintain records to be used to support credits claimed. Records shall include, but are not limited to:

1. A log showing the type of activity claimed, date or duration, sponsoring organization, name of speaker or instructor, location, and PDHs earned.
2. Attendance verification records in the form of completion certificates or other documents supporting evidence of attendance.

g. Reporting

Each Professional Soil Classifier shall submit a written record or log of continuing education activities to the Secretary-Treasurer of the Board prior to the end of their certification renewal period. The Board may request supplemental documentation such as registration receipts, meeting agendas, participation rosters, or certificates of completion in order to verify proper classification of an activity or compliance with these standards.

h. Noncompliance and Reinstatement

Any Professional Soil Classifier shall be listed as “delinquent” if fees remain unpaid after the due date of January 1 of the current year. His/her certificate shall expire if fees remain unpaid for sixty (60) days after the due date. A Professional Soil Classifier whose certificate has expired may have his or her certificate restored only by making application to the Board and upon payment of all lapsed renewal fees and payment of the required restoration fee provided that he or she has engaged in the practice of soil classifying three (3) of the preceding four (4) years, or have more than six (6) years of total soil classifying experience and have actively practiced soil classifying during the preceding year. If certification has lapsed for more than four (4) years, the applicant shall again be required to pass examinations as described in Section 5.

i. Exemptions

Any Professional Soil Classifier whose certificate expires while he or she is engaged in active duty with the armed forces of the United States may have his or her certificate restored without paying any lapsed renewal fees or restoration fee or taking any examination if, within one (1) year after termination of such service, he or she furnishes the Board with an affidavit to the effect that he or she was so engaged, and if the Board finds that he or she is of good character and reputation, and if not more than four (4) years has lapsed since he or she last engaged in the practice of soil classifying. If more than four (4) years has lapsed, the Professional Soil Classifier shall be

required to successfully pass examinations to determine his or her proficiency as described in section 5.

j. Notification

At least thirty (30) days in advance of the expiration of the certificate, the Board shall notify every Certified Professional Soil Classifier of the date of expiration and the amount of the fee required for renewal. The notice will also include the ending date of the five (5) year certification period and a listing by category, of the PDHs accepted to date.

## SECTION 9

### **SUSPENSION, REVOCATION, AND REINSTATEMENT OF CERTIFICATION**

- a. The Board may, upon its own motion, and may, upon receipt of written complaint, investigate the actions of any Professional Soil Classifier certified by it. It shall have the power to suspend or revoke certification when the Board has determined that the Professional Soil Classifier has engaged in any of the following: fraud or deceit in obtaining certification, any violation of the Code of Ethics, or negligence, professional misconduct, or incompetency in the practice of soil classifying.
- b. Before the Board shall suspend or revoke the certification of any Professional Soil Classifier it shall give that individual a hearing on the matter and shall, at least twenty (20) days prior to the date set for such hearing, notify the individual in writing. Such notice shall contain the exact statement of charges against him or her and the date and place of the hearing. Such individual shall be heard in person or by counsel before the Certification Board.
- c. If, after such hearing, the Board has determined that the charges have been substantiated and the Board votes in unanimous favor of suspension or revocation, the soil classifier shall be notified and shall, on such notice, immediately return his or her certificate of certification.
- d. Suspension of certification shall not exceed twelve (12) months. During the period of suspension, the suspended soil classifier shall not represent himself or herself as an ISCA Certified Professional Soil Classifier. At the end of the suspension period, a Professional Soil Classifier may have his or her certificate reinstated by making a

written request to the Board, upon payment of all lapsed renewal fees, and agreement to adhere to the Code of Ethics.

- e. Any Professional Soil Classifier whose certification has been revoked may be eligible for recertification after a period of no less than one (1) year from the date of revocation. He or she must be eligible for certification as described in Section 5 of these Standards and shall follow the procedures for application as described in Section 6.

## SECTION 10.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

These standards shall go into effect upon approval by a majority of the eligible voters present at the Annual Meeting of ISCA.

Approved at the annual meeting, March 1, 1980.  
J. Wiley Scott, Chairman  
Ethics, Registration and Membership Committee  
Linus M. Kiefer, President, ISCA

Amended March 1982  
Amended October 1987  
Amended March 1989  
Amended March 1991  
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