

FORTIFIED
Home™
Evaluator
Certification
Handbook



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This document was developed and is maintained by Architectural Testing, Inc. as one of the reference documents for the FORTIFIED Home™ Evaluator Training Program which is sponsored by The Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety (IBHS) and administered by Architectural Testing, Inc. Use of this document outside of the certification program is strictly prohibited.

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A program of the Insurance
Institute for Business & Home Safety

Important Information about the IBHS FORTIFIED Home™ Certified Evaluator Training Program

This handbook is provided to supply you with the information and registration requirements of the IBHS FORTIFIED Home™ Certified Evaluator Training program for evaluators, non-evaluators, and trainers.

Inside you will find an overview of the training program, what to expect when you attend, and important information about eligibility and registration.

After you are registered, you will receive a training manual that was developed as an inspection and evaluation training guide for the FORTIFIED Home™ Certified Evaluators Training program. The training manual will provide the information needed for your training, and prepare you for the certification examination at the end of the course. The manual is also meant to be a reference tool for all evaluators.

This comprehensive Program is administered by
Architectural Testing, Inc.



FORTIFIED Home™

FORTIFIED Home™ is a set of resilience requirements designed to improve the performance of new and existing homes during weather events, such as hurricanes and storms producing high winds and hail.

Program Objectives

- Ensure that essential inspection and documentation services are provided to home builders and homeowners seeking to make residential structures stronger, safer, and more durable in the face of specific natural hazards.
- Reduce risks facing property owners by making new and existing homes more resistant to damage from hurricanes, tropical storms, hailstorms, high winds and wind-driven rain associated with thunderstorms.
- Make best-practice engineering and building standards available to anyone seeking to strengthen new and existing single-family, detached homes installed on permanent foundations.
- Give design and construction professionals who want to provide resilient homes to their customers guidance on best practices in different geographic areas.
- Show recognizable benefits to the building industry, insurance industry, code jurisdictions, consumers, and other interested parties.
- Provide a uniform, voluntary, superior set of standards to upgrade a home and help improve its resilience by adding system-specific upgrades to minimum code requirements.

Evaluator Training Objectives

- Identify and recruit qualified professionals to provide high-quality verification services.

- Provide an introduction to wind-resistant design and construction principles through the completion of self-paced pre-work assignments to prepare for instructor-led instruction.
- Provide high-quality learning materials and instructor-led training.
- Enable candidates to demonstrate that they have learned and retained the knowledge to properly report current construction conditions and verify compliance in accordance with FORTIFIED Home™ standards by passing a comprehensive examination.

What Does the Training Offer?

FORTIFIED Home™ is recognized as the most comprehensive standard for residential structure resilience. FORTIFIED Home™ designations are only available for homes that meet these rigorous standards and are verified by certified FORTIFIED evaluators.

The FORTIFIED Home™ Certified Evaluator Training Program provides evaluator training and certification to ensure that FORTIFIED Home™ designations are consistent, accurate, and technically rigorous throughout the country. The course covers the protocol for performing evaluations, and it is intended to ensure the consistency of compliance verification activities conducted nationwide.

There are two types of training and certification available: FORTIFIED Home™ Trainer and FORTIFIED Home™ Evaluator. A Trainer's certification is based upon relevant work experience, demonstration of training ability, and passing a written examination. An Evaluator's certification is based on inspection, design, or construction experience, and passing the examinations for the self-paced, orientation module (approximately 2-hours of study time) and a 1-day, instructor-led, in-person class. Evaluator training is available to those individuals seeking certification, as well as to

those individuals who wish to attend to increase their own knowledge of the program. Individuals who do not wish to be certified may register as a Non-Evaluator Participant.

FORTIFIED Home™ Certified Trainers and Certified Evaluators are certified by the Administrator after completing the comprehensive training program, passing the certification exam, and meeting rigorous professional requirements. Trainer and evaluator candidates are required to meet the minimum experience criteria for performing home inspections, residential construction design services, or residential contractor services prior to participation in the training. Individuals who do not meet the minimum residential design, construction, and/or home inspection experience requirements for certification may participate as Non-Evaluator participants.

Qualified applicants for both the trainer certification and the evaluator certification must be proficient in the following computer skills:

1. Proficiency in Microsoft Office 2003 or newer version, and a working knowledge of Word and Excel.
2. Ability to scan and e-mail a copy of a signed form.
3. Capable of sending a photo attachment using email.
4. The ability to navigate the Internet using common browsers.

