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FAQs: The New House Cleaning Technician (HCT) Certification

As the news about the first *The Clean Trust*-approved residential cleaning certification has spread, the leaders of the Institute for Service Excellence—the only *The Clean Trust*-approved school—have fielded many questions by phone, email, LinkedIn message board, and even through Facebook. So we've taken the time to present the most commonly asked (and answered!) questions to help you better plan your investment in your staff, your customers, and your company with the House Cleaning Technician (HCT) certification.

Q: How long does the HCT certification take?
A: The training course takes 14 hours, which we break over two consecutive days of instruction and training, roughly 8 am – 5 pm with a lunch break. The certification examination is administered at the end of the second day.

Q: How long will the certification examination take?
A: The certification exam is 160 multiple-choice questions. Two hours are allotted for completion of the exam immediately following the instruction. The completed exam is submitted to and graded by The Clean Trust, who will notify successful candidates directly with their certification.

Q: How many courses do I have to take to become certified?
A: Just one 2-day course (14 hours of instruction) is all it takes to complete the training and examination requirements for HCT certification. ISE currently has seven opportunities scheduled throughout 2012 and in many locations around the continental US to bring the course as close to you as we can.

Q: Who at my company should be certified?
A: The short answer is EVERYONE! The knowledge and skills combined will most certainly raise the confidence and quality of your cleaning technicians in the field, but your office/sales staff should also know how to answer the same questions over the phone to turn an inquiry or cold call into a sale. The knowledge from this course will make all the difference!

Q: Who receives the certification?
A: The individual who completes the training and passes the examination is awarded the certification; thus The Clean Trust HCT certification "travels" with the individual technician if s/he transfers to another company/location.

Q: What happens if I or my employee does not pass the examination?
A: If a student fails a Clean Trust exam, the student will have ninety (90) days to re-take the entire exam. Once the ninety days have expired, the student will have to repeat both the class and the examination.

Q: Can I have my cleaning business certified?
A: Yes. The Clean Trust offers a "Certified Firm" opportunity for companies who can demonstrate they meet the requirements, such as having a certified technician on all jobs, having a continuing

education program for technicians, maintaining insurance, etc. For more information about becoming a Certified Firm, visit www.TheCleanTrust.org.

Q: Will you be offering the HCT certification online?

A: The Clean Trust policy does not currently permit The Clean Trust certification courses to be taught or presented via an on-line or web based training methodology.

Q: Will the HCT course address "green", natural, organic, or other environmentally-friendly methods of cleaning?

A: The science—biology, chemistry, and physics—that underlies cleaning is the same regardless of your company's preferred cleaners or cleaning methodology. The primary environmental focus of cleaning is the improvement of the indoor environment, including the potential effects of traditional, green, and chemical free cleaners affect the indoor environment. The secondary environmental focus on the effects of cleaning on the outdoor environment is also addressed as part of the course.

Q: Does the HCT course require cleaners or companies to use certain products or equipment?

A: No. The House Cleaning Technician course is a collection of best cleaning practices as developed through a consensus-based inquiry involving over 40 industry professionals and experts. The HCT course provides owners and cleaners with the scientific, home material, and environmental knowledge to make informed decisions about their equipment and specific local/company practices. The objective of the HCT certification is to enable the cleaning technician to truly know and understand why s/he should clean in a certain way to make it both clean (free of dirt) and sanitary (free of biological contaminants).

Q: How often does HCT certification have to renewed?

A: HCT certification is valid for the life of the cleaning technician. The Clean Trust assesses annual registration fees ranging from $30.00 - $80.00, depending on the number of certifications an individual holds. The HCT course and examination do not have to be repeated. That said, our knowledge and understanding of the biology, chemistry, and physics of both contaminants and methods of removal are constantly evolving, so we recommend that your company establish or invest in continuing education for your technicians.

Q: Can anyone be a teacher/trainer for the HCT course?

A: The Clean Trust has rigorous requirements for becoming approved as an instructor for any of its certifications; being able to teach a course goes beyond simply being certified in the course you wish to teach. Candidates for HCT instructor approval must demonstrate that they have

1. At least five years (of the last seven years) verifiable and documented field experience supervising residential cleaning operations, including at least three years caring for occupied homes
2. Documented proof of field experience in fifty (50) homes
3. Attained Journeyman Textile Cleaner status with The Clean Trust; certifications include (1) choice of Carpet Cleaning Technician or Commercial Carpet Maintenance Technician; (2) Upholstery and Fabric Cleaning Technician; and (3) choice of Odor Control Technician, Color Repair Technician, or Carpet Repair and Installation Technician.
4. Affiliated with a Clean Trust-approved school carrying at least $1,000,000 of liability insurance.

To maintain School and Instructor Approval, instructors must

1. Actively participate in discussions of any revision to the HCT Job Task Analysis and examination
2. Attend annually at least one Clean Trust-approved continuing education function with emphasis on technical aspects and processes, best practices and the science of cleaning.

To learn more about becoming a candidate for instructor approval, please contact Bruce and Sarah Vance or David Kiser at Mail@ISEToday.com.

Q: When will you have a course in my town/country?

A: For our opening schedule, ISE looked at major metropolitan areas where there was a high concentration of ARCSI member companies within a few hours' driving distance; that is what led to the six locations selected for our 2012 schedule. We are always happy to learn of new, enthusiastic local hosts in other cities who will help us out by providing or finding a suitable training location and getting the word out to area companies. Just email us at Mail@ISEToday.com to let us know of your interest.

Q: Can I (the owner) become certified and then train my own staff?

A: Yes and No. Yes, the owner of a company can become HCT certified, but that does not qualify the owner to then certify his/her own staff. HCT certification can be awarded only when the training is performed by a Clean Trust-approved instructor, through a Clean Trust approved school, AND the certification examination taken and passed by each individual candidate.

If you have a question that has not been addressed here, please contact us at Mail@ISEToday.com, and we will respond both directly and with additional information on our website as appropriate.