

# BECOME A CERTIFIED SPORTS FIELD MANAGER



## Credentialing Information

sponsored by the  
SPORTS FIELD MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION



Equal Opportunity Guidelines apply to all applicants. There will be no preference, limitation, specification, or discrimination based on race, color, religion, age, sex, marital status, disability or national origin.

## SFMA History

Because a few men believed that sports fields could be improved through the sharing of knowledge and the exchange of ideas, the Sports Turf Managers Association was officially formed in 1981. The key leaders in the STMA's infancy were Harry "Pops" Gill (deceased), Milwaukee County Stadium; Dr. William Daniel (deceased), Professor Emeritus, Purdue University; Dick Ericson, Minneapolis Metrodome; and George Toma National Football League.

After sharing the office, executive secretary and conference facilities of the National Institute of Parks and Grounds Management in Appleton, Wisc. for three years, the sixty STMA members decided to venture into independence in November 1984. The Board of Directors, led by their newly elected president, David Frey, appointed the Association's first Executive Director, Dr. Kent W. Kurtz (deceased), Professor of Turfgrass & Ornamental Horticulture at California State Polytechnic University in Pomona. In 1985, the association incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation and began a quarterly newsletter. STMA established a national office in Upland, Calif., during the spring of 1987. The first national conference in 1986 was held in conjunction with the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America's conference, as were the annual meetings in 1987 and 1988.

January 1989 marked STMA's first independently sponsored annual conference and exhibition in Vero Beach, Fla. Subsequent conferences have been held in Houston, '90, San Diego '91, Indianapolis '92, Baltimore '93, Bradenton '95, Anaheim '96, Colorado Springs '97, Orlando '98, Mesa '99, St. Louis '00, Tampa '01, Las Vegas '02, San Antonio '03, San Diego '04, Phoenix '05, Orlando '06, San Antonio '07, Phoenix '08, San Jose '09, Orlando '10, Austin '11, Long Beach '12, Daytona Beach '13, San Antonio '14, Denver '15, San Diego '16, Orlando '17, '18, Fort Worth, '19, Phoenix, '20, West Palm Beach, '21, Virtual, Savannah, '22, Salt Lake City, 2023 and the 2024 conference will be held in Daytona.

In 1990, the Board of Directors decided to recognize chapters. Chapters have formed and are still organizing all over the country. SFMA has 32 chapters, which hold seminars with educational sessions, often combined with demonstrations, facility tours and vendor exhibits.

In 2004, the association hired its own, dedicated full-time staff after being managed by a management company for six years, and the association headquarters was relocated to Lawrence, Kan. Membership at the end of 2011 was 2,505 representing 15 countries.

***SFMA's Mission: SFMA advances professionalism in sports field management and safety through education, awareness programs, and industry development.***

## PURPOSE OF CERTIFICATION

The Sports Field Management Association (SFMA), having recognized the importance of fostering and improving professionalism within the sports turf industry, has developed a certification program for Certified Sports Field Managers. The purpose of the program is to:

- Increase professionalism in the sports field management industry
- Promote Better and Safer Sports Field Areas
- Establish credentials that signify a specific level of expertise
- Increase career opportunities and promote the sports field manager and the profession
- Provide recognition for attaining a level of expertise and performance as professionals in the industry
- Stimulate and motivate improved performance and increased professionalism
- Increase opportunities for education and training

Additionally, the SFMA has established continuing education requirements that all Certified Sports Field Managers must satisfy to maintain their status as a SFMA Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM).

In order to attain the designation of Certified Sports Field Manager, a candidate must satisfy: 1) the Basic Requirements; 2) the combination of education and experience point requirements; 3) pass a national certification examination.

