



Achieving NICET Certification is a two-part process: passing the required exam(s) and documenting adequate work history. Passing the exam(s) is undoubtedly the more challenging of the two processes, but providing NICET with sufficient and appropriate work history documentation is the most common reason for certification being denied after the exam(s) has/have been passed.

NICET is transitioning to a completely electronic platform for managing certifications. While NICET currently still accepts mailed exam and work history applications, submissions through the website will be processed faster. Additionally, by setting up an account on NICET's website, scheduling subsequent exams and renewing certifications becomes much easier and simpler.

### Work History Requirements

NICET's work history requirements vary by certification, so NICET's website should be consulted to determine the exact requirements for a specific area of certification. Generally, Level I requires 6 months of work history, Level II requires 2 years, Level III requires 5 years, and Level IV requires 10 years.

NICET's work history calculation is not solely based on work history time. NICET calculates work history for an area of certification based on the percent of work in that area multiplied by the amount of time covered. For example, one year of work in a position that is 50% fire alarm and 50% other low voltage systems would be calculated as 6 months of fire alarm work history.

### Performance Verification

NICET requires a performance verification to be completed by your current supervisor. The form may be completed by requesting NICET email the request to your supervisor,

or by printing and mailing the form on NICET's website. The person who completes the performance verification form should be the same person listed as your current supervisor.

If you are a company owner, your Verifier can be someone who has supervised your work. An AHJ, contractor, or PE that you have worked under are the most common sources. Since your Verifier is your supervisor, it is essential that you do not use a subordinate or a partner in your business as your Verifier. NICET requires that the Verifier be someone who has supervised and approved your work.

Your Verifier must initial each box in the Performance Measures section. An initial is required in each box; NICET does not permit a single initial with a line down or quotation marks. Failure of your Verifier to initial each box could prevent NICET from accepting the verifier form or granting your certification.

### Documenting Work History

NICET wants to see the entire span of your career in your initial documentation of work history. While NICET is primarily concerned with your work history in the area you are seeking certification but will also weight any related work history in their evaluation of your qualifications. NICET does NOT want to review work history in a piecemeal fashion, they require the entire history to be delivered with the initial documentation. Submitting additional work history later to meet work history requirements could be denied by NICET or even result in the suspension of certification.

NICET requires that work history be broken down by employer and/or responsibilities. Each time you change employers or change responsibilities or titles, a new, separate work history form must be completed. For example, working for a single company as a technician, supervisor, and manager would require three different work histories to be completed. Working for a separate company and holding the same three positions would require an additional three work histories (6 total).

Each position will require identification of the employer, title, name of supervisor, city, and state, and level of employment (full or part-time). The information needs to be stated as accurately as you can recall, and fields may not be left blank. The fact that a company is no longer in business, or that a supervisor is no longer in a position is not a concern for NICET. They use this information to evaluate your experience as it relates to your desired area of certification.

Each position also requires identification of a date range in the position (month/year). The dates of experience in all positions should cover your entire career. Any gaps in experience must also be covered with a separate work history form that explains the gap (unemployed, outside the industry, etc.) Gaps in experience use the "Other" S/TA.

Within in position, area of work (Subfield/Technical Area), percentage of the work, and a detailed description of the work must be provided. NICET identifies the area of work as Subfield/Technical Areas, or S/TA's. NICET identifies S/TA's using 2 or 3 letter codes, like FA or Fire Alarm, ITS for sprinkler inspection & testing, or SH for special hazards systems. NICET identifies S/TA's for areas they offer certification in, and areas they do not. In the Electrical and Mechanical System category, which includes fire protection, includes S/TA's for related electrical and mechanical categories.

The percentage of work in each S/TA while in that position must also be identified. The total of all percentages must equal 100%. Working with the percentages is a critical consideration for each position. The percentages listed for each S/TA will be used to calculate the AMOUNT of experience in that area when determining the amount of work experience counted towards the certification requirement. The percentages must be accurate to the best of your recollection, but should also consider the certification being sought, and any future certifications that may be desired. The work history that is submitted becomes part of a NICET permanent record and cannot be changed to suit another certification that is planned for the future.

#### Work History Detailed Description

The detailed description section of the work history documentation is one of the most critical areas of the form. NICET is looking for specific details in this form, and not providing the information NICET is looking for will cause the form to be rejected.

NICET provides an example of the type of information they are seeking on the PDF (mail) form. A sprinkler example is used, but the essential information covered is the same no matter what type of system is being discussed.

