

Learn about the ASCS!

Where to Take the ASCS Exam

NADCA requires that all member companies have at least one certified Air Systems Cleaning Specialist (ASCS) on staff. Through ASCS certification, contractors demonstrate requisite knowledge of HVAC system cleaning, NADCA standards, OSHA regulations and more.

The ASCS designation is requested frequently from consumers, and is listed in the specifications for many commercial and industrial jobs. To obtain the ASCS certification, an individual is required to take and pass a multiple choice exam. This exam is available through several different outlets, including but not limited to NADCA testing centers, the [NADCA Annual Meeting & Exposition](#), and [the NADCA Technical Conference](#).

NADCA Testing Centers

The ASCS exam is available at testing centers throughout the world. The ASCS exam is not available online for first-time test takers or those who have let their ASCS certification lapse. (However, individuals who already hold the ASCS may renew it through online quizzes. This option is not available for ASCS candidates.)

Candidates taking the ASCS exam at a testing center must follow these steps:

If the [Member Promo Package](#) application has been submitted, you must still create an account in the test-taker's name, and the ASCS exam must be scheduled by a member of the NADCA staff.

Contact NADCA to schedule the exam when the account has been created.

- Visit the NADCA Testing Site here: <http://www.nadcatesting.com>.
- In the top right-hand corner of the page, click "Create a New Account."
- Fill out the company information. This section requires a "Member Security Code," which is provided upon submission of [the NADCA member application](#). If you have lost/misplaced the "Member Security Code," please call NADCA at 855-GO NADCA (466-2322).
- The blue bar across the middle of the NADCA Testing Site includes an option to "Register for a Test." Click this link to see all NADCA testing options. Choose the ASCS Exam by clicking the orange "Buy Now" box (\$385). This will open a page with testing center search options.
- For candidates with a non-member company, the ASCS exam must be scheduled in [the non-member area of the NADCA Testing Site](#). This link is at the bottom of the testing site homepage.
- Unless [the Member Promo Package](#) application has been submitted, payment must be made through the testing site with a valid Visa, MasterCard or American Express.



Click for enlarged screen shot of www.nadcatesting.com

Taking the ASCS at a NADCA Event

NADCA offers the ASCS exam at the [Annual Meeting & Expo](#) and the [Technical Conference](#). More detail is included in the registration brochures for each event. The Annual Meeting & Expo registration brochure is typically published in December. The Technical Conference brochure is typically published in May.

How much does the ASCS certification examination cost?

The cost of the examination is as follows:

	Member	Non-Member
ASCS Exam	\$385.00	\$1,610.00
ASCS Exam Retake	\$260.00	\$885.00
ASCS Online (at standardized testing center)	\$385.00	\$1,610.00
ASCS Online Retake (at standardized testing center)	\$260.00	\$885.00
ASCS Online Training Class	\$395.00	\$595.00

Prepare for the ASCS Exam

The ASCS examination tests the knowledge and skills needed to become successful in the HVAC inspection, maintenance and restoration industry. The subjects of the exam cover a range of topics, including indoor air quality, safety, mechanical, field experience, and the ability to correctly apply practical knowledge.

There are several ways to prepare for the examination:

The NADCA ASCS Candidate's Guide includes an outline of subject areas from which the test is based, a list of recommended reading materials, and a few sample questions similar to those given on the exam.

[Click here for a free download of the ASCS Candidates Guide.](#)

ASCS Online Course

The ASCS Online course enables training to be accessible online 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Upon payment, access to the ASCS Online training is granted through the Internet, and users may complete the course at an individualized pace. Users have the ability to log-out of the course and return to it again at a later time. The online format enables NADCA to reduce the course time down to three hours (assuming the course runs uninterrupted).

The cost of the ASCS Online course is \$395 for members and pending applicants.

The cost of the ASCS Online course is \$595 for non-members.

This registration fee entitles users to access the course for a total of five hours. Registrants also receive access to electronic copies of the slide presentation used for the ASCS Course (in PDF format), the NADCA Safety Manual, and other items that comprise the ASCS Study Materials.

[Click here to learn more about the ASCS Online Course.](#)

In-Person Training

The ASCS to the ACR Standard Course provides an excellent source of information for HVAC Inspection, Maintenance and Restoration and includes topics such as Mold in HVAC Systems, Cleaning HVAC Systems and Associated Ductwork, Industry Standards, Project Management and Containment Strategies. The course is ideal for those who are new to the industry or preparing for certification. This class is offered at the [NADCA Annual Meeting & Exposition](#) and the [NADCA Technical Conference](#).

