

2022 Consumer Product Safety Professional Certification Program Details, Criteria for Admission, Scope, and Program Schedule



**Offered by Society of Product Safety Professionals
In cooperation with
ADK Information Services, LLC**

Table of Contents

- I. Introduction & Background-p. 2**
- II. Program Objectives-p. 3**
- III. Eligibility Requirements-p. 4**
- IV. Scope of Program: The Five Areas of Knowledge-p. 5**
- V. Certification Program Schedule-p. 8**
- VI. Program Certification Credentials-p. 11**
- VII. Program Registration & Application Instructions-p. 11**

I. Introduction & Background

The Consumer Product Safety Professional Certification Program is the outgrowth of decisions made in 2016&2017 by a group of professionals who wanted expanded education opportunities in the product safety field, as well as develop a path for professional growth and leadership. This led to the creation of two new organizations that paved the way for achieving these purposes: The Society of Product Safety Professionals (SPSP) and Consumer Product Safety Certification Services (CPSCS).

SPSP initiated development of the program by forming a task force comprised of product safety professionals, including individuals working for consumer product companies, along with professionals who provide outside consulting expertise to such companies. The task force worked throughout 2017 to identify areas of knowledge required of well-rounded consumer product safety professionals. They synthesized them into five key areas of knowledge that serve as the foundation the Consumer Product Safety Professional Certification program.

The focus of CPSCS's efforts was the establishment of a formal program that would provide a certification earned by individuals who had demonstrated mastery over the areas of knowledge required of professionals working in the consumer product safety field. The leaders of SPSP and CPSCS determined in 2021 that they would develop their program in cooperation with ADK Information Services, LLC, which had a 12-year history of developing product safety education management courses at the university level, including the development of certification programs.

The five knowledge areas that were defined by the SPSP special task force as essential for effective management of a company's product safety and compliance programs are as follows:

- 1. **Culture** and its relationship to product safety in a consumer product company, related government agencies, and related outside service providers*
- 2. **Product Safety Assurance**, including areas of risk assessment, risk tolerance, and technical issues associated with the design, manufacturing, and distribution of consumer products*
- 3. **Regulatory Compliance**, primarily, but not exclusively, within the U.S. marketplace*
- 4. **Incident Management** and the development of consumer database reports and information about incidents involving injuries and/or deaths associated with products offered by a company*

5. *Product Recall and Withdrawal*, including notification, reporting, and management

These areas are discussed in greater detail in *Section IV—Scope of Program: The Five Areas of Knowledge* (page 4).

As a result of the task force’s work, the program focuses on the elements of a product safety culture within companies, both large and small, and delves into topics essential to managing a product safety-oriented organization, some of which include:

- Knowledge of a broad range of product safety issues
- Creating a risk assessment system reflective of the company’s commitment to customer safety
- Establishing priorities for appropriate action and approval by senior leadership
- Designing a product safety program that addresses corrective actions and withdrawal of products where appropriate

Upon successful completion of the academic program, which includes a multi-faceted examination process, SPSP awards the Certified Product Safety Professional designation “Certified Product Safety Professional™. This recognition elevates the stature of the professional accomplishments of the individual.

II. Program Objectives

This program is designed to accomplish the following objectives:

1. Offer a rigorous program that expands the candidate’s knowledge and provides information about the key components of a product safety system.
2. Provide product safety professionals with the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the design and management of a product safety system. This certification program assesses candidates’ knowledge and understanding through a multiple-choice examination, an essay component, and a case study project.
3. Recognize the accomplishments of product safety professionals based on academic competency and prior experience in fulfilling the responsibilities associated with designing and managing product safety systems.
4. Through classroom activities and webinars on specific knowledge areas of product safety management, provides a meaningful education experience that will be recognized by peers, employers, and the product safety community as validating the designation of *Certified Product Safety Professional*.

