



A PASSION FOR EXCELLENCE

The complete guide to earning and maintaining the business certification for the snow management industry

Section 1: Meeting Prerequisites

Section 2: Applying for the exam

Section 3: Taking the exam

Section 4: Marketing your certification

Section 5: Maintaining your certification

www.sima.org/GetCSP

Meeting Prerequisites

As the only true certification focused on snow management contractors, part of the way a person earns their CSP is in the experience and education they have accumulated over time. Not just anyone can become certified; there is no replacement for knowledge and time in the trenches.

Before applying for the program, make sure any applicants meet one of the following prerequisite paths:

Eligibility

OPTION 1:

Direct Snow Management Experience

- ☐ In the last 5 years, applicant has 3 or more consecutive winter seasons of direct snow-specific experience in the industry as an owner, co-owner, or CEO OR
- ☐ In the last 5 years, applicant has 5 or more consecutive winter seasons of direct snow-specific experience as a supervisor/manager*

(Supervisor/manager is defined as an individual who manages and is accountable for at least one of the following: billing/accounting, operations management, legal/insurance/subcontractors, sales/marketing/account management, or facilities/property management)

OPTION 2:

Snow-Specific Training, Experience, and Education

- ☐ Snow-Specific training, experience, and education – applicant must have/submit the following with application:
 - **Employment.** At least 2 consecutive winter seasons as a supervisor/manager in any industry-affiliated organization.
 - **Education credits.** 15 hours of SIMA-approved, snow-specific education credits within a 2 year period prior to application.
 - **Post-secondary education degree OR relevant certification.** Associate's, Bachelor's or Master's, or technical degree in any field.

Applicants must submit transcripts or a copy of degree earned. Maintaining a relevant industry certification for 3 or more years can also satisfy this requirement. Applicants must submit a document outlining the certification program.

Once you are certain you meet the prerequisites, you can continue to the application process.

Applying & Preparing for the Exam

Submitting your application

Applying for the CSP program can be started online at www.sima.org/store, where you can purchase an application and the study materials. However, we do recommend that you consult with a SIMA staff member first, especially if you are considering having more than one individual certified from your company - we can help streamline the process. Contact Chris Dix, Chris@sima.org, to kick off this process!

The application process is broken down into 4 easy steps:

STEP 1: Ensure you meet one of the eligibility options in Section 1.

STEP 2: Pay the application fee, which is \$450 for SIMA members and \$500 for non-members.

STEP 3: Upon submitting payment, you will be emailed a link to complete the online CSP application.

STEP 4: Once the application process is completed, you will receive an email with a link to sign up for an exam date.

Preparing for the exam

The CSP program makes it easy to prepare for the exam. We offer a robust training book, *Mastering Commercial Snow & Ice: A Complete Guide to Running a Successful Snow Business*, to help you prepare and study at your own pace. In addition to your own experience and knowledge, our study guide covers the various topics needed to successfully complete the exam.

We do not recommend taking the exam cold turkey - the breadth of knowledge required to show mastery and attain the CSP is too detailed, and you will likely fail the exam. Plan several weeks or months at a minimum to read the materials, quiz yourself, and get focused.

Once your application is submitted and approved, you will receive an email with a link to schedule your exam. Exams are offered once per month online via SIMA's training center.



Taking the Exam

Scheduling and taking the exam

The CSP exam is not for the faint of heart, but with study and focus, it is definitely something that is within your reach. Basic steps in the exam process are:

- ☐ **Schedule the exam:** Fill out the exam sign up form and choose an upcoming date. We'll get you set and send you reminders leading up to the exam.
- ☐ **Access the exam:** On the day of the exam, login with your SIMA username/password at the SIMA training center. You will have 2 days (10am EST the first day through 4pm EST the second day) to finish the exam.
- ☐ **Get your results:** At the end of the exam time, access will be revoked. You will receive an official results email from SIMA within 1-2 days.

How the exam works

The exam is divided into six sections with a separate exam for each. Each section has 20-40 questions, with a total of 200 questions across all six. You must earn a 70% in each section to pass. You can complete the sections in any order over the two days available. We recommend completing each section in one sitting, since if you log out or leave your computer idle, questions answered may not be saved.