Webinar

The ASCS to the ACR Standard Course is also available as a Webinar. The Webinar is an ideal option for ASCS candidates who do not wish to travel, but would prefer to be taught by a live instructor. Please check [NADCA's training schedule](#) for dates and times of availability for the ASCS Webinar.

ASCS Study Materials Manual

NADCA's ASCS Study Materials Manual is available for those who do not wish to take the online or in-person classes, and would instead like to study on their own. DO NOT order this study manual if you have registered for the ASCS Online Course or the ASCS Training & Preparation Class, as these materials are provided upon registration for those classes.

This study manual is available for purchase as electronic download, CD or print format and includes the following publications: ASCS Candidate's Guide, Certification Handbook, ASCS Study Course, Intro to HVAC System Cleaning, ACR Standard, NADCA Safety Manual & Mold Remediation Study Course.

[Click here to order the ASCS Study Materials Manual.](#)

Learn about the ASCS!

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the benefits of ASCS certification?

ASCS certification enhances one's professional development and is also a world-wide credential recognizing a person's knowledge and skills relating to HVAC system hygiene.

Is the individual or the business ASCS certified?

NADCA's certification program certifies individuals, not companies. Certified individuals may use the credential in marketing their own expertise. Certification is not transferable to other individuals.

Any certified individual who changes companies must pay a fee to transfer their ASCS certification. The fee is \$385 if the new company is a NADCA member and \$1,610 if the new company is a non-NADCA member. Individuals have 30 days from their last day of employment to transfer. During the time NADCA is processing the transfer application, the ASCS certification is considered null and void.

Click here for the [ASCS Transfer Form](#).

Who should become NADCA certified?

NADCA recommends at a minimum that an owner, principal, or key employee of a company become a certified an ASCS This individual must be a full-time employee, be directly responsible for project management, and should oversee all air duct cleaning projects. There is no limit to the number of company representatives who can become certified.

How was the ASCS certification examination developed?

The ASCS was developed in accordance with testing procedures created by the National Organization for Competency Assurance, under the close supervision of independent test development experts. These procedures included an industry-wide survey that gauged the frequency and proficiency of various techniques, subject matter areas, and general knowledge that contractors in the industry agreed are important for competent workmanship. [More information about NADCA's history is located here.](#)



Candidates Guide

for

Air Systems Cleaning Specialist (ASCS)

NADCA's landmark certification, the Air Systems Cleaning Specialist (ASCS), was updated in 2012 to more accurately reflect the scope of work in cleaning and restoring HVAC systems in both the residential and commercial marketplace.

An ASCS is qualified to serve as a project manager for residential and commercial HVAC cleaning and restoration projects. Further, while not required, this individual is expected to possess the knowledge, skills and abilities of someone who has been performing this type of work for three years.

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Introduction

NADCA's ASCS certification was developed to recognize those industry professionals involved in the proper cleaning of HVAC systems, which has been very successful over the years. Today, many job specifications require that a certified ASCS be on a project. As is customary with credentialing practices, certification bodies should periodically perform a job analysis to be sure the credential reflects the most current practices in the industry. NADCA performed a job analysis on the ASCS certification to more properly reflect an individual's scope of work in cleaning and restoring HVAC systems. One finding from the ASCS Job Analysis project is that, in today's industry, individuals who clean and restore HVAC systems are often required to address issues related to microbial contamination. This is no longer a separate area of expertise – ASCS holders perform this type of work on a regular basis. As a result, the Ventilation System Mold Remediator (VSMR) certification is being merged into the new ASCS certification.

Examination Description

The examination consists of 150 multiple choice questions. Candidates will have 3 ½ hours to complete the exam. The content of the examination is based on a scientific survey of NADCA members, certificate holders, and industry professionals who engage in the practice of HVAC system inspection, cleaning and restoration. This survey evaluated the relative importance of the knowledge and skills that comprise the practice of performing an HVAC system cleaning project for all building classifications. The content areas tested, and their relative emphasis are provided in the examination content outline listed in this Guide.

Who Is Eligible?

The ASCS Certification Exam is open to the public. There are no pre-requisites and anyone who wishes to obtain the ASCS credential can sit for the exam.

