

Plan and develop career pathway focused training programs.



Tree Care Industry Association, Inc.

## TCIA Trainer Qualification Program – Policies and Standard Operating Procedures

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## **Foreword**

TCIA Policy and Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) manuals are provided to facilitate program administration and consistency. Questions, suggestions, or requests for exemptions related to these policies shall be directed to TCIA's Department of Certification. Suggestions will be reviewed through an appropriate process (verbal or written). Requests for exemptions must be submitted in writing and shall not take effect unless approved by the TCIA Leadership Team.

## **1. Purpose, Target Audience, Objectives, and Stakeholders**

### **1.1 Purpose of the Program**

1.1.1 The TCIA Trainer Qualification Program is a voluntary, assessment-based qualification program designed to prepare individuals to deliver TCIA's Tree Care Academy Career Pathway courses, Electrical Hazards Awareness Program (EHAP), Certified Treecare Professional (CTSP) program workshops, and Crew Leader Qualification (CLQ) workshops.

1.1.2 For individuals, the Trainer Qualification provides formal recognition of their ability to deliver high-quality, industry-aligned instruction using adult learning best practices.

1.1.3 For employers, training organizations, and partners, the program ensures consistent, accurate, and standards-based delivery of TCIA training.

### **1.2 Target Audience**

The Trainer Qualification Program is intended for individuals who:

- Deliver or plan to deliver internal training within their organizations
- Plan and develop career pathway-focused training programs.
- Serve as consultants or third-party trainers
- Lead workforce development or apprenticeship programs
- Facilitate grant-funded ASTI workshops
- Support employee advancement through training and career pathway progression.

### **1.3 Program Objectives**

The objectives of the Trainer Qualification Program are to:

- Improve the quality and consistency of training delivery across the tree care industry
- Support tree care industry employers in developing career pathway-focused training programs.
- Authorize qualified individuals to teach TCIA course material
- Support workforce development initiatives, including apprenticeships and grant-funded programs
- Build a community of qualified trainers committed to safety, professionalism, and continuous improvement

#### **1.4 Primary Stakeholders**

Primary stakeholders include TCIA Qualified Trainers, employers, workforce development partners, grant administrators, and TCIA.

## **2. Application of Policies**

TCIA's Department of Certification shall administer these policies in a fair, balanced, and objective manner while maintaining the integrity and credibility of the Trainer Qualification Program and providing high-quality customer service.

## **3. Normative References**

- ANSI Z133, *Arboricultural Safety Requirements*
- ANSI A300, *Tree, Shrub, and Other Woody Plant Management – Standard Practices*
- Applicable OSHA regulations (29 CFR 1910 series)

## **4. Definitions**

### **4.1 Trainer Qualification Online Course**

An asynchronous online course serving as the body of knowledge for the Trainer Qualification Program.

### **TCIA Qualified Trainer Certificate**

Documentation issued by TCIA upon successful completion of all Trainer Qualification requirements.

#### **4.3 Capstone Project**

A two-part final assessment demonstrating readiness to deliver TCIA training using a blended learning model.

#### **4.4 TCIA Qualified Trainer**

An individual who has completed all Trainer Qualification Program requirements and is authorized to deliver approved TCIA training.

### **5. Customer Service, Confidentiality, and Public Information**

5.1 General program inquiries shall be addressed by TCIA's Department of Certification within two (2) business days.

5.2 Publicly available information shall be limited to enrollment and qualification status. All other candidates and Qualified Trainers information shall remain confidential.

### **6. Eligibility, Enrollment, and Program Administration**

#### **6.1 Eligibility Requirements**

Candidates must meet at least one (1) of the following requirements at the time of enrollment:

- Hold an active TCIA Certified Treecare Safety Professional (CTSP) certification in good standing; or
- Have a minimum of two (2) years of experience as a full-time professional trainer or instructor in arboriculture, safety, or a closely related field.

#### **6.2 Enrollment Application and Approval**

6.2.1 Candidates must attest to meeting eligibility requirements as part of the enrollment application.

6.2.2 TCIA reserves the right to request supporting documentation or clarification to verify eligibility.

6.2.3 TCIA may deny enrollment if eligibility requirements are not met or if submitted documentation is found to be incomplete, misleading, or falsified.