You will have two chances during the exam timeframe to earn a passing score on each section. If you do not pass a section after your allotted two tries, you will have to retake it during a future exam date at no additional charge. You will only have to retake the sections you did not pass, not the entire exam. Additional information and next steps will be sent in an email from SIMA upon completion of the exam.

Questions on the exam are multiple choice and true/false - there are no essays or open-ended questions. The questions are written so that an individual shows they can synthesize the information from experience and study materials. Preparation and understanding are the keys to success.

Due to exam security and best practices, exam questions answered incorrectly are not given at any time in the process.

Marketing Your Achievement

Get the word out

Once you have successfully passed the exam and demonstrated mastery of the materials, you will be officially certified by SIMA as a Certified Snow Professional. We will provide you with a comprehensive marketing kit, located in the same training platform where you took the exam, so that you can leverage your achievement and use it to your advantage.

The marketing kit includes:

- CSP marketing checklist
- Press release you can customize to announce to your market and key stakeholders
- Digital marketing images and badges to share on social media
- The CSP logo and brand use documentation
- 2 print brochure items to have printed and included in your proposals

CSP benefits:

Along with the marketing materials provided, CSPs also receive the following benefits:

- SIMA member companies will be listed as 'Credentialed Staff' in the SIMA Snow Contractor Directory online at www.sima.org.
- Official certification certificate from SIMA.
- Occasional special offers on new products and services and VIP invites to certain industry events and research projects.



Maintaining Your Certification

Overview

Achieving certification is a huge accomplishment, and an investment of your time and resources. However, a good certification program is defined by the long-term commitment of certified professionals to continued professional development and education. This is where our continuing education requirements and an annual renewal come into play.

Each year you will be asked to provide the following to ensure your certification is in good standing:

- 15 Continuing Education Credits highlighting education and other experiences.

Note: Credit requirements will begin in the year after your certification is earned.

- An annual renewal fee of \$130, billed each fall.

There are many ways to earn credits

The idea of earning 15 credits each year can be overwhelming, but it's typically much easier than you think and can be done in many ways!

EVENT / CREDIT TYPE	NUMBER OF CREDITS EARNED
Attending the full annual Snow & Ice Symposium. <i>Note: 1 day Symposium passes are worth 7 credits, and trade show only passes are worth 3 credits.</i>	15 credits per year
Volunteering on a SIMA committee or Board of Directors.	5 credits per year
Mentoring new SIMA members via a formal mentoring program administered through the SIMA office.	5 credits per year
Attending any Certification Committee approved trade show.	3 credits per event attended
Speaking or putting on a formal educational session for organizations outside the current employer of the CSP in order to educate others about the industry.	2 credits per hour of instruction
Speaking or putting on a formal education session for your current employer on safety, business, or other snow-related training in order to educate others about the industry.	2 credits per year
Authoring and having published a snow industry-related article, white paper, or blog through an organization outside the current employer of the CSP.	2 credits per item published
Attending any business or industry-related educational function conducted by a person or entity outside of the current employer of CSP. Education must be focused on topics/elements that can be applied to snow and ice management (general business, leadership, sales, technology, snow operations, etc.). Education related to other industries specifically (i.e. Landscape Design Build 101) do not apply if they are specific to a function not related to the operations, management, or leadership of a snow organization.	1 credit per hour of instruction
Participation in training via a professional consultant/coach outside of the current employer of CSP. Consulting/coaching must be focused on topics that can be applied to snow and ice management (general business, leadership, sales, technology, snow operations, etc.). Consulting/coaching related to other industries specifically (i.e. Landscape Design Build 101) do not apply if they are specific to a function not related to the operations, management, or leadership of a snow organization.	Up to 10 credits per year (1 credit per hour of training)
Volunteering at the annual Snow & Ice Symposium.	1 credit per year

Our commitment to members

For use toward ASM or CSP training, the \$200 Annual Training Commitment is available each year you renew - use it yourself or award it to an individual employee. Request it now or we can add it to your Team Plan!



Build a Team Plan and Save

Save money when training more than one person and SIMA will handle account management and setup for your team. We can even help you designate a training champion and set completion goals, including reminders to team members and more.

Save between 10-30% on the program by creating a custom training plan with us. Other training options can also be added, including Certified Snow Professional (CSP).

Need more info?

Contact SIMA Membership & Development Manager Chris Dix at Chris@sima.org - he can help answer any questions and get you and your team started on the path toward CSP!