## PART ONE - REQUIREMENTS

### *BASIC REQUIREMENTS*

**Please note: If any of the BASIC REQUIREMENTS are not fulfilled at the time of application, the application will be returned to the applicant (NO EXCEPTIONS).**

1. The applicant must have a minimum of a high school diploma or equivalent.
2. The applicant must achieve a minimum of 40 points earned through a combination of education and experience with the following criteria:

### *EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE POINTS*

#### Education

<u>Program</u>	<u>Points</u>
SFMA Approved Educational Program	Vary

*(see current list of approved programs)* **Note: These points may be in addition to the below listed points. The below listed education points are not cumulative. In other words, an applicant can only receive points for the highest educational level achieved. Experience points are cumulative.**

#### **Associate Degree**

Non-turfgrass related	2
Turf or Related Plant Science	8

#### **Bachelors Degree**

Non-turfgrass related	8
Turf or Related Plant Science	16

#### **Advanced Degree - Masters or Doctorate**

Non-turfgrass related	12
Turf or Related Plant Science	24

#### Experience

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Points/year*</u>
Formalized Internship Program	.1 per 100 hrs worked
Sports Field Crew	2.5
Supervisory Sports Field Management (Assistant, Foreman or Lead position)	4
Sports Field Manager (Top Position)	6
Experience as assistant golf course superintendent	1½
Experience as a golf course superintendent	3

**NOTE:** no more than 50 percent of total experience points can be earned on a golf course  
**\*a minimum of 1500 hours must be spent on the job to qualify for each claimed year.**

The Application and resume will be evaluated to determine eligibility for Certification.

## **Written Test**

Qualified applicants will be scheduled to take a written multiple-choice test comprised of four major Sections pertinent for a Sports Field Manager.

A passing grade of 80% will be required for each Section.

Each Section will be graded individually - in any Section in which the applicant does not achieve a passing grade, the test for this Section must be retaken within one year of notification of failure. If the applicant continues to fail a Section beyond the one-year time limit, he/she must start all over again. Any section of the test may be taken a maximum of three times during a one-year period. An applicant may petition for an extension of the one-year testing period if extraordinary circumstances prevail.

Sections for testing will include:

### *Agronomics*

- Basic horticultural calculations
- Basic soils
- Turfgrasses and their selection
- Turfgrass nutrition
- Water management
- Turfgrass cultural practices

### *Pest Management - IPM, Cultural, Pesticides*

- Weeds
- Insects
- Diseases

### *Administration*

- Budgeting
- Communication
- Supervision/Personnel Management
- Safety/Compliance/First Aid

### *Sports Specific Field Management - Field design, layout, dimensions, lining/markings, maintenance, playability, aesthetics*

- Baseball/Softball
- Football
- Soccer, Lacrosse, Field Hockey

## **Recognition of Achievement**

Applicants who successfully complete all specified requirements will attain the designation of Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM). Certification status takes effect on the first day of the month following notification of attainment of certification. This achievement will be recognized with an appropriate plaque or certificate, news release and an announcement at the Annual SFMA Conference. Certified individuals are authorized to use the designation CSFM after their names on all business documents as an indication of certification status for the duration of the period in which their certification status remains active and in effect.

## **Re-Certification**

Certification must be kept up-to-date and current by means of Recertification on a three-year cycle. During each three-year cycle, the Certified Sports Field Manager is required to accumulate a total of 3 Continuing Education Units (CEUs) **and** 9 Industry Service Points (ISPs). No more than ½ of the total CEUs may be earned and applied toward recertification in any one year, ISPs can be earned at any time during your certification period.

### Continuing Education Unit

CEU is the abbreviation for Continuing Education Unit - a universally accepted measurement of the value of continuing, nonaccredited education courses. One tested CEU is equal to 10 contact hours of classroom study. Within the SFMA Certification Program, the SFMA Certification Committee Educational Program Review Subcommittee will determine the value applied to all continuing education offered by SFMA with the approval of the SFMA Board of Directors and the value applied to all other continuing education programs submitted to the Certification Committee for approval of CEU credit.