III. Eligibility Requirements

The Consumer Product Safety Professional Certification program is open to professionals in several categories, as listed below, with all candidates required to meet the following criteria:

- Possess at least 10 years of product safety work experience or 7 years of experience accompanied by a related bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university.
- Hold a position considered professional in nature. This includes the recognition that the individual is managing responsibilities related to product safety at a meaningful level.
- Devote a minimum of 50% of a part- or full- time job to product safety-related responsibilities that are associated with the design and management of the various components of a product safety system. This is determined by evaluating the candidate's degree of authority and their employer's reliance on their ability to defend analytical approaches used in professional practice. This also encompasses their recommending how to control hazards through engineering and/or administrative approaches.
- Have breadth of professional safety duties. This is determined by evaluating the variety of hazards or events about which the candidate must advise, and the range of skills involved in recognizing, evaluating, and controlling hazards. Examples of skill areas include analysis, synthesis, design, investigation, planning, administration, and communication.

Consumer Product Safety Professional in Industry

Individuals employed by companies that develop, manufacture, and market consumer products, or that are responsible for importing consumer products into the United States are eligible for consideration. In this capacity the position's primary responsibility must be the prevention of product-related harm to people and related property. Such individuals must have at least 10 years of experience as a product safety professional within a consumer product company or 7 years of such experience, accompanied by a related bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university. Such experience may involve the blending of employment periods between consumer product companies or advising such companies within the professional's field of competencies.

Consultants and Service Providers

Another eligible category includes individuals with special areas of expertise who are called upon as consultants or service providers to assist manufacturers, retailers, or importers in the implementation of their product safety programs. This would include, but not be limited to engineers, attorneys, laboratory experts, technical specialists including chemistry, toxicology, medical, and human factors, and business process specialists in such areas as product recalls or supply chain management. Such individuals must meet the background requirement for entry into the certification program, namely at least 10 years of experience as a product safety consultant to consumer product companies, or 7 years of such experience accompanied by a related bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university. Such experience may involve the blending of

employment periods between consumer product companies or advising such companies within the professional's field of competencies.

Government Employees

State or federal employees, whose job function is specifically focused on consumer product safety may also apply. Such individuals must be employed in this capacity at least half time, and have specific knowledge associated with the management of one or more of the components of a product safety system that is appropriate to the position they hold. Such individuals must have at least 10 years of experience as a state or federal employee or 10 years of experience in a state or federal position combined with experience as a product safety professional in a company. Individuals would also be eligible with 7 years of such combined state or federal experience and experience as a product safety professional within a company accompanied by a related bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university. Such experience may involve the blending of employment periods between government service and consumer product companies or advising such companies within the professional's field of competencies.

Non-Profit Organization Employees and Volunteers

Also eligible are employees or volunteers of NGO's (or similar organizations) whose job focus is at least 50% on consumer product safety and have specific knowledge associated with the management of one or more of the five key knowledge areas of a product safety system.

IV. Scope of Program: The Five Areas of Knowledge

The program content and focus are on the following five areas of knowledge:

1. Corporate Culture of Product Safety

- ▶ Corporate Product Safety Policy: policy development, communication to all corporate stakeholders, advocates for support of senior management.
- ▶ Advice to leadership: safety-related fact-based assessments, advocacy and recommendation of actions and plans for corrective actions regarding product designs, production alterations, including products in the field; communicates to the organization the need to reduce or eliminate foreseeable safety risks; drives safety risk issues to the corporate risk leadership and corporate officers; works with appropriate company officials and legal counsel to determine whether to report incidents to a regulator when warranted under applicable statutes and/or internal safety policies.
- ▶ Ethical conduct: Participates in and advocates for developing a product safety mission for the company, including provisions for conduct and ethical behavior; elevation of consumer safety to a heightened prominence in corporate decision making; quality of training of

product safety personnel, and promotes building respect within and outside of the company for its commitment to product safety

2. Consumer Product Safety Assurance

Successful candidates will have a general understanding of basic elements of a broad consumer product safety assurance system. They will master these elements to the extent necessary to act and/or engage appropriate external and internal resources for action.

- ▶ **Product hazard assessment:** including assessment of product information, market data, relevant published literature, incident claims, litigation, on-line product reviews, and other sources of field data for potential risks of hazards; promotes policies and procedures ensuring that product safety is considered in all relevant corporate processes such as product design (including foreseeable consumer behavior), manufacturing, customer service, customer support, marketing, field service, etc. as it relates to product hazards; assessment of processes, test methods, and standards to validate final product risk; assessment of marketing materials and product instructions for safe use of products.