6.2.4 Denial decisions shall be communicated in writing and may be appealed in accordance with Annex B, Right to Appeal.

### **6.3 Program Fees**

6.3.1 All Trainer Qualification candidates must pay the full program registration fee at the time of enrollment.

6.3.2 Program fees are non-refundable once enrollment is processed.

### **6.4 No Grandfathering or Alternate Pathways**

6.4.1 The TCIA Credentialing Council shall not grandfather candidates into the Trainer Qualification Program.

6.4.2 No alternate means of enrollment, assessment, or qualification shall be permitted outside the approved Trainer Qualification scheme.

### **6.5 Audit Rights and Oversight**

6.5.1 TCIA reserves the right to audit eligibility documentation, enrollment status, and completion timelines at any time.

6.5.2 Failure to cooperate with an audit may result in suspension or revocation of enrollment or qualification status.

## **7. Qualification Requirements**

To earn the Trainer Qualification, candidates must:

1. Submit an enrollment application and receive approval
2. Pay Enrollment Fee
3. Complete the asynchronous Trainer Qualification Online Course

4. Earn the TCIA Qualified Trainer Certificate
5. Successfully complete the Capstone Project for each TCIA course for which they seek authorization to teach

## **8. Trainer Qualification Online Course**

8.1 The Trainer Qualification Online Course represents the program's body of knowledge and is delivered asynchronously.

8.2 Candidates must complete all required learning activities and assignments.

8.3 Unlimited assignment resubmissions are permitted until satisfactory completion is achieved.

8.4 Failure to actively participate or complete course requirements within two (2) years from the enrolled date may result in administrative withdrawal.

## **9. Capstone Project**

9.1 The Capstone Project serves as the final assessment of instructional readiness.

9.2 **Part One:** Candidates shall select one TCIA course and pass the associated final exam with a score of 100 percent.

9.3 **Part Two:** Candidates shall develop and submit a comprehensive lesson plan integrating TCIA online content with instructor-led and hands-on training.

9.4 Capstone submissions shall be reviewed by the Department of Certification, which may require revisions prior to approval.

## **10. Trainer Authorization and Scope of Practice**

### **10.1 Authorization to Teach**

10.1.1 Upon successful completion of all requirements, candidates shall be designated as TCIA Qualified Trainers.

10.1.2 Qualified Trainers are authorized to deliver approved TCIA training in accordance with program policies and instructional standards.

## **10.2 Scope of Practice**

10.2.1 Authorized programs may include:

- TCIA Tree Care Academy courses
- Electrical Hazards Awareness Program (EHAP)
- Crew Leader Qualification (CLQ) programs with workshops
- Certified Treecare Safety Professional (CTSP) workshops

10.2.2 Authorization does not confer authority to modify TCIA course content, assessments, or learning objectives.

10.2.3 TCIA reserves the right to limit, suspend, or revoke authorization based on compliance, performance, or program needs.

10.2.4 TCIA Qualified Trainers must deliver training using TCIA-approved materials and instructional methods.

## **11. Program Oversight, Audits, and Revisions**

11.1 TCIA's Department of Certification is responsible for program oversight and administration.

11.2 TCIA may conduct audits of instructional activities, materials, lesson plans, and the use of TCIA's intellectual property.

11.3 Failure to comply with audit requirements may result in disciplinary action.

11.4 Program revisions shall be reviewed and approved through TCIA's established governance process.

## **12. Record Retention**

Electronic records of course completion and qualification status shall be maintained in TCIA's Learning Management System (Brightspace).

## **13. Ethics, Misconduct, Marketing, and Logo Usage**

## **13.1 Code of Ethics**

13.1.1 Trainer Qualification candidates and TCIA Qualified Trainers must adhere to the TCIA Code of Ethics.

13.1.2 TCIA recognizes that the manner in which trainers conduct training, represent TCIA programs, and interact with learners reflects upon the professionalism of the tree care industry and the arboriculture profession.

