

§ 143-151.13. Required standards and certificates for Code-enforcement officials.

(a) No person shall engage in Code enforcement under this Article unless that person possesses one of the following types of certificates, currently valid, issued by the Board attesting to that person's qualifications to engage in Code enforcement: (i) a standard certificate; (ii) a limited certificate provided for in subsection (c) of this section; or (iii) a probationary certificate provided for in subsection (d) of this section. To obtain a standard certificate, a person must pass an examination, as prescribed by the Board or by a contracting party under G.S. 143-151.16(d), that is based on the North Carolina State Building Code and administrative procedures required for Code enforcement. The Board may issue a standard certificate of qualification to each person who successfully completes the examination. The certificate authorizes that person to engage in Code enforcement and to practice as a qualified Code-enforcement official in North Carolina. The certificate of qualification shall bear the signatures of the chairman and secretary of the Board.

(b) The Board shall issue one or more standard certificates to each Code-enforcement official demonstrating the qualifications set forth in subsection (b1) of this section. Standard certificates are available for each of the following types of qualified Code-enforcement officials:

- (1) Building inspector.
- (2) Electrical inspector.
- (3) Mechanical inspector.
- (4) Plumbing inspector.
- (5) Fire inspector.
- (6) Residential changeout inspector.

(b1) The holder of a standard certificate may practice Code enforcement only within the inspection area and level described upon the certificate issued by the Board. A Code-enforcement official may qualify and hold one or more certificates. These certificates may be for different levels in different types of positions as defined in this section and in rules adopted by the Board.

(b2) A Code-enforcement official holding a certificate indicating a specified level of proficiency in a particular type of position may hold a position calling for that type of qualification anywhere in the State. With respect to all types of Code-enforcement officials, those with Level I, Level II, or Level III certificates shall be qualified to inspect and approve only those types and sizes of buildings as specified in rules adopted by the Board.

(c) A Code-enforcement official holding office as of the date specified in this subsection for the county or municipality by which he is employed, shall not be required to possess a standard certificate as a condition of tenure or continued employment but shall be required to complete such in-service training as may be prescribed by the Board. At the earliest practicable date, such official shall receive from the Board a limited certificate qualifying him to engage in Code enforcement at the level, in the particular type of position, and within the governmental jurisdiction in which he is employed. The limited certificate shall be valid only as an authorization for the official to continue in the position he held on the applicable date and shall become invalid if he does not complete in-service training within two years following the applicable date in the schedule below, according to the governmental jurisdiction's population as published in the 1970 U.S. Census:

Counties and Municipalities over 75,000 population – July 1, 1979

Counties and Municipalities between 50,001 and 75,000 – July 1, 1981

Counties and Municipalities between 25,001 and 50,000 – July 1, 1983

Counties and Municipalities 25,000 and under – July 1, 1985

All fire prevention inspectors holding office – July 1, 1989. Fire prevention inspectors have until July 1, 1993, to complete in-service training.

An official holding a limited certificate can be promoted to a position requiring a higher level certificate only upon issuance by the Board of a standard certificate or probationary certificate appropriate for such new position.

(d) The Board may provide for the issuance of probationary or temporary certificates valid for such period (not less than one year nor more than three years) as specified by the Board's rules, or until June 30, 1983, whichever is later, to any Code-enforcement official newly employed or newly promoted who lacks the qualifications prescribed by the Board as prerequisite to applying for a standard certificate under subsection (a). No official may have a probationary or temporary certificate extended beyond the specified period by renewal or otherwise. The Board may provide for appropriate levels of probationary or temporary certificates and may issue these certificates with such special conditions or requirements relating to the place of employment of the person holding the certificate, his supervision on a consulting or advisory basis, or other matters as the Board may deem necessary to protect the public safety and health.

(e) The Board shall, without requiring an examination, issue a standard certificate to any person who is currently certified as a county electrical inspector pursuant to G.S. 160D-1102. The certificate issued by the Board shall authorize the person to serve at the electrical inspector level approved by the State Fire Marshal in G.S. 160D-1102.

(f) The Board shall issue a standard certificate to any person who is currently licensed to practice as a(n):

- (1) Architect, registered pursuant to Chapter 83A;
- (2) General contractor, licensed pursuant to Article 1 of Chapter 87;
- (3) Plumbing or heating contractor, licensed pursuant to Article 2 of Chapter 87;
- (4) Electrical contractor, licensed pursuant to Article 4 of Chapter 87; or,
- (5) Professional engineer, registered pursuant to Chapter 89C;

provided the person successfully completes a short course, as prescribed by the Board, relating to the North Carolina State Building Code regulations and Code-enforcement administration. The standard certificate shall authorize the person to practice as a qualified Code-enforcement official in a particular type of position at the level determined by the Board, based on the type of license or registration held in any profession specified above.

(g) A licensed architect or licensed professional engineer who possesses a valid certificate under subsection (f) of this section, but is not employed by the State or a local government, may utilize that certificate for the limited purpose of performing independent third-party plan review under subsections (d) and (e) of G.S. 160D-1110.1. (1977, c. 531, s. 1; 1979, cc. 521, 829; 1983, c. 90; 1987, c. 827, ss. 225, 227; 1989, c. 681, s. 17; 1989 (Reg. Sess., 1990), c. 1021, s. 5; 1991, c. 133, s. 1; 2007-120, s. 1; 2008-124, s. 8.1; 2019-174, s. 2; 2022-62, s. 32; 2023-142, s. 2(c); 2023-151, s. 11.81; 2024-49, s. 5.2(j).)