All trainer candidates and evaluator candidates who wish to be certified through the FORTIFIED Home™ Certified Evaluator Training program must take the final examination.

Certified Evaluators are qualified to perform FORTIFIED Home verification services to property owners.

Certified Trainers are eligible to conduct training classes for evaluator candidates by registering the class and evaluator candidates with the Administrator.

Certified Evaluator Training

Registered attendees may be evaluator certification candidates or non-evaluator participants. Certification candidates who have demonstrated the knowledge to provide evaluation, re-inspection, and re-designation inspection services as determined by the Program Administrator are certified through the program.

Evaluator Certification Candidate

How Do I Participate?

Evaluator candidates are individuals who are active in design, construction, and/or inspection within three years of their application date, are seeking certification through this program, and wish to take the FORTIFIED Home™ Certified Evaluator Examination. Certification candidates must meet one of the following requirements:

1. Three or more years of verifiable experience as a home inspector (with a minimum of 250 home inspections). Qualifying experience includes recognition as an ICC-certified residential inspector, or a certified, licensed, or registered home inspector. The Candidate may also be a member of ASHI, InterNACHI, or NAHI.
2. Five years of design, construction and/or inspection experience in the residential construction industry as a registered, certified, or licensed engineer or architect, or as a licensed building code official or building contractor.
3. A combination of post-secondary education and experience totaling a minimum of five years, three of which must be working as a residential or general contractor in a supervisory capacity (team leader, project manager or supervisor.)

Certified evaluators who perform inspections must submit proof of insurance coverage as listed in the checklist at the back of the handbook prior to receiving evaluator credentials.

Training

Evaluator certification candidates must complete a self-paced orientation module and attend the entire one-day, instructor-led, in-person class in order to take the evaluator examination, which is open-book, and given at the end of the training.

How Do I Register?

Evaluator candidates must fill-out and submit the registration form, along with payment and the registration materials listed at the back of this handbook to the Program Administrator in order to register to take the self-paced orientation module and attend an in-person, instructor-led training class. The orientation module and in-person class will have separate registration fees. Initial registration includes the fee for the orientation module only.

Self-Paced Orientation Module

This first level of training covers significant issues relating to the specific peril for which training is desired. A thorough understanding of this material is required in order to lay a foundation for the classroom material and concepts. The training manual provided to you by the Administrator when you register contains sections relating to the orientation material, and must be read and used to answer a set of on-line review questions. A score of 92% is required in order to be eligible for the in-person class training. Upon completion of the orientation module and passing the review, the Administrator will send you proof of completion, as well as information about the in-person classes, and directions for registering to attend the in-person class of your choice.

In-Person Class

After passing the orientation module, individuals wishing to participate in a FORTIFIED Home™ Evaluator training class sponsored by a FORTIFIED Home™ Certified Trainer must fill-out

and submit the registration form sent by the Administrator upon completion of the orientation module, along with payment and proof of passing the orientation module to the class sponsor or to the Administrator in order to register for a class.

The in-person training is a one-day, instructor-led class that covers the information that an evaluator must understand in order to perform FORTIFIED Home™ evaluations, re-inspections, and re-designation audits. The comprehensive one-day training is followed by administration of the final evaluator examination.

Examination Information

Taking the Final Examination

Certification candidates will take the open-book examination at the end of the class they attend, which will be administered by the Certified Trainer teaching the class. The examination will consist of multiple choice and True/False questions. Candidates will have a set time limit in which to complete the examination.

Results of the Examination

All examinations will be submitted to Architectural Testing, Inc. for scanning and scoring. After scoring the examinations, Architectural Testing, Inc. will send the results within 30 days to the candidates, where applicable.

What Does Passing the Examination Mean?

Certification candidates who demonstrate their knowledge of the training materials by passing the final open-book Certified Evaluator's examination with a score of 85% or better, and who have satisfied all other requirements of the program, including submission of required insurance coverage will be certified and receive a FORTIFIED Home™ Certified Evaluator certificate and photo identification card which includes their renewal date. Certified evaluators may be listed on the website after execution of the Evaluator's Agreement.

Failing the Examination

Evaluator certification candidates who do not pass the final examination will receive notification along with instructions on how to retake the examination, if they choose. Candidates will be required to pay the full examination fee for re-examinations.