How To Get Certified

1. Candidates will first need to pay an exam fee. Individuals employed by a NADCA Member company will be able to register for the exam at a reduced rate. (Member Rate = \$385 US / Non-Member Rate = \$1610 US*)
2. Candidates will need to take the exam at a proctored facility. This can be done at a Kryterion standardized testing center, or during a NADCA Conference.
3. To become certified, candidates will need to obtain a passing score of 72% or greater on the exam.
4. Should an individual fail the exam, he/she can retake the exam at a reduced rate. (Member Rate = \$260 US / Non-Member Rate = \$910 US)

Is Training Available to Prepare for the ASCS Exam?

The following training courses can help prepare candidates for the updated ASCS Exam:
VMT Online Training Course – Covers the basics of HVAC system cleaning designed for cleaning technicians.

ASCS Training Course – Includes a more comprehensive training on proper HVAC system cleaning techniques.

VSMR Training Course – Provides in-depth training on how to properly remediate mold from HVAC systems.

Candidates are also encouraged to review the list of *Reference Materials* listed in this Guide.

Training Options

Online

The [Ventilation Maintenance Technician Course](#) is only available online. The course includes 5 training modules (no longer than 30 minutes each) covering the basics of HVAC system cleaning. Individuals who complete all five modules and pass a short quiz at the end of each module will receive a Certificate of Completion for this course. The cost is \$175 US Member rate / \$1500 US Non-member rate.

The [ASCS Online Training Course](#) can be reviewed online at any time. Study materials are downloadable from this online training course. Total run time on the training modules is three (3) hours and participants will have five (5) hours access. The cost is \$395 US Member/ \$595 US Non-member.

NADCA Webinars are offered throughout the year where attendees can review the training live with an instructor at a pre-determined date and time. These training programs are designed to train multiple people at one time at your location, as well as provide direct participation and feedback with the instructor. Visit our [Training Calendar](#) on our website for a schedule of events.

In-Person

NADCA offers in-person training including the ASCS to the ACR Standard and VSMR Bridging Exam Training Courses during the [Annual Meeting](#) or [Technical Conference](#) as Pre-Conference Sessions. Study materials are provided for course attendees. Visit NADCA's website for registration details (www.nadca.com/resources).

Study Materials

Candidates who do not wish to attend a training program, can also purchase study materials and do a self-study. The ASCS Study Materials Manual, VSMR Study Materials and HVAC Inspection Manual are all available for purchase. A Publication Order Form is available at www.nadca.com.

**For non-members who want to get certified, NADCA offers a [membership promotional package](#) which includes the cost for membership, one registration for VMT and ASCS online training programs, and registration for one individual to take the ASCS exam at a testing center at a total cost of \$1650. Visit [NADCA's website](#) for more details.*

Examination Delivery

Kryterion Standardized Testing Centers

The updated ASCS certification exam will be available at standardized testing centers around the globe. Registration can be done online and you can also find available testing locations, dates and times at www.nadcatesting.com. If you go through the motions as if you were purchasing the exam, the information will display before any transactions take place.

NADCA Annual Meeting and Technical Conference

It will also be administered during [NADCA's Annual Meeting](#) and [Technical Conference](#). More details and registration information can be found on NADCA's website: www.nadca.com/resources

How To Renew ASCS Certification

Candidates who successfully pass the exam will hold the designation for 1 year, and will be renewable every July. Candidates will renew by obtaining 6 continuing education credits (CECs) and submitting a renewal fee of \$75 US member/ \$775 US non-member.

Participation in NADCA Training Programs includes the 6 CECs needed for ASCS Renewal:

Regional & Online Training

ASCS Training Course
CVI Training Course
VSMR Training Course
NADCA Annual Meeting
NADCA Technical Conference
ASCS Online Training Course
NADCA Webinar Training

CEC Training Program

Companies can send one representative to NADCA's Annual Meeting to participate in the CEC Training Sessions and bring this training back to their certified personnel. The CEC Training Program provides 6 CECs for each participant. A signed Affidavit and certification renewal fees for each individual are required.

ASCS Online Renewal Quizzes

Certificants can take an online renewal quiz which includes the 6 CECs needed for renewal. The open book quiz consists of 50 multiple choice questions and is available at a cost of \$300 US Member/ \$1225 US Non-member.

A two (2) credit quiz is also available for individuals who only need 2 additional credits for renewal. The cost is \$75 US Member/ \$150 US Non-member.

Industry Related Training

Certificants can obtain up to 4 CECs for participation in industry related training courses. Visit NADCA's website for a [list of qualified programs](#). If a program is not listed, you can submit it for approval with the [CEC Approval Form](#).

