Certified Food Protection Manager Overview and Course Links

In North Carolina, it is required that the School Nutrition Administrator overseeing the National School Lunch Program receive or hold a current a Certified Food Protection Manager (CFPM) certification by passing an American National Standards Institute (ANSI)-accredited exam. Per North Carolina Professional Standard Hiring Requirements, this certification must be obtained within 30 days of hire date to the position of School Nutrition Administrator. For new schools seeking approval to operate the National School Lunch Program in North Carolina, this could also be within 30 days of when approval is received. If the School Nutrition Administrator has previously received this certification and it is expired, they will need to renew their certification within 30 days.

Note that this is not a requirement by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, but a North Carolina-specific requirement. It is not required that a training course is taken before taking the exam, but taking a training or preparation course is strongly encouraged because it has been shown to increase the likelihood of passing the exam, especially for those who have never taken the exam.

This certification is also required per the North Carolina Food Code for the person in charge (PIC) at a foodservice establishment, such as a school or catering kitchen (2-102.12(A); 2-102.20). Someone with a current CFPM certification for the food establishment must be on site at all times the establishment is in operation. Certifications are valid for 5 years from the date issued. Typically, School Nutrition Managers overseeing foodservice operations at the school level will hold this certification. For catered or vended School Food Authorities, at least one person from the catered establishment must have this certification also and must be able to provide proof of certification upon request. It is strongly recommended to have at least two individuals, such as a School Nutrition Manager and School Nutrition Assistant Manager, at a food production site who have a current CFPM certification.

You may hear this certification referred to as a "ServSafe Certification;" ServSafe is one of several companies that provides a training course and ANSI-accredited exam (see #5 below). It should be noted that ServSafe and other companies offer several types of food safety continuing education courses and exams, so it is important to ensure that the correct one is chosen that provides an opportunity to take the Certified Food Protection Manager exam.

Below is a list of commonly used organizations and companies that offer CFPM preparation courses and/or the CFPM exam. Some offer an online course and online proctoring for the exam.

1. [Safe Plates for Food Managers](https://foodsafety.ces.ncsu.edu/retail-food-safety-programs/safe-plates-food-managers/) (NC State University/NC Cooperative Extension preparation course - uses the National Registry of Food Safety Professionals exam, see #4 below)
2. [360training.com, Inc.](https://www.ansi.org/Accreditation/credentialing/personnel-certification/food-protection-manager/AllDirectoryDetails.aspx?&prgID=8&OrgId=536&statusID=4) (Learn2Serve® Food Protection Manager Certification Program)
3. [AboveTraining/StateFoodSafety.com](https://www.ansi.org/Accreditation/credentialing/personnel-certification/food-protection-manager/AllDirectoryDetails.aspx?&prgID=8&OrgId=1838&statusID=4) (Certified Food Protection Manager (CFPM) Exam)
4. [National Registry of Food Safety Professionals](https://www.ansi.org/Accreditation/credentialing/personnel-certification/food-protection-manager/AllDirectoryDetails.aspx?&prgID=8&OrgId=122&statusID=4) (Food Protection Manager Certification Program; International Certified Food Safety Manager)
5. [National Restaurant Association](https://www.ansi.org/Accreditation/credentialing/personnel-certification/food-protection-manager/AllDirectoryDetails.aspx?&prgID=8&OrgId=87&statusID=4) (ServSafe® Food Protection Manager Certification Program)
6. [The Always Food Safe Company, LLC](https://www.ansi.org/Accreditation/credentialing/personnel-certification/food-protection-manager/AllDirectoryDetails.aspx?&prgID=8&OrgId=2208&statusID=4) (Food Protection Manager Certification)

A full list of accredited providers can be found from on the [Conference for Food Protection](https://anabpd.ansi.org/Accreditation/credentialing/personnel-certification/food-protection-manager/AlLdirectoryListing?menuID=8&prgID=8&statusID=4) website.

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