The re-examination may be administered by a certified trainer or by a proctor approved by the Program Administrator, and is an open-book examination. One re-examination will be permitted. Candidates who fail to pass after retaking the examination and desire to continue with the certification process are required to retake the Certified Evaluator's training class and final examination, and pay all appropriate fees. Evaluator certification candidates must contact the Program Administrator for further information on retaking the class.

Recertification

FORTIFIED Home™ Evaluator certification is valid for a period of three years. Evaluators are required to perform an average of six evaluations per year during the certification period (18 total evaluations in the three years), and submit updated insurance documentation each year, along with the administrative fees. During the third year, Certified Evaluators are required to attend an in-person class, retake the examination, and pay all appropriate fees.

Insurance documents must be updated annually in order to maintain active evaluator status and be able to access the evaluation submission software. The Program Administrator will notify the certified Evaluator 60 days prior to the annual anniversary date of certification requesting the insurance information. Certified Evaluators who submit proof of insurance will maintain their active Certified Evaluator status. Certified Evaluators who do not submit the required insurance information each year as requested will have their certifications suspended until the requirement is completed.

Ninety days prior to the third anniversary date, the Program

Administrator will send notification to the certified Evaluators including instructions on registering to retake the required in-person class. Certified Evaluators who complete the class, pass the final open-book Evaluator's examination with a score of 85% or better, and who have satisfied all other requirements of the program, including paying the associated recertification fee and submission of required insurance coverage, will be recertified and receive an updated FORTIFIED Home™ Certified Evaluator certificate and photo identification card which includes their new renewal date.

Decertification

Evaluators who do not complete recertification by the renewal date will be decertified, and will not be able to submit or access evaluations. Evaluators who are decertified will be removed from the website and must contact the Administrator for instructions on renewing their evaluator certification.

Certified Evaluator Responsibilities

Upon successfully completing the required training and certification exam, you will be required to:

- Submit documentation of your insurance coverage and update these documents annually.
 - ◆ Proof of insurance coverage meeting the licensing requirements for professional licenses, or minimum coverage if other than required by professional licenses including: General Liability - \$1,000,000; Automobile Liability - \$500,000; Workers Compensation – as required by law; Employer's Liability - \$500, 000 (usually part of Workers Comp policy); Professional Liability - \$500,000 (strongly recommended)
- Sign the FORTIFIED Evaluator Agreement. The Agreement must be fully executed by the evaluator and IBHS prior to being listed as a FORTIFIED Certified Evaluator, before advertising as a

FORTIFIED Certified Evaluator; and before conducting any FORTIFIED evaluations or inspections.

- Maintain appropriate records and agree to be audited by IBHS or their designee.
- Maintain an appropriate knowledge base of the FORTIFIED Homes™ program requirements by completing any additional training required by the program.

Non-Evaluator Participant

Non-evaluator participants are individuals who are interested in participating in the FORTIFIED Home™ Evaluator Program training for knowledge purposes only. They are not seeking certification, and do not take the exam. There are no experience or educational prerequisites required for non-evaluator participants.

How Do I Register?

Non-Evaluator participants interested in the FORTIFIED Home™ Evaluator Training must fill-out and submit the registration form along with the non-refundable registration fee to the Program Administrator in order to register to take the self-paced orientation module. After completing the orientation training, the Non-evaluator participant may attend the in-person, instructor-led training class.

Individuals seeking to participate in a FORTIFIED Home™ Evaluator Certification training class should contact the Program Administrator, Architectural Testing, Inc. at 717-764-7700 or fortifiedhome@archtest.com for more information.

Certified Trainer Training

How Do I Participate?

Individuals who meet one or more of the following criteria may participate in the training to become a FORTIFIED Home™ Certified Trainer and sponsor FORTIFIED Home™ Certified Evaluator training classes upon successful completion of the trainer course:

1. Five or more years of experience as an Instructor, Teacher, or Trainer in construction trades **and** five or more years of construction experience. This includes, but is not limited to, Vocational Instructors, Shop Teachers, Armed Services Instructors, and College Professors.
2. Five or more years of verifiable experience as a home inspector (with a minimum of 500 home inspections). Qualifying experience includes recognition as a certified, licensed, or registered home inspector.
3. Five years of design, construction and/or inspection experience in the residential construction industry as a registered, certified, or licensed engineer or architect, or as a licensed building code official, an ICC certified residential inspector, or building contractor.
4. A combination of post-secondary education and experience totaling a minimum of five years, three of which must be working as a residential or general contractor in a supervisory capacity (team leader, project manager or supervisor.)