Revoked Certifications

When an ASCS expires, the certification is revoked. Individuals will have no longer than one year after their expiration date to reinstate a revoked certification. To reinstate a revoked certification, individuals can take an online renewal quiz for six (6) CECs at www.nadcatesting.com. Certifications which have been revoked for more than one year cannot be reinstated and the individual will need to get recertified.

ASCS Certification Exam

LIST OF REFERENCE MATERIALS

Approved January 25, 2012

Introduction

HVAC inspection, maintenance and restoration professionals are encouraged to invest in and maintain a library of industry reference materials. Following is a list of reference materials used during development of the Air Systems Cleaning Specialist (ASCS) certification exam.

Please note that the items on this list do not address every question on the ASCS exam. There are some questions that a competent professional is expected to learn through real-world, on-the-job experience. These publications and courses are recommended – but not required – for ASCS candidates. Ultimately it is up to the discretion of the candidate to determine what amount of preparation is warranted before taking the exam.

- NADCA – *Assessment, Cleaning & Restoration of HVAC Systems* (ACR 2006)
- NADCA – *HVAC Inspection Manual*
- NADCA – *Introduction to HVAC System Cleaning Services*
- NADCA – *Safety Manual*
- NADCA – Ventilation Maintenance Technician (VMT) Training Course
- NADCA – Air Systems Cleaning Specialist (ASCS) Training Course
- NADCA – Ventilation System Mold Remediator (VSMR) Training Course
- NADCA – Code of Ethics
- IICRC Standard S500 – *Standard and Reference Guide for Professional Water Damage Restoration* (<http://iicrc.org/standards/iicrc-s500/>)
- IICRC Standard S520 – *Standard and Reference Guide for Professional Mold Remediation* (<http://iicrc.org/standards/iicrc-s520/>)
- New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene – *Guidelines on Assessment and Remediation of Fungi in Indoor Environments: Environmental and Occupational Disease Epidemiology* (November 2008)
(<http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/epi/epi-mold-guidelines.pdf>)
- ASHRAE/ACCA/ANSI Standard 180-2008 – *Standard Practice for Inspection and Maintenance of Commercial Building HVAC Systems* (2008)
- NAIMA – *Fibrous Duct Construction Standards*
- NAIMA – *Cleaning Fibrous Glass Insulated Duct Systems*
- NFPA 90A – *Installation of Air-conditioning & Ventilation Systems* (2002)
- SMACNA – *Duct Cleanliness for New Construction Guidelines* (2000)
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency document, “*Should you have the air ducts in your home cleaned?*” (EPA 402-K-97-002, October 1997)
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency document, “*Mold Remediation in Schools and Commercial Buildings*” (http://www.epa.gov/mold/mold_remediation.html)
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency document, “*Mold Resources*”
<http://www.epa.gov/mold/moldresources.html>
- Occupational Safety & Health Administration – *A Brief Guide to Mold in the Workplace* (<http://www.osha.gov/dts/shib/shib101003.html>)
- U.S. Department of Energy – *Federal Energy Management Program (FEMP) Fact Sheet – Actions You Can Take to Reduce Cooling Costs* (May 2005)

Examination Content

The content of the updated ASCS certification exam is organized into seven domains:

Domain	% of Questions
I. Understand the Necessity for Cleaning	5.3%
II. Understand Mechanical Systems	14.7%
III. Perform HVAC System Inspections	12.0%
IV. Understand Contamination	12.0%
V. Understand HVAC Cleaning and Restoration Procedures	42.0%
VI. Protect the Health & Safety of Employees and Building Occupants	6.0%
VII. Understand Standards and Guidelines	8.0%

All exam items are referenced to the exam content outline below.

NADCA ASCS Content Outline

- I. Understand the Necessity for Cleaning
 - A. Demonstrate knowledge of improved indoor air quality
 - B. Demonstrate knowledge of energy savings
 - C. Demonstrate knowledge of increased lifespan of system
 - D. Manage customer expectations

- II. Understand Mechanical Systems
 - A. Demonstrate knowledge of HVAC system design
(Types of systems)
 - B. Demonstrate knowledge of HVAC system components and elements
(Coils, ductwork, etc...)

