



# Guidance for a Successful Certification Session

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Shotcreter (formerly nozzleman) certification sessions have changed and evolved over the last decade. After a program reorganization in 2011, ASA has worked very closely with our examiners to maintain consistent quality and bring stronger oversight to the program. Anyone who has hosted a session knows that there is a lot involved.

Normally, much of the focus is on paperwork: Without the correct, fully documented hours, participants will not be allowed to test for the certifications they wish to pursue. Education requirements have also changed for recertifying shotcreters; they must now participate in the 8-hour ASA-sponsored shotcreter education for their recertification. Both time and cost constraints have many companies looking to reduce the number of days required for certification sessions.

While we try to work with companies to minimize the days needed for a session, we wanted to highlight some factors that could easily add a day to your session for completion — and how to avoid them.

### RECERTIFICATION OPTIONS

Recertifying shotcreters (recerts) have the option of showing 500 hours on the nozzle **within the last two years** to take a comprehensive oral interview in lieu of taking the written exam. This is only available to recerts who are currently certified or have been expired for less than one year. This is a nice option if candidates struggle with taking written exams, but it requires more time for the session host to compile and fully document the minimum 500 hours of work experience. It also adds time at the session for the examiner to confirm the experience with each recert and then conduct the oral exam. If taking the written exam is not a problem for the shotcreter (after all, they did take and pass the exam for their original certification), we suggest your recerts retake their written exam. This saves time before and during the session, as no work experience needs to be submitted beforehand. Also, both new candidates and recerts can take the 90-minute written exam at the same time, rather than each recert taking about 30 minutes per oral interview.

### TIMELY SUBMISSION OF WORK EXPERIENCE FORMS (WEF)

If your examiner doesn't have enough lead time before your session to review the WEFs and prepare, your examiner must take time away at your session to conduct lengthy interviews with each participant to verify and possibly re-calculate hours required for the certification pursued.

### CRAFTSMAN WORKBOOKS

The printed study material for the written exams is shipped when full payment is made. We recommend you make full payment as soon as your numbers are confirmed (but no later than 2 weeks prior to your session start date) so you can get the workbooks to your shotcreters as soon as possible. Don't keep them until the session! Distribute them to your shotcreters, have them study, and remind them to bring them to the session. Reviewing the questions at the end of each chapter and bringing any questions from their studies to the session to ask your examiner can be particularly helpful in reinforcing the written information. If you think any of your participants would benefit from studying with others, we highly recommend setting up study sessions or a review partner to help your shotcreters prepare.

### SCHEDULE

We have a standard template for the certification session schedule, but adjustments can be made. If concrete supply or storm forecasts may impact your session, speak with your examiner. He will work with you to schedule the best time to shoot and core the panels at your session.

### PANELS

It's not a bad idea to build a couple extra panels to have on hand just in case a shotcreter needs to reshoot a panel. If a panel fails at coring, you often have the option to ask your examiner to stay an extra day so the shotcreter can reshoot their panel and then core the next day. Having your examiner stay one extra day could save you from scheduling an additional session which would require two days at a minimum to shoot and core. Equipment and material availability may affect whether this is an option or not.

## SHOOTING SET-UP

Make sure all your panels are secure. If you are shooting overhead panels, it is highly recommended to place only ONE panel on a single scaffold setup. Though two panels may fit, vibration from shooting the second panel will make the first panel drop out. In cold weather shooting, plan to protect the panels from freezing overnight, as slower strength gain in cold temperatures can preclude coring the panels the next day. Protecting overhead panels is more challenging than the vertical panels, feel free to discuss options with your examiner beforehand.

## EQUIPMENT

Make sure you discuss the equipment you will be using with your examiner and ensure that you will have the proper power and water supply required. If all your best equipment is in the field and you plan to use some of your old backup equipment for the session, make sure it is properly maintained and ready for service. Do not pull them out of storage the day of the session: This includes compressors!

## CONCRETE MATERIAL

A certification session is not the time to try something new. Use the wet or dry-mix materials you typically use, so your shotcreters are most familiar with achieving the

proper consistency. Discuss the concrete mixture with your examiner beforehand, as he cannot help you make adjustments during the performance exam.

## CORING

This can often take up the most time at a session. Be prepared, and consider what would work best for your company. GFRP rebar is highly recommended for larger sessions as it can substantially reduce the coring time. ASA provides contact information for a supplier who sells pre-cut kits which include the required rebar sizes, cut to length, per panel. New and spare coring bits, a backup core drill, or hiring a coring contractor are also options that can facilitate the time required for coring.

## CURING

Be prepared to protect your panels accordingly to account for climate conditions (high/low temperatures, rain/snow, etc.). If you have any questions, please ask your examiner!

## CONCLUSION

Certification is an investment. Taking these considerations into account will go a long way toward a smooth session. Anything can happen, but the more prepared you are, the more able you will be to respond. We want to partner with you for smooth, successful certification sessions!