Certified trainers who perform inspections and meet the same requirements as certified evaluator candidates may become Certified Evaluators by passing the trainer's exam. Like the Certified Evaluator, the Certified Trainer must submit proof of insurance coverage as listed in the checklist at the back of the handbook prior to receiving evaluator credentials.

Training

Candidates for FORTIFIED Home™ Trainer Certification must participate in a multi-day, in-person training class. The first two days of the class will cover the Evaluator training material. On the third day, participants will present assigned portions of the material to the rest of the class in order to evaluate training skills. The program review will take place on the final day, and will conclude with the administration of the Certified Trainer's examination.

How Do I Register?

Qualified applicants must fill-out and submit the registration form, along with the registration materials listed below, to the Program Administrator in order to register to for the training:

1. Copies of state-issued licenses or registrations for the professional category indicated on the application, if applicable. At the discretion of the Program Administrator, a professional resume may be accepted in instances where there are no state-issued licenses or registrations.
2. Original photograph of the candidate (clear head shot, either black and white or color). Examples would be a passport-type photograph or a digital photograph.
3. A copy of a signed, photo identification card (driver's license, identification card, or other identification form).
4. Registration fee made payable to Architectural Testing. Note: Registration fees are non-refundable.

Individuals seeking FORTIFIED Home™ Trainer Certification should contact the Program Administrator, Architectural Testing, Inc. at 717-764-7700 or fortifiedhome@archtest.com for more information on available classes.

Examination Information

Taking the Examination

Certified trainer candidates must demonstrate acceptable training skills and take an open-book, written trainer examination at the end of the class they attend.

Results of the Examination

All examinations will be scored by the lead trainer, and candidates will have a chance to review any incorrect answers. Candidates who pass the Certified Trainer's exam will receive a Trainer's Kit from the Administrator with the information and materials needed to schedule and register evaluator training classes.

What Does Passing the Examination Mean?

Candidates who demonstrate compliance with the Program requirements, obtain a passing score of 90% or better on an open-book, written trainer examination, and satisfactorily demonstrate their ability to train will become a FORTIFIED Home™ Certified Trainer and receive a certificate and trainer ID card. The Certified Trainer's Agreement must be fully executed before trainers may be listed on the website.

Trainers who also meet the certified evaluator criteria and who have satisfied all other requirements as required for evaluator certification may also become a FORTIFIED Home™ Evaluator. A certified evaluator certificate and photo ID card will also be issued once the required insurance documentation has been received.

Failing the Examination

Trainer candidates who do not pass the examination will be given the opportunity to take one re-examination, no sooner than one-week following failure. Candidates who fail to pass the examination on

the second attempt and desire to continue with the process will be required to re-take the Certified Trainer class and pay all appropriate fees.

Candidates who do not demonstrate satisfactory training skills as determined by the Lead Trainer shall be permitted to demonstrate their training skills anytime following their initial examination.

Please contact the Program Administrator for further information on re-taking the examination or demonstrating training skills.

Recertification

FORTIFIED Home™ Trainer certification is valid for one year. Prior to the renewal date, the Program Administrator will send notification with recertification instructions.

Certified Trainers are required to teach a minimum of four FORTIFIED Home™ Evaluator classes per year and pay the associated recertification fee in order to maintain their certification. If the four classes are not taught within the year, and the trainer is also a certified evaluator, a combination of classes AND FORTIFIED Home™ evaluations will be considered as meeting the same requirements.

# of Evaluator Classes	Minimum # of Evaluations
1	36
2	24
3	12
4	0

Certified Trainers who do not meet the requirements listed above shall have the option of participating in another FORTIFIED Home™ Certified Trainer training class and retaking the examination. All applicable fees apply.

Decertification

Trainers may be decertified if they do not teach the required number of classes and/or perform the required number of evaluations, violate class procedures, fail to maintain strict test security, or fail to maintain and submit the required insurance coverage each year.

