

NWCOA Certification Standards and Operational Policy  
Dated Jan 2018 and shall supersede all previous versions

ABSTRACT

The National Wildlife Control Operators Association (NWCOA) is a nonprofit, professional trade association comprised of individuals, businesses, corporations, or other entities who provide services to the public to resolve human-wildlife conflicts. NWCOA is devoted to professional development within the Wildlife Damage Management Industry by creating, promoting and strengthening professional standards for all facets of the industry. Standards include, but are not limited to 1) minimum competency for wildlife control operators (WCO), and 2) accreditation of continuing education opportunities offered to WCOs. To this end, NWCOA has developed a professional certification program designed to evaluate the competency, integrity, and professional experience of WCOs and the continuing education that they receive from within the industry.

A professional WCO is a person with demonstrated expertise in the art and science of applying the principles of wildlife damage management to the sound resolution of wildlife conflict with humans. An applicant for professional certification who demonstrates this expertise through education, experience and is judged to properly represent the profession as an ethical practitioner will be designated as a NWCOA Certified Wildlife Control Professional™ (CWCP™).

The program for certifying WCOs is a service provided by NWCOA for its members, nonmembers, and the public, who may desire a peer-evaluation statement or quality assurance. Certification constitutes recognition by NWCOA that, to its best knowledge, an applicant meets a superior level of educational, experience, and ethical standards adopted by this Association and the applicant has demonstrated competency through formal testing.

NWCOA has established standards for certification for individual operators and the administration of the program. NWCOA will maintain and disseminate a registry of certified WCOs through its media outlets in compliance with its non-profit corporation mission statement of serving the public and the wildlife damage industry. All NWCOA Certification programs shall follow an appropriate fee schedule to ensure that the program is financially self-sustaining.

## 1.0 OBJECTIVES

1.1. The primary objective of the National Wildlife Control Operators Association (NWCOA) certification program is to guide operators, governmental agencies, and the public in defining operational standards for service through knowledge, competency, integrity, and field experience for professional WCOs, and to encourage all practicing WCOs to meet such standards.

1.2. Create public confidence in the professional advice of certified WCOs in matters concerning wildlife damage management. Also, provide recognition for those who have pledged to abide by NWCOA Code of Ethics and to act in the best interest of the public and wildlife resources.

1.3. Assist the public in evaluating WCOs by establishing a procedure for critical peer evaluation based upon defined educational, technical, ethical and practical experience requirements.

## 2.0 – CWCP™ CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR ELIGIBILITY

2.1. The requirements to become a NWCOA Certified Wildlife Control Professional™ (CWCP™) cover five categories: experience, training, successfully passing an exam, ethics, and paying the fee. Compliance with these requirements should be submitted electronically on an official application. The application will be verified by NWCOA Executive Staff and approved by the NWCOA Governing Board or designee.

2.1.1. Experience. To be eligible to apply for certification, the applicant must have five (5) years practical experience as defined by full time equivalence of 10,000 hours. A year is defined as fifty, (50) - forty (40) hour weeks, or 2000 work hours. Part-time workers must complete the required 10,000 hours of experience within an eight (8) year span.

2.2.1.1. Applicant's experience must demonstrate the application of wildlife damage control techniques in a professional environment. Identification of professional-level experience will require careful evaluation of each application. Therefore, it is the applicant's responsibility to fully document his/her experience/time devoted specifically to wildlife damage control activities. Credit will be awarded within the following guidelines:

2.2.1.1a. Experience credit normally will be awarded on the basis of one-week full-time experience for one-week credit (40 hours). Part-time employment or experience will be calculated based upon total hours worked per week less than 40 hours. NWCOA recognizes that due to the seasonal nature of wildlife damage management, some weeks will significantly encompass more than 40 hours of work experience. In this circumstance, we accept averaging the time across the entire work year. The goal, however, is to have 2000 hours of experience annually.

2.2.1.1b. Partial credit may be granted for experience gained in positions peripheral to wildlife damage management. Peripheral experience credit may be used to fulfill not more than three-thousand hours (3000 hours) of experience

credit. Examples of peripheral experience may include: Biological Research, Wildlife Management Technician (non-damage related), Animal Care and Control, Zoo Operations, Animal Husbandry, etc.

2.2.1.1c. Documentation. Applicant's estimate of time devoted specifically to professional wildlife damage management work should be documented through a signed statement from supervisor, or signed statement from applicant if self-employed, as well as detailed completion of the Experience section of the application.

2.2.1.1d. Up to one year (2000 hours) of volunteer experience will be creditable toward the 5-year experience requirement provided that the position constitutes professional wildlife control duties, and is supported by a letter from the supervisor.