13.1.3 TCIA Qualified Trainers and candidates assume responsibility to the profession, society, and their peers by agreeing to:

- Provide objective, fair, accurate, and professional instruction and service
- Maintain current knowledge of applicable industry standards and safety requirements
- Conduct duties in an honest, lawful, and professional manner
- Maintain a professional image in actions and appearance
- Place safety, training quality, and ethical practices as top priorities
- Respect the views, ideas, and contributions of others
- Submit accurate documentation and reports
- Maintain confidentiality where required
- Report ethical violations or misconduct as applicable
- Refrain from falsification of records or training documentation

13.1.4 Violations may result in disciplinary action, including suspension or revocation of TCIA Qualified Trainer status.

## **13.2 Marketing and Logo Usage**

13.2.1 TCIA Qualified Trainers may use approved Trainer Qualification logos in accordance with TCIA branding guidelines.

13.2.2 All claims regarding Trainer Qualification status must be factual and limited to authorized instructional activities.

## **Annex A – TCIA Credentialing Council Member Position Description**

A-1 The Council is charged with the ongoing oversight and evolution of the Trainer Qualification. Expertise on the Council will provide credibility and breadth of knowledge to give the Trainer Qualification validity for the profession, as well as for the government and public.

A-1.1 The TCIA Board of Directors has approved the following representative seats and advisors on this Council.

Seat 1: OSHA

Seat 2: DOT/FMCSA

Seat 3: National Safety Council

Seat 4: Independent safety consultant (or associated with risk management)

Seat 5: One large tree care company member (as defined by the gross tree care revenue dues structure)

Seat 6: One medium-sized tree care company member (as defined by the gross tree care revenue dues structure)

Seat 7: One small tree care company member (as defined by the gross tree care revenue dues structure)

TQ Advisor: Independent academic advisor

A-1.2 The TCIA Board of Directors can make adjustments to council seats and advisors.

### **A-2 Qualifications and Skills**

Council Members will bring diverse knowledge and skill sets to the Council, creating synergy. Their knowledge and skill sets may include, but are not limited to:

- A. federal regulatory compliance;
- B. teaching adults;
- C. Hispanic/Latino culture;
- D. generational cultures;

- E. familiarity with other individual credentialing programs, particularly safety-related certifications;
- F. statistical knowledge concerning accidents and underlying contributory factors in tree care and/or landscaping; and,
- G. familiarity with tree care/landscape operations, management, and company hierarchical structure.

#### A-3 Terms

Terms for representatives for each seat and advisors are for three years and may be reappointed for an additional three years.

## A-4 Council Responsibilities

A-4.1 The Council is an independent, objective certification body charged with establishing the parameters around which the program will be administered and the qualification granted. The TCIA Board approves the annual budget of the Trainer Qualification.

A-4.2 The Credentialing Council is a TCIA council that is independent and objective. The council is responsible for developing and maintaining policies and procedures that outline the parameters of the Trainer Qualification administration, including:

- A. granting qualification.
- B. expanding and reducing the scope of the qualification; and,
- C. suspending or withdrawing the qualification.

A-4.3 The council may also participate in:

- A. overseeing the development of test questions or other means of evaluating candidates' suitability for TQ designation;
- B. periodically evaluate and adjust TQ knowledge domains;
- C. tracking of trends in the program;
- D. making recommendations for program development to support TQ;
- E. representation of the program to the general public, consumers, industry groups, or government officials.

## A-5 Expenses

TCIA provides reasonable funds to cover the expenses for participating in Council meetings. TCIA will contract for hotel rooms as needed. Council members will be reimbursed for the lowest coach airline tickets, purchased at least 21-30 days in advance, or the equivalent of the price at that time, in order to maximize cost efficiencies to TCIA. Receipts are required for reimbursement for all items. Mileage will be reimbursed at the going IRS rate. Expenses should be submitted within 30 days.

## **Annex B - Right to appeal**

Appeals shall be based on potential procedural errors or specific mitigating factors regarding the implementation of these Trainer Qualification policies. Appeals based on actual program content are not accepted. Appeals shall be submitted in writing to the TCIA Director, Credentialing Programs, or other TCIA executive.