Certified Trainer Responsibilities

Upon successfully completing the required training and certification exam, you will be required to:

- Sign the FORTIFIED Trainer Agreement. The Agreement must be fully executed by the trainer and IBHS prior to being listed as a FORTIFIED Certified Trainer, before advertising as a FORTIFIED Certified Trainer; and before conducting any FORTIFIED Certified Evaluator training classes.
- Maintain an appropriate knowledge base of the FORTIFIED Homes™ program requirements by completing any additional training required by the program.
- Conduct FORTIFIED Home™ Certified Evaluator training classes in accordance with the requirements of the FORTIFIED Home program.
- Maintain the integrity of the program
- Administer examinations only to qualified candidates
- Return all examinations/results and materials to the Administrator within the specified time frame.
- Allow access to the Administrator or his representative to audit training classes.
- Certified trainers who perform inspections must meet the same requirements as a certified evaluator and submit annual proof of insurance coverage as listed in the checklist at the back of the handbook.

Conflict of Interest Limitations

Certified Evaluators and Certified Trainer/Evaluators may not perform evaluations or inspections on any home where they are:

- Property owners who have a vested or financial interest in the home being evaluated for designation.
- Trade contractors or suppliers who have supplied materials or installed products or systems in the home being evaluated for designation.
- Sales agents for the home being evaluated for designation.

Contact

Anyone with questions about the program, or for individuals seeking to register for the FORTIFIED Home™ Certified Trainer or Certified Evaluator Training, please contact the Program Administrator, Architectural Testing at 717-764-7700 or fortifiedhome@archtest.com for more information.



**DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS FOR
CERTIFIED EVALUATOR OR TRAINER CANDIDATES**
PLEASE MARK EACH REQUIREMENT THAT YOU MEET

*denotes required information for certification

- Application***
- Registration Fee for Orientation Training***
(Checks made payable to Architectural Testing or contact Administrator for credit card form)
- Copy of photo ID (driver's license, passport, etc.)***
- Photograph (digital or passport style for Evaluator's ID card)***

Computer Skills* (All skills required)

- Proficiency in Microsoft Office 2003 or newer version, and a working knowledge of Word and Excel*
- Ability to scan and e-mail a copy of a signed form*
- Capable of sending a photo attachment using email*
- The ability to navigate the Internet using common browsers*

Experience Requirements (Must meet one* of these requirements)

- Minimum of five years as a certified, licensed, or registered general contractor, residential contractor/builder, or building contractor (submit a copy of your active professional license or registration)
- Registered, certified, or licensed architect or engineer (submit a copy of your active professional license or registration) **Note:** Minimum of five years' experience.
- ICC-certified building code official (submit a copy of your ICC certification documents) **Note:** Minimum of five years' experience.
- ICC-certified residential inspector (submit a copy of your ICC certification documents) **Note:** Minimum of three years'

experience and 250 verifiable home inspections for certified evaluator, or a minimum of five years' experience and 500 verifiable home inspections for a certified trainer.

Certified, licensed, or registered home inspector (submit a copy of your active professional license or registration) **Note:** Minimum of three years' experience and 250 verifiable home inspections for certified evaluator, or a minimum of five years' experience and 500 verifiable home inspections for a certified trainer.

Professional résumé - in lieu of the credentials listed above. Must indicate:

Post-secondary education and experience totaling a minimum of five years, three of which must be working as a residential or general contractor in a supervisory capacity (team leader, project manager, or supervisor)

Also include the following along with résumé:

Letter from a supervisor or project manager on company letterhead which describes specific responsibilities held;

How the applicant's position or company relates to home inspection, property hazard mitigation or the home building industry

Is signed by the person in authority including title and relationship to applicant

Dates of employment

Association Membership (If applicable)

American Society of Home Inspectors (ASHI)

International Association of Certified Home Inspectors (InterNACHI)

National Association of Home Inspectors (NAHI) as a Certified Real Estate Inspector (NAHI CRI) or as a NAHI regular member

Insurance Requirements* – after completion of training and passing the examination submit:

- Proof of insurance coverage meeting the licensing requirements for professional licenses
- Minimum coverage if other than required by professional licenses:
 - General Liability - \$1,000,000
 - Automobile Liability - \$500,000
 - Workers Compensation – as required by law
 - Employer's Liability - \$500,000 (usually part of Workers Comp policy)
 - Professional Liability - \$500,000 (strongly recommended)

In order to avoid conflicts of interest, I declare that*:

- I will not be the property owner who has built or has a financial interest in any home I inspect for designation purposes.
- I will not be a contractor or supplier of any materials and/or installed products or systems in any home that I inspect for designation purposes.
- I will not be a sales agent for any home being designated.



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