- ▶ **Anticipation, identification, and evaluation of potential risks in new products,** including participation in design and development processes, continuous improvement through evaluation of existing designs with product design team; ensure that product designs integrate consumer use behavior—including foreseeable misuse—into final product decisions; collaboration with product managers, development teams, customers, retailers, dealers, distributors, and service companies on product safety issues; integration of safety analytical tools such as Design Failure Mode and Effects analysis (DFMEA) and Process Failure Mode and Effects Analysis (PFMEA), criticality analysis, fault trees; risk sensing analytics and others into the product development process to predict and reasonably minimize safety risks to consumers and others.

- ▶ **Third-party certifier management:** including coordination of testing to validate product compliance with mandatory and voluntary standards; management and maintenance of Good Laboratory Practices of qualified laboratories for self-certifications where appropriate.

3. Regulatory Compliance

Successful candidates will have a general understanding of the basic elements in a product safety and regulatory compliance system. They will master these elements to the extent necessary to act and/or engage appropriate external and internal resources for action.

- ▶ Encompasses a knowledge of rules, regulations, standards, bans, and restrictions applicable to a company's products; use of information sources to stay up-to-date on standards and regulations with continuous efforts to research and learn about new information related to their organization's industry; communicates a company's overall safety vision and requirements internally and across the supply chain.
- ▶ Cognizant of regulations and requirements in all applicable markets while noting that the overall program's focus is primarily on the United States market at the federal, state, and local levels; leverages industry associations to keep abreast of changing laws, regulations and standards and comments on them when appropriate; maintains awareness of standards development panels, committees, industry groups, task forces, etc.; participates in standards development activities.

4. Incident Management

Successful candidates will have a general understanding of basic elements in an incident management program. They will master these elements to the extent necessary to act and/or engage appropriate external and internal resources for action.

- ▶ Ensures a comprehensive corporate system through which all product safety-related complaints, incidents, injuries, lawsuits, liability claims, warranty claims, etc. are compiled in a data management system.
- ▶ Manages and maintains a system to investigate, evaluate, and, when appropriate, act on safety-related incidents, including a system that escalates potential or actual product safety incidents for reporting, recalling, and other corrective actions such as product re-designs and production changes
- ▶ Monitors field complaints received by phone, email, mail, warranty cards and other claims, legal actions, on-line and social media complaints that may indicate safety-related product issues, including a working knowledge of consumer safety information sources such as the Consumer Product Safety Commission's (CPSC) SaferProducts.gov website, CPSC's NEISS (National Electronic Injury Surveillance System), and relevant information from regulatory agencies; reviews product recalls of products similar to those manufactured/sold by the company.
- ▶

- ▶ Manages resources to forensically determine root causes of failures; evaluates the effectiveness of corrective actions and maintains all records necessary for product safety actions and for corrective actions both internally and externally.

5. Product Recall Actions and Withdrawal Systems

Successful candidates will have a general understanding of basic elements in a product corrective action and withdrawal system. They will master these elements to the extent necessary to act and/or engage appropriate external and internal resources for action.

- ▶ Corrective actions and withdrawal of products, including communication and coordination of product sales and shipping-holds; reverse logistics; recalls and other corrective actions including safety notices, corrective action preparation and coordination with the appropriate regulatory agency and company personnel.
- ▶ Consumer communications and remunerations, including notification of a product hazard, defect or failure; the system for return, repair, replacement, or repurchase as well as disposal plans, modification of future production to eliminate the identified risk that led to recall or corrective action,
- ▶ Designs, develops, and maintains systems to control affected inventory and compensation/incentives to encourage the appropriate corrective action and widespread withdrawal participation.
- ▶ Monitors and reports corrective actions activity as required by law; manages effective corrective actions; maintain all records for product destruction, returned inventories, repaired or refurbished products, etc.
- ▶ Communicates lessons learned and conducts post-mortem on all product safety corrective actions and withdrawals with a broad team from across the company, as well as external suppliers.

V. Certification Program Schedule

The program is segmented into three parts: 1) a two-day opening workshop which brings the cohort together in-person or in a virtual setting of video conference classrooms depending on factors including health and safety conditions; 2) a webinar series that extends for 10-12 weeks where students convene remotely; and 3) a closing workshop where students reconvene on-site or in a virtual classroom setting to participate in a multi-faceted examination process.