In addition to describing the work on these systems, NICET is looking for three specific pieces of information in the detailed description. We call these "TSB." The components of TSB are:

- **TYPES** of system – based on function, not brands or models
- **SIZE** of system – range of number of devices on the systems
- **BUILDING** types – types of buildings the systems were in

For example, when describing fire alarm work, you would describe the TYPES of systems

you worked on (conventional, addressable, voice evac), the SIZE of systems (range of number of smokes, pulls, notification appliances), and TYPES of buildings (schools, factories, offices).

If you were describing sprinkler work, you would describe the TYPES of systems (wet, dry, preaction, deluge), SIZE of systems (range of numbers of risers and heads), and TYPES of buildings (schools, factories, offices).

It is essential to keep the detailed description accurate, concise, and to the point. Ideally, the description is 4-6 lines of information and involves only a single paragraph. Begin with a brief description of the work performed (specific to the position you are describing), then discuss the TSB points.

Each S/TA needs to be described separately. Keep the description of a FA S/TA section to fire alarm work, and SP S/TA section to sprinkler layout work, and an ITS S/TA section to sprinkler inspection and testing work. Completing the details for any S/TA's that NICET offers certification in will save having to clarify the work later should you seek that certification as well. Areas where NICET does not offer certification (like LV (low voltage) and GE (electrical)), do not require this level of detail.

NICET's only concern in the detailed description is the specific work that you did on the systems identified in the S/TA appropriate to the position you held. For example, when discussing a technician position, discuss actual technician work (installation, inspection, testing, and maintenance), rather than discussing design or project management that you did in another position.

Information about brand names and models of equipment are meaningless to NICET, as are certifications and licenses that you hold. This information may obscure the actual work done in a position and could prevent NICET from accepting your work history documentation. As Joe Friday used to say on Dragnet, "Just the facts, ma'am."

### Recommendation

A Personal Recommendation is required for Level III and IV certification. The recommendation must come from someone other than your Verifier (current supervisor), and from someone with a high-level NICET Certification or a degree or certification, like a PE (professional engineer).

Your recommender may come from within your organization or outside of it. The is that your recommender is familiar with your work and willing to recommend you for Level III or IV NICET Certification. Your recommender is not required to have supervisory experience with your work, only familiarity.

## Major Project

A Senior Level Major Project write up is required for Level IV Certification. The major project write up is a concise, detailed 2-3 page written description of your role in a major fire alarm project. While NICET does not define “major,” it should be of reasonably large size and scope based on your experience. The project should be within the last 3 years.

The critical component of the major project write up is your supervisory capacity on the project. NICET wants to read about your supervisory role on the project. Specifically, NICET wants to read about your senior-level technician work, including delegation of responsibilities, interfacing with other trades and stakeholders, and your overall management of the project.

NICET requires the project to be typed. The project must include your name and NICET ID number, and the name and location of the project. The project should consist of a range of supervisory activities and demonstrate your ability to manage a large scale project.

It is critical to remember that the project write is about YOUR work. NICET is not concerned with details about others involved in the project, only about the work that you were involved in.

Details should include:

- Location, type of facility, and purpose (new install, retrofit, etc.)
- Size (square footage, stories, installation time)
- Time period (start/stop dates, level of involvement, time spent on the project)
- Scope (amount of equipment, number of devices, locations, sections)

Supervisory capacity is another crucial aspect of the senior level project write up. NICET wants specific details about the supervisory work performed on the project. Details should include the number of people, tasks performed, and supervisory relationship to the people. NICET also requires information on the range/scope of each supervisory activity. Details about proposal, design, approval, installation, check out, and final acceptance should be included.

## Conditional Decision Letter (CDL)

If NICET finds any aspect of your work history documentation unsatisfactory, they will mail you a Conditional Decision Letter (CDL) explaining the issues they require clarification on. NICET will not grant certification until the issues covered by the CDL are resolved. If you receive a CDL, it is essential to review it and make sure you understand exactly what issues NICET has with your work history documentation so that you can

respond appropriately.

[Check out NICET's instructions for using their online experience submission tool here.](#)

## Upcoming Training Opportunities

FEB 9:00 am - 5:00 pm EST

**17 Fire Alarm Design**

FEB 9:00 am - 5:00 pm EST

**18 Inspection & Testing of Fire Alarm Systems**

FEB 9:00 am - 5:00 pm EST

**19 NICET Water-Based Systems Layout, Level 1**

FEB 9:00 am - 5:00 pm EST

**20 Basic Training: Fire Alarm Systems Installation Program**

FEB 9:00 am - 5:00 pm EST

**21 NICET Water-Based Systems Layout Level II**

[View Calendar](#)

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### About NTC

NTC is the most recognized name in training for the fire protection and low voltage industry. NTC develops and conducts training for NICET Certification, Continuing Education and career development.

**702.648.8899 / M-F from 8 AM to 5 PM Eastern**

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