- III. Perform HVAC System Inspection
 - A. Disclose any conflicts of interest
 - B. Assess the HVAC system condition
 - C. Conduct visual inspections
 - D. Identify problem conditions and plan of action

- IV. Understand Contamination
 - A. Causes of contamination to the HVAC system
 - B. Contamination agents
(Types, sizes)
 - C. Exposure effects

V. Understand HVAC Cleaning and Restoration Procedures

- A. Perform project assessment
- B. Define the scope of work
(Select equipment, products and methods)
- C. Clean and restore the HVAC system
(Access, engineering controls)
- D. Validation

VI. Protect the Health and Safety of Employees and Building Occupants

- A. Adhere to federal regulations and laws
- B. Protect the job site
- C. Understand risk management

VII. Understand Standards and Guidelines

- A. National Air Duct Cleaners Association (NADCA)
- B. Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors' National Association (SMACNA)
- C. North American Insulation Manufacturers Association (NAIMA)
- D. American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers, Inc. (ASHRAE)
- E. The Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification (IICRC)
- F. National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)
- G. Air Conditioning Contractors of America (ACCA)

For Full Content Outline, visit [NADCA's website](#).

Transitioning ASCS Holders Certified before September 20, 2012 to the updated ASCS Certification

ASCS holders certified before September 20, 2012 who also hold the VSMR designation (or equivalent) will be automatically enrolled into the updated ASCS credential.

The following credentials are an acceptable alternative to the VSMR designation in qualifying for the updated ASCS certification. Please note, these credentials must be current to qualify.

1. CMR: Certified Mold Remediator
2. CMRS: Certified Mold Remediator Supervisor
3. CIE: Certified Indoor Environmentalist
4. CIEC: Certified Indoor Environmental Consultant
5. State Mold Remediator Licenses

Current ASCS holders who do not hold VSMR certification (or equivalent), will be required to establish this knowledge and skill set by taking the ASCS Bridging Exam. This will be an online quiz which can be completed by June 2013. The bridging exam will be available at www.nadcatesting.com. It can be used for two (2) Continuing Education Credits for ASCS renewal.



Publications/Materials Order Form

Mail or fax this form with payment to:

NADCA • 15000 Commerce Parkway, Suite C • Mt. Laurel, NJ 08054 • Fax (856-439-0525)

Name/Company

Shipping Address/City/State/Zip/Country

Phone/Email (Required)

	Member Price		List Price		Quantity	Total
	PDF Download/CD	Print Publication	PDF Download/CD	Print Publication		
NADCA Standards, Guidelines & Specifications						
ACR 2006—NADCA's Standard <i>(A free copy is available for download at www.nadca.com)</i>	—	\$25	—	\$25		
General Specifications for the Cleaning of Commercial HVAC Systems <i>(A free copy is available for download at www.nadca.com)</i>	—	\$5	—	\$10		
Introduction to HVAC System Cleaning Services	\$2	\$5	\$8	\$10		
Safety Manual	\$125	\$150	\$310	\$335		
On-the-Job Safety Handbook	—	\$50	—	\$60		
Certification Study Materials						
Air Systems Cleaning Specialist (ASCS) Study Materials <i>(Candidate's Guide, Certification Handbook, ASCS Study Course, Intro to HVAC System Cleaning, ACR 2006 Standard, NADCA Safety Manual & Mold Remediation Study Course)</i>	\$300	\$325	\$575	\$600		
ASCS/VSMR Bridging Exam Study Materials <i>(ACR Standard 2006, Mold Remediation Study Course & References)</i>	\$150	\$175	\$280	\$300		
Certified Ventilation Inspector (CVI) Study Materials <i>(HVAC Inspection Manual, Case Studies & Sample Forms)</i>	\$45	\$70	\$75	\$100		
Instructional CDs/Materials						
Containment Strategies	\$85	—	\$125	—		
HVAC Cleaning & Restoration Resource Library	\$45	—	\$45	—		
Mold Awareness Training	\$85	—	\$125	—		
Other Publications & Items						
DucTales Magazine Subscription (6 issues per year, mailed)	—	\$0	—	\$50		
NADCA Logo Sticker - LARGE (for trucks)	—	\$5	—	—		
NADCA Logo Sticker - SMALL (various uses)	—	\$3	—	—		
NADCA Logo Patch (iron on)	—	\$5	—	—		
Template for Cleanliness Verification (plastic sheet tool)	—	\$4	—	\$5		

PAYMENT METHOD (check one)

CHECK AMEX MASTERCARD VISA

Credit card number: _____ Exp Date: ____/____/____

Cardholder name: _____

Signature: _____

Please enter total amount for items ordered + shipping in box at right. Orders will not be processed without this total calculated.

Shipping/Handling Costs by Country/Location

Regular shipping — United States	\$10
2-Day shipping — United States	\$25
Regular shipping — Canada	\$15
2-Day shipping — Canada	\$35
FedEx International	\$65
TOTAL AMOUNT WITH SHIPPING COSTS	\$