Activities which would qualify for CEUs include:

- Educational Conferences - SFMA Annual Conference and approved sessions of state and regional conferences applicable to the sports field industry (*Inquire for current listings*)
- Educational Programs and training sessions applicable to the sports field industry, previously evaluated and approved by the SFMA Certification Committee Educational Program Review Subcommittee (*Inquire for current listings*)
- Educational Programs and training sessions applicable to the sports field industry, but not previously evaluated and approved by the SFMA Certification Committee Educational Program Review Subcommittee may be submitted to said subcommittee for review and subsequent action

Activities which would qualify for ISPs include:

- Sports Field Related Community Service
- Write Published Article for National Trade Magazine, National Newsletter, or Chapter Newsletter
- Turfgrass Association Involvement as officer, board member or committee member at the SFMA national or chapter level, or for other turfgrass related associations
- Speaker on a sports field related topic
- Hosting an SFMA Chapter event
- Providing and monitoring a sports field internship program

### **Educational Resources**

An opportunity to prepare for better sports field management and certification will be provided through a listing of resource materials and aids to include but not limited to:

- Textbooks, manuals, tapes and any other educational materials or programs approved as applicable and pertinent.

### **Fees**

Fees as established will cover the cost of administering the program to include application, testing, evaluating, and re-certification.

### **Board of Review**

A Board of Review has been established with the responsibility to address questions and/or review disputes and decisions including certification, de-certification and issues as addressed under the Professional Practice and Disciplinary Procedures section of this document.

## **DEFINITIONS**

**Sports Field Manger** - an individual who is primarily responsible for decisions, administration, supervision and execution of all procedures related to the playability and safety of sports field playing surfaces.

### **Supervisory Sports Field Management**

**Assistant** - an individual in the Sports Field Crew who is primarily responsible under the guidance and supervision of the Sports Field Manager for conducting assigned responsibilities in any aspect of sports field care.

**Sports Field Management Experience** includes experience as a Sports Field Manager in any of the following sports: Football, baseball, softball, soccer, lacrosse, field hockey, rugby, track and field, horse race tracks, cricket, tennis, polo.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES**

### **A. Accommodation Procedures**

The CSFM program is available to all qualifying individuals and does not discriminate against persons with disabilities or handicaps. Requests for any modification of procedures for individuals must be made specific as to the nature of the problem. Medical documentation of specific needs must accompany the request. The Certification Committee shall review the request at its discretion and notify the candidate of its determination.

### **B. Application Information**

Application forms must be filed at least 60 days prior to the applicant's anticipated examination date. Upon receipt of the application, the Certification Committee will review the information and assess the applicant's eligibility to sit for the examination. The accepted applicants are scheduled in order of remittance. Applications and information can be obtained from the SFMA Headquarters.

A 75% refund of the exam fee will be issued if cancellation is made in writing at least 30 days prior to the scheduled exam date. Telephone calls will not be accepted.

Fifty percent (50%) of the exam fee will be refunded if cancellation is made after the deadline date. This policy will also apply to no shows.

The applicant will be assessed the fee as established for rescheduling an examination.

The Certification examination is administered once annually in conjunction with the SFMA Annual Conference. Additional testing will be held at appropriate local SFMA approved assessment centers or testing sites under proctored conditions as specified by the Certification Committee. All fees for assessment center arrangements are to be borne by the applicant.

### **C. Eligibility Appeal Policy**

If an application is not accepted by the Certification Committee upon review of the educational and/or experience documentation submitted, the applicant shall be notified of such decision and such application may be placed on pending status until the qualifying requirements are achieved. The applicant can appeal this action directly to the staff Certification Coordinator through telephone contact. Should the issue or issues not be resolved through this process, the applicant may appeal in writing to the Board of Review.

The written appeal, signed by the applicant, must be received at least 60 days before the date of the requested examination date. The applicant is responsible for demonstrating that the appeal should be granted. The Board of Review shall review the request and notify the applicant of its determination in a timely manner. The Board of Review's decision shall be final.



## Examination Policies

Candidates must retake the section(s) of the examination they did not pass within one year of the date of notification of their failure to pass that section or sections of their most recent examination. The candidate may take any unpassed section of the examination a maximum of three times within this one-year period. Failure to retake the examination within this time frame will require the candidate to resubmit a new application and retake the complete examination. It is recommended that candidates who fail one or more sections of the Certification examination review their scores to determine appropriate remedial studies and/or experiences.

### E. Policies During the Examination Administration

A candidate who informs a test site administrator that he/she does not wish to continue taking the section of the exam being taken, may not complete this section of the exam later that day. If the candidate retakes the examination at a later date, he/she must submit the retake fee for the section(s) which were discontinued.