Opening Workshop

June 1 & 2, 2022

Setting in a virtual classroom

via Zoom video conference

The Culture of Product Safety will consist of a two-day workshop laying the foundation for designing and managing a proactive as well as compliant product safety system that places the safety of the consumer at a high level of an organization's values structure. The workshop will focus on the development of a safety-oriented policy, advocacy for product safety, managing communication to all stakeholders, and description of how the organization will ensure safer products through user-behavior-focused designs, product development, production, and adherence to safety goals throughout the supply chain. The candidates will examine each element of a typical compliance plan, including critical stages of new product development, risk assessment and hazard analysis, regulatory compliance and conformity to standards, production, including testing and certification, distribution eventually reaching consumers. Consumer-related elements include knowledge of consumer expectations, as well as the design and management of an ongoing corrective-action system, including product recalls and corrective design changes.

Webinar Series

June 8 – August 10,

Weekly/bi-weekly webinars will focus on specific product safety topics that align to the five areas of knowledge that are the content of the program.

1. Hazard Analysis and Risk Assessment (4 one-hour segments):

Includes general knowledge relating to assessment of product information, market data, claims, and other sources; human interaction with a product, including foreseeable use and misuse behaviors; assessment of test methods and standards to validate risk; integrate safety analysis tools such as Design Failure Mode and Effects Analysis (DFMEA) and Process Failure Mode and Effects Analysis (PFMEA), fault tree; third-party certifier management; validation of product compliance with mandatory and voluntary standards; and appropriate certification of lab and lab practices

2. Product Compliance—laws, regulations, and standards (4 one-hour segments):

Includes general knowledge relating to developing a system for tracking new or expanded governmental requirements, ensuring communication throughout the company's compliance chain; a planned system for using industry associations, standards information, and conferences as a tool for staying current with changing

rules, and advocating company positions; maintain awareness of standards development panels, committees, and other venues for promoting awareness and understanding. This includes one module on international consumer product regulatory management.

3. Incident Management Programs (2 one-hour segments):

Includes general knowledge relating to a company system through which all product safety-related complaints, incidents, injuries, lawsuits, liability claims, warranty claims are compiled in a central data system; manages and maintain a system to investigate, evaluate, and if appropriate, act on safety related incidents; manage a system that escalates potential or actual product safety incidents for reporting, recall, or other actions.

4. Product Corrective actions, and withdrawal systems (2 one-hour segments);

Includes general knowledge relating to the design, development, and maintenance of a system to control affected inventory reverse logistics; includes plans for consumer or distributor compensation/incentives to encourage participation; monitors and reports corrective actions as required by law; manage effectiveness and fraud-free corrective actions; maintenance of all records for product destruction, returned inventories, repaired or refurbished products; evaluation of product safety corrective actions and communicates the selected corrective actions throughout the company supply chain and senior management.

Closing Workshop

August 30 and 31, 2022

Virtual classroom in Zoom video conference format

Participants finish out the program by sitting for the certification examination, which is comprised in part of both multiple-choice and essay questions. Candidates are required to pass the exam, as it demonstrates their knowledge of specific details associated with each of the knowledge areas. All the questions included in this examination are addressed by the course through in-person and online course activities. In addition, candidates are called upon to demonstrate three skills that are essential in effective management: analytical ability, good judgement, and the ability to communicate effectively, which are identified through the essay component of the certification examination.

Finally, during the closing workshop, participants also present their Capstone Project. This consists of a case study they design and develop that reflects a candidate's understanding of the different elements in a product safety system by describing the solution to a situation or opportunity in the product safety area. The case study will be presented to a panel of experts who will meet individually with each candidate during the closing 2-day workshop in a virtual setting for each panel.

VI. Program Certification Credentials

Upon successful completion of the certification examination and capstone project, the Society of Product Safety Professionals (SPSP) will award candidates the “Certified Product Safety Professional” designation pin and a Certificate attesting to their successful completion of the Consumer Product Safety Professional Certification Program. Successful candidates will be officially allowed to use the letters “CPSP” following their full name for as long as the certification remains valid. They will be listed on the SPSP website as a “certified professional” in good standing having successfully completed the certification program (including any required examinations) offered by SPSP in collaboration with CPSCS.