#### 2.2.2. Training Requirements.

Option A. A regionally-accredited college degree (associates or higher) in Wildlife Biology or Wildlife Management or a program certified by the Wildlife Society automatically fulfill the training requirements. Applicants must provide a certified transcript.

Option B. A person can fulfill the training requirements by obtaining and maintaining two (2) NWCOA approved certifications. Applicants must provide proof of certification.

Option C. A person can fulfill the training requirements by obtaining and maintaining one (1) NWCOA approved certification and provide proof of attendance at two NWCOA national EXPOs or Regional Training events. Applicants must provide proof of certification and attendance.

Note: Maintenance or renewal of NWCOA certifications are based on the requirements of each program.

2.2.3. Successfully passes the CWCP proficiency exam with an eighty-five (85) percent grade.

2.2.4. Signs and adheres to a strict Code of Ethics.

2.2.5. Pay the application fee.

2.3. Certification shall be for a period of five (5) years.

2.3.1 Once certified, CWCPs are not required to conform to CWCP program changes in educational or experience requirements resulting from future revisions, however, existing CWCP™s shall be subject to other renewal requirements such as the underlying certifications.

#### 2.4 – RENEWAL OF CERTIFICATION

CWCPs must begin the renewal process prior to the expiration of their certification. Failure to maintain the certification will require additional actions discussed below at 4.0.

2.4.1 Training. To maintain a CWCPs knowledge of advances within the field of wildlife damage management, he/she must complete one (1) of the options below.

2.4.1a. Option 1. An applicant must maintain three (3) NWCOA approved certifications (not counting CWCP).

2.4.1b. Option 2. Add one additional NWCOA certification above what they obtained during the previous certification period.

2.4.1c. Option 3. Maintain two (2) NWCOA certifications and attend one (1) NWCOA approved event or the Vertebrate Pest Conference ([www.vpconference.org](http://www.vpconference.org)) or the Wildlife Damage Management Conference sponsored by The Wildlife Society. Proof of registration or a letter from a conference participant/official confirming presence is sufficient to prove attendance.

2.4.2. Existing CWCPs™ seeking renewal must maintain documentation of original certification and shall supply documentation to the NWCOA upon request for verification.

2.4.2.1. In the case of missing records, renewal candidates must provide adequate documentation to support their original CWCP application.

## 2.6 Ethical Requirements

2.6.1. All applicants must pledge to uphold and conduct their activities in accordance with the Code of Ethics as prescribed by NWCOA. In the event any applicant has engaged in past activity or conduct that the NWCOA determines violates a provision of the Code of Ethics, the NWCOA shall thoroughly investigate such activity or conduct, to determine whether such past activity, conduct, or record shows a propensity on the part of the Applicant to act contrary to the provisions of the Code of Ethics and thereby constitutes grounds for denying and rescinding certification.

2.6.2. WCOs with the CWCP certification shall conduct their activities in accordance with the Code of Ethics as prescribed by NWCOA outlined below:

### Code of Ethics:

1. I will strive to follow all laws and regulations pertaining to wildlife damage management.
2. I ascribe to a professional code of conduct that embodies the traits of honesty, sincerity and dedication.
3. I will show exceptionally high levels of concern and respect for people, property and wildlife.
4. I will promote the understanding and appreciation of the many values of wildlife and scientific wildlife management, as well as an appreciation for the economic and health concerns of people adversely affected by wildlife.
5. I will be sensitive to the various viewpoints of wildlife damage management.

6. I will provide expertise on managing wildlife damage to my clientele upon request, within the limits of my experience, ability and legal authority.
7. I will promote competence and present an image worthy of the profession by supporting high standards of education, employment and performance.
8. I will strive to broaden my knowledge, skills and abilities to advance the practice of commercial wildlife damage management.
9. I will, in good faith, select new or time proven methods for resolving wildlife damage conflicts and give due consideration to humaneness, selectivity, effectiveness and practicality.
10. I will treat my competition and clientele in a courteous manner and in accordance with honorable business practices.
11. I will encourage, through word and through deed, all Commercial Wildlife Control Operators to adhere to this code and to participate in state associations of Commercial Wildlife Control Operators.