Candidates who arrive late for a section of the exam may not take that section of the exam.

Disruptive behavior is cause for dismissal from the test site by the test site administrator. No refunds will be given to candidates expelled for disruptive behavior.

No visitors are permitted in testing rooms (including children).

Candidates may bring only pencils, pens, and calculators into the testing area. They may not bring coats, book bags, luggage, scratch paper, etc. to their examination desks. No paper or printed materials may be brought into or removed from the testing room by the candidates.

Only the individual named on the registration roster will be permitted to take the examination. No substitutions are allowed for registered candidates. Candidates must present a current government-issued photo ID at check-in.

### F. Related Examination Information and Policies

*Examination Item Development* - Test questions for the Certification examination are prepared by the Certification Committee Test Development Subcommittee. Each question is validated by this subcommittee in item-writing groups, referenced to current resources from the literature on or related to sports field management, and edited by sports field managers for clarity and content.

Exams will be given as multiple choice tests developed for four major Sections pertinent for a Sports Field Manager. Sections for testing are Agronomics; Pest Management - IPM, Cultural, Pesticides; Administration; and Sports Specific Field Management - Field design, layout, dimensions, lining/markings, maintenance, playability and aesthetics.

*Comments on Exam Questions* - If candidates, after taking the examination, have comments about a test question, they should use the Suggested Revisions for Test Question form available from a proctor on the day of the test. The form also allows space for the candidate to explain his/her comments in detail.

When item writing committees meet to revise the examination, they will have available to them information provided by candidates on this form. The Certification Committee, however, will not respond to comments individually.

*Passing Point* – An 80 percent score must be achieved on each individual section of the Certification examination to pass that section of the examination. A candidate must pass all four sections of the examination to achieve certification status.

*Examination Scoring* - After the examinations are scored, each candidate is sent a score report that indicates whether he or she has obtained a passing score on those sections of the examination he/she completed. The score report also indicates the maximum possible scores for those sections, the minimum scores needed to pass, and the actual scores obtained by the candidate. The total score on the written section of the examination is the number of correct responses. The total number of correct responses is then calculated in relation to the total number of questions within that section of the examination to arrive at the percentage of correct responses for that section of the examination.

*Confidentiality* - The examination scores are confidential and will not be disclosed unless the SFMA receives a written request to do so from a candidate or is directed to do so by a subpoena or court order. A candidate wanting scores released to another entity must indicate in writing which particular scores may be disclosed and identify specifically the person or organization to whom the scores should be revealed. ***No candidate scores will be given by telephone, facsimile, or electronic mail for any reason.***

*Verification of Scores and Appeals* - Candidates receiving failing scores may request a rescoring of the answer sheet. Information about rescoring will be included with the candidate's score report. Upon receipt of the rescoring request form and fee, the candidate's answer sheet will be inspected, and hand scored. Requests for rescoring answer sheets must be received by the testing service no later than 30 days following the release of examination results. Requests received later than that will not be processed.

***The SFMA does not encourage candidates whose score is close to passing to request verification of their scores.*** As a result of the procedures that are used to score and verify scores, it is extremely doubtful that any examination results will change from "fail" to "pass" when rescored. The candidate's Certification exam scores are final.

Improper behavior by examiners, room proctors and/or violations of stated examination procedures are acceptable reasons for appealing the results. The candidate must inform the test site administrator of any test related incident that affected the candidate. The candidate may appeal test results based upon such above listed actions. This appeal may be made directly to the staff Certification Coordinator through telephone contact. Should the issue or issues not be resolved through this process, the candidate may appeal in writing to the Board of Review. The candidate must state in writing the reason the results were affected by improper actions of examiners/room proctors or stated examination procedures that caused the candidate to fail. The appeal must be received by the Board of Review no later than 30 days following the initial contact with the Certification Coordinator which must be made no later than 30 days following the release of examination results. Failure of one or more sections of the certification exam is not an acceptable basis for appeal. The decision of the Board of Review shall be final.

*Examination Disclosure* - The examination questions and answers/exam software remain solely the property of the SFMA. These materials are confidential and are not available for review by any person or agency for any reason.