Those candidates who successfully complete the course and pass the examination will receive a Certificate from SPSP with this or similar wording: *"This candidate has met the required experience criteria and successfully completed the SPSP Consumer Product Safety Professional Certification Program, demonstrating an understanding of the knowledge required to contribute to the design and management of a proactive and compliant product safety system within a company."*

A. If a candidate completes the required course work but does not sit for or does not pass the exam, he or she is entitled to receive a “certificate of completion” designating that he or she has completed the course work, but is not entitled to use the wording noted in the above paragraph and is not entitled to use the designation of “Certified Product Safety Professional (CPSP)” in any manner.

B. Certification Maintenance will be required every five years and will be based in part on tutorial requirements developed through SPSP and CPSCS, along with associations and organizations that provide members with product safety-related programs, and other forms of support of professionals in the field of consumer product safety. A description Certification Maintenance Program and associated fees is available at www.productsafetyprofessionals.org.

VII. Program Registration

Program Tuition

The tuition for the course and the examination is \$3,500. For members of the 2022 class, there will be a \$300 discount for those holding a current paid membership in the Society of Product Safety Professionals. This will bring the net tuition for members of this class to \$3,200. These discounts cannot be applied to future classes until such time as so specified by the sponsoring organizations. In addition, there is a \$175 admissions application fee to cover expenses associated with verification of employment background and education transcripts where appropriate.

Registration Period:

Program registration for the 2022 course will be open from January 30 until the closing date to be announced. Applicants will be informed of their status no later than May 25, as determined by the program’s Admissions Committee.

Candidates may be asked to clarify certain information on their application form, as determined by the Admission Committee.

Education Requirement

Applicants who are applying under the applicable educational program option must have copies of their transcripts sent directly from the educational institution to the Society of Product Safety Professionals, Attn: SPSP Certification Program 4579 Laclede Ave. #326 St. Louis, MO 63108. International transcripts may be evaluated by the program Admissions Committee or a designated Third-party validator for acceptability. The program Admissions Committee will review the education documents submitted on behalf of an applicant and make a final decision based on their compliance with the education requirement.

Eligibility Appeal

Candidates who are declined admittance to the program by the Admissions Committee may appeal that determination by applying to the Consumer Product Safety Certification Services, which will have the final determination. Denial of admittance to a candidate does not preclude reconsideration of their application once identified deficiencies are satisfactorily addressed. Denial for a specific program year may be made based on available space in the program or other considerations unrelated to the candidate's qualifications, but such determinations does not preclude acceptance in subsequent program years.

Application Instructions

Individuals seeking admittance to the program must fill out an application following the instructions provided. A complete application requires candidates to provide:

- Contact information
- History of employment, including specified information
- A qualifying education credential where appropriate
- Two letters of reference: One reference from a direct supervisor of the candidate working for a manufacturer, retailer, importer, distributor, or other relevant organization and who has worked with the candidate within the past 5 years, and one reference from a colleague qualified to discuss the candidate's character, professionalism, and commitment to product safety.
- Application agreement and validation, acknowledging truthful information has been provided
- Payment of Application fee (\$175)
- Signed copy of application
- Release form allowing access to transcripts and relieving ADK Information Services, Society of Product Safety Professionals, Consumer Product Safety Certification Services, and their officers, directors, and employees of liability for non-admittance or any consequential damages.

Do not send resumes, professional papers, continuing education course certificates, or any other items that are not specifically requested. After you submit your application, SPSP, CPSCS, or ADK or its agents may contact you with additional questions once your application review has been completed.

The application fee is nonrefundable and nontransferable. The fee covers the administrative

expense of processing your application, including employment verification by an independent Third-party verifier. Payment of the application fee is required in order to formally initiate the application process. If all application requirements have not been met within one year of the application submission date, the application will expire and the application fee forfeited.

For further information, contact Society of Product Safety Professionals, Attn: Certification Program Coordinator, 4579 Laclede Ave. #326 St. Louis, MO 63108, or info@productsafetyprofessionals.org. Or by phone: 314-497-1797.

Approved by the SPSP and CPSCS Boards of Directors as of January 31, 2022.