### 3.0 Accreditation of Certified Training Offerings

- NWCOA will maintain a list of accredited training courses.
- All training, seminars, conferences and activities of an educational nature may be eligible for consideration for accreditation. New training courses or previously unlisted courses may be accredited at any time by the NWCOA. Course accreditation requires submission of the curriculum, instructor credentials, and total hours to the Committee for official review. Official review may require attendance of training course by NWCOA if the course is new or includes field instruction not included in paper documentation.
- Once a training opportunity has been accredited by NWCOA, individuals may be required to provide proof of attendance and/or proof of certification to obtain credit towards the CWCP.
- Certification Programs Recognized by NWCOA. (This list will be subject to change).
  - Certified Goose Management Professional
  - Certified Bat Management Professional. Part 1 and 2 each count as a separate certification.
  - Firearms Certification for Shooting in Sensitive Environments. Each level counts as a separate certification.
  - Basic Operator Training Course (BOTC)
  - Advanced Operator Training Course (AOTC)

Note: Those achieving advanced standing in a particular certification may only count the lower certification as a separate certification for the first renewal period. Thereafter, only the higher level of certification counts. For example, if a new CWCP became a BOTC and AOTC during his/her renewal period, then he/she would have two (2) certifications. But during the second renewal period, only the AOTC would count as a certification. This change is to encourage CWCPs to broaden and deepen their training rather than relying on basic or foundational information.

#### 4.0 Lapsed Certifications

4.1. A certification will be considered lapsed if the CWCP fails to submit a renewal application with the appropriate renewal payment prior to the expiration of his/her certification. Payments made online or by phone or fax are acceptable. Applications mailed in must be postmarked prior to the expiration date.

4.2. If a CWCP is determined to be lapsed for more than one (1) day but less than ninety (90) days, but otherwise in compliance with renewal requirements, he/she will only be required to successfully pass the CWCP proficiency exam with an eighty-five (85) percent grade. Note, an exam fee may be required.

4.3. Those deemed to be lapsed greater than ninety (90) days will be required to start the CWCP application process over.

4.4. NWCOA reserves the right to exempt applicants from these requirements if it determines that the situation is extraordinary. Examples may include, called up to active duty, significant medical issues, and others.

#### 5.0 DENIAL OF CERTIFICATION / ACCREDITATION – APPEALS PROCESS

5.1 Any certification applicant may appeal the decision of the NWCOA Board, documenting charges of discrimination or arbitrary and capricious action by the NWCOA. The Board may elect to pass the decision to a review board to act as a Board of Inquiry (BOI) or to act as a BOI itself and to review the appeal and make a final decision regarding the appeal. In either case, the BOI shall inform the applicant of the final decision in writing within ten days of decision.

5.1.1. All Certification appeals must be made within thirty (30) days of the date of denial. Only information on education and experience previously submitted to the committees will be subject to review by the BOI. Submission of new information or additional documentation may invalidate an appeal and require the applicant to file a new application for certification without prejudice. Therefore, it is incumbent on applicants to fully and completely document their education and experience in their original applications.

#### 6.0 - VIOLATIONS OF ETHICAL STANDARDS

6.1. Suspension or revocation of certification for violation of the Code of Ethics as prescribed by NWCOA is a serious matter that reflects unfavorably on the entire profession. Considerable effort must be expended to ensure equitable treatment of all concerned. NWCOA shall review all complaints and alleged ethics violations, and if NWCOA determines that the actions warrant suspension or revocation of certification, NWCOA shall make a decision through the Governing Board.

6.2. NWCOA assumes no liability for charges of misconduct filed by or against a Certified Wildlife Control Professional and the Association provides no financial or legal assistance to either the person(s) bringing a charge of misconduct or the individual charged with misconduct.

6.3. Upon review and finding of fact, the BOI may recommend disciplinary action against  
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a CWCP or other Certification holder for gross incompetence, negligence, or violation of The NWCOA Code of Ethics. Recommended disciplinary action may include Official Reprimand, Suspension of Certification for a specified time, Permanent Revocation of Certification or other actions as deemed appropriate by the BOI. The NWCOA Governing Board shall make all final decisions regarding disciplinary actions. An Official Reprimand requires a majority vote of the Governing Board. More than one Official Reprimand within five (5) years will warrant Suspension of Certification. Any Suspension or Revocation of NWCOA certifications will require a  $\frac{2}{3}$  majority of the Governing Board.

## 7.0 SCHEDULE OF FEES

7.1 Certification is a service extended to qualified WCOs. However, the certification procedure was developed and is administered by NWCOA. Members of the Association subsidize this effort with their volunteer efforts and membership dues to maintain a viable peer review process. Nonmembers contribute nothing in this regard; therefore, there is a differential fee for certification. The fee structure for certification is: NWCOA Member/Nonmember.

Initial application fee for Certified Wildlife Control Professional \$100.00  
NWCOA members and \$200.00 for non-members. Renewal application  
fee for Certified Wildlife Control Professional is the same.

7.2 Fees shall be reviewed periodically and set by the governing board of NWCOA at levels sufficient to sustain the program.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_, Secretary, NWCOA