### **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality of all individual records shall be maintained at all times. All certification forms, examination results, continuing education records, and all such related documents may only be disclosed by SFMA with the written permission of the individual to whom these documents relate. Individuals may have access to their own records when requested in writing or in person. SFMA shall not disclose such information to third parties without the individual's consent or as required by law.

This Confidentiality provision shall not prohibit SFMA from releasing information to any third party regarding an individual's membership status in SFMA or certification status.

### **CONTINUING EDUCATION AND INDUSTRY SERVICE**

Requirement – The SFMA has established that all Certified Sports Field Managers must obtain 3 continuing education units (CEUs) within a three-year Re-Certification cycle. Newly Certified Sports Field Managers will be advised, when they receive their certification notice, of their continuing education requirements, as well as other information about the SFMA's continuing education requirements.

Requirement – The SFMA has established that all Certified Sports Field Managers must obtain 9 Industry Service Points (ISPs) within a three-year Re-Certification cycle. Newly Certified Sports Field Managers will be advised, when they receive their certification notice, of their industry service requirements, as well as other information about the SFMA's industry service requirements.

## PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE AND DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

The SFMA may revoke or otherwise take action with regard to the application or certification of an individual in the case of:

- i. Ineligibility for certification;
- ii. Irregularity in connection with any certification examination;
- iii. Unauthorized possession, use, access, or distribution of certification examinations, score-reports, answer sheets, certificates, certificant or applicant files, documents or other materials;
- iv. Material misrepresentation or fraud in any statement to the Certification Committee or to the public, including but not limited to statements made to assist the applicant, certificant, or another apply for, obtain, or retain certification;
- v. Gross or repeated negligence in professional work and/or behavior which includes negligence in fulfilling entrusted and/or required responsibilities in providing and maintaining the safety, playability, aesthetics and appeal of athletic fields under the Sports Field Manager's supervision; unfair treatment and/or abuse of staff members under his/her supervision; discourteous treatment of supervisors, coaches, athletes and/or attendees at athletic activities; and any abusive or non-abusive behavior unbecoming of a professional;
- vi. The conviction of, plea of guilty to, or plea of nolo contendere to a felony or misdemeanor which is directly related to public health, athletic care or education. This includes but is not limited to rape, sexual abuse of a child or athlete, actual or threatened use of a weapon of violence; the prohibited sale or distribution of a controlled substance, or its possession with the intent to distribute; or use of the position of Sports Field Manager improperly to influence the outcome or score of any athletic contest or event or in connection with any gambling activity; and
- vii. Not adhering to the eligibility requirements for certification candidacy or obtaining and properly submitting the established CEU and/or ISP requirements for recertification.

## DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

### Section 1:

#### 1) Panels

- a. The SFMA by a majority vote shall appoint persons who are members of the SFMA to form (i) a Review Panel, (ii) a Hearing Panel, and (iii) an Appeals Panel to consider alleged violations of any Application or Certification Standard set forth in parts i-vii above. These Panels may be established as standing panels.

- b. Each of these panels shall be composed of three full-voting members and up to four non-voting (substitute) members, whose terms shall run for three years and may be renewed. A full or substitute member may not serve more than two terms consecutively and may not serve on more than one membership or certification review, hearing, or appeals panel at a time. If a full or substitute member serves as a member on one of these panels, he or she may not consider the same matter while serving on a different panel.  
A full or substitute member may not serve in any situation where his/her impartiality or the presence of actual or apparent conflict of interest might reasonably be questioned.
- c. A majority of full-voting members of a panel shall select their Chair at the beginning of each year.
- d. A quorum consists of three full-voting members, and panel action shall be determined by a majority vote.
- e. Where a vacancy of a full-voting member occurs in any of the panels as a result of resignation, unavailability, or disqualification, the Chair shall designate a full-voting member from the substitute members.

## 2) Review Procedures

- a. **Submission of Information to the SFMA**  
Persons concerned with possible violation of SFMA standards shall identify the certification applicant, SFMA members and any other persons alleged to be involved and the facts concerning the alleged conduct in as much detail and specificity as possible with available documentation in a written statement addressed to the Chair of the SFMA Certification Committee. The statement must include the name, address, and telephone number of the person making the statement and others who may have knowledge or facts concerning the alleged violation.
- b. Whenever the SFMA Headquarters receives allegations which raise an issue under parts i-vii above, the SFMA Headquarters shall transmit such allegations to the Chair of the Review Panel. If the Review Panel determines that no good cause exists to question eligibility or compliance with the Standards, no adverse action shall be taken. However, if the Review Panel determines by a majority vote that good cause does exist, it shall direct the transmittal to the applicant or certificant by certified mail or tracked courier, return receipt requested, of a statement of the factual allegations constituting the alleged violation and disciplinary standard allegedly violated, and shall also include the following recitation of rights and procedures: That the applicant or certificant has the right to an oral hearing if he/she disputes the truthfulness of the allegations and the applicant or certificant must bear his/her own expenses in connection with any such hearing; that the applicant or certificant must appear in person at the hearing; that the applicant or certificant may be represented by counsel at the hearing, may present evidence on his/her own behalf and may examine or cross-examine any witness under oath; that the applicant or certificant shall have fifteen (15) days to notify the Chair whether he/she disputes the allegations, requests an oral hearing, and/or has comments regarding appropriate sanctions; that sanctions may be imposed if the allegations are determined to be true by a Hearing/Disciplinary Panel or if the applicant or certificant fails to submit a timely response; that the

applicant or certificant will be deemed to consent to the imposition of sanctions by the Hearing/Disciplinary Panel if he/she does not dispute the truthfulness of the allegations.

### 3) Hearing

If an applicant disputes the allegations or requests a hearing,

- a) The Chair shall
  - (1) forward the allegations and response of the applicant or certificant to the Hearing Panel;
  - (2) schedule a hearing of the Hearing Panel after the request is received;
  - (3) send by certified mail or tracked courier, return receipt requested, a Notice of Hearing to the applicant or certificant. The Notice of Hearing shall include a statement of the time and place of the hearing as selected by the Chair of the Hearing Panel.
- b) The Hearing Panel shall maintain a verbatim oral or written transcript.
- c) The SFMA and the applicant or certificant may make opening statements, present documents and testimony, examine and cross-examine witnesses under oath, make closing statements, and present written briefs as scheduled by the Hearing Panel.
- d) The Hearing Panel shall determine all matters relating to the hearing. The hearing and related matters shall be determined on the record by majority vote. Formal rules of evidence shall not apply. Relevant evidence may be admitted. Disputed questions shall be determined by majority vote of the Hearing Panel.

### 4) Sanctions

Sanctions for violation of any CSFM Application or Certification Standard may include one or more of the following:

- a. Denial or suspension of eligibility;
- b. Revocation;
- c. Non-renewal;
- d. Censure;
- e. Reprimand;
- f. Suspension;
- g. Training or other corrective action;
- h. Reports; and
- i. Conditions relating to the above.

## 5) Appeal

- a. The applicant or certificant may appeal to the Appeals Panel a decision by the Hearing Panel regarding the truthfulness of the allegations and may appeal a decision by the Hearing/Disciplinary Panel regarding the imposition of sanctions. An appeal must be filed within thirty (30) days of the applicant's or certificant's receipt of the decision through the submission of a written appeals statement to the Appeals Panel. The SFMA may file a written response to the appeals statement of the applicant or certificant.
- b. The Appeals Panel shall render a decision on the record without oral hearing, although written briefing may be submitted.

## 6) Decision

The decision of the Review, Hearing/Disciplinary and Appeals Panels shall be rendered in writing and shall be considered final. The decision shall contain factual findings, conclusions of law, and any sanctions applied. It shall be transmitted to the applicant or certificant by certified mail or tracked courier, return receipt requested.

## Section 2:

### 1) Summary Procedure

Whenever the Review Panel determines that there is cause to believe that a threat of immediate and irreparable injury to the public health exists, the Review Panel shall forward the allegations to the Hearing Panel. The Hearing Panel shall hear the matter by immediate telephone or other expedited notice and hearing procedure. Following such notice and opportunity by the individual to be heard, if the Hearing Panel determines that a threat of immediate and irreparable injury to the public exists, certification may be suspended for up to 60 days pending full hearing under the procedures described above.