

**AIR SYSTEMS CLEANING
SPECIALIST (ASCS)**



*The HVAC Inspection, Cleaning
and Restoration Association*

Overview of the ASCS Certification

NADCA's ASCS certification was developed to recognize those industry professionals involved in the proper cleaning of HVAC systems. An Air System Cleaning Specialist (ASCS) is qualified to serve as a project manager for residential and commercial HVAC cleaning and restoration projects and as a ventilation system mold remediator.

Benefits of the ASCS Certification

NADCA's landmark credential is a world-wide certification recognizing an individual's knowledge and skills related to HVAC system cleaning. Becoming ASCS-certified is a career milestone and a commitment to excellence in the industry. NADCA's ASCS certification showcases expertise, dedication, and a commitment to perform proper HVAC system cleanings in accordance with ACR, The NADCA Standard.

The ASCS Exam

A Job Analysis was performed with a third-party psychometrician to determine the most necessary skills of an Air Systems Cleaning Specialist. This included a scientific survey of industry professionals, certificants, and others who engage in HVAC system cleaning. The survey evaluated the relative importance of the knowledge and skills that comprise the practice of performing proper HVAC system cleaning for all building classifications. The content areas tested, and their relative emphasis, are provided in the outline below.

The ASCS certification exam is made up of six domains. The content outline domain weights represent approximate percentages of content distribution.

1. Benefits of HVAC System Cleaning
2. Mechanical Systems
3. Understanding Assessments
4. Cleaning and Restoration Procedures
5. Health & Safety of Employees and Building Occupants
6. Standards & Guidelines

It's important to note that the domains or sections of the exam are not represented equally through the test form regarding the number of questions as well as the point value of each question within any given domain.

DOMAIN	Percentage of Questions
Benefits of HVAC System Cleaning	16%
Mechanical Systems	15%
Understanding Assessments	12%
Cleaning and Restoration Procedures	42%
Health & Safety of Employees and Building Occupants	7%
Standards & Guidelines	8%

Content Outline

I. Benefits of HVAC System Cleaning

- a. Demonstrate knowledge of improved indoor air quality
- b. Demonstrate knowledge of energy savings
- c. Demonstrate knowledge of increase lifespan of air handling unit/HVAC system
- d. Manage customer expectations
- e. Understand causes and types of contamination

II. Mechanical Systems

- a. Demonstrate knowledge of HVAC system design/types of systems
- b. Demonstrate knowledge of HVAC system components and elements (coils, registers, etc.)

III. Understanding Assessments

- a. Conduct visual inspections
- b. Identify problem conditions and plan of action
- c. Assess the HVAC system's condition

IV. Cleaning and Restoration Procedures

- a. Perform project assessment
- b. Define the scope of work, including selecting equipment, products, and methods
- c. Clean and restore the HVAC system (access and engineering controls)
- d. Validation

V. Health & Safety of Employees and Building Occupants

- a. Understand exposure effects
- b. Adhere to regulations and laws
- c. Protecting the job site
- d. Understanding risk management

VI. Standards & Guidelines

- a. Familiarity with industry standards and guidelines including ACR, The NADCA Standard and standards/guidelines of other industry organizations including but not limited to:
 - Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors' National Association (SMACNA)
 - North American Insulation Manufacturers Association (NAIMA)
 - American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air Conditioning Engineers, Inc. (ASHRAE)
 - The Institute of Inspection, Cleaning, and Restoration Certification (IICRC)
 - National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)
 - Air Conditioning Contractors of America (ACCA)

Acronyms

The following is a list of acronyms that are commonly used in the industry and may appear in the ASCS exam. It is recommended that candidates review this list.

Acronym	Expansion
ACCA	Air Conditioning Contractors of America
AFD	Air Filtration Device
AHU	Air Handling Unit
AIHA	American Industrial Hygiene Association
ANSI	American National Standards Institute
ASHRAE	American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air Conditioning Engineers
ASTM	American Society for Testing and Materials
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency (United States)
FPM	Feet Per Minute
HEPA	High Efficiency Particulate Arrestance
HVAC	Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning
IAQ	Indoor Air Quality
IEP	Indoor Environmental Professional
IICRC	Institute of Inspection Cleaning and Restoration Certification
IWC	Inches of Water Column
MUA	Make Up Air
NADCA	National Air Duct Cleaners Association
NAIMA	North American Insulation Manufacturers Association
NFPA	National Fire Protection Association
NIOSH	National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
RPM	Revolutions Per Minute
SMACNA	Sheet Metal & Air Conditioning Contractors' National Association
SDS	Safety Data Sheet
UV	Ultraviolet
VAV	Variable Air Volume
VOC	Volatile Organic Compounds
WC	Water Column

Preparing for the Exam

No one single publication, training course or reference guide will prepare a candidate on its own without other supplemental materials.

It is strongly recommended that prior to taking any certification exam, candidates review the recommended reading materials listed in the Candidate Guide and prepare themselves with self-guided study. Please note: The ASCS and CVI training courses do not teach to the exam. Candidates should not expect to earn a passing score simply by attending a NADCA training course.

If you're reading this, you've already started to prepare for the exam! The first step is to review the Candidate Guide and familiarize yourself with the domains and content that make up the exam.

NADCA offers a variety of resources that may help prepare test takers for the examination. This includes the Ventilation Maintenance Technician (VMT) course which includes five training modules covering the basics of HVAC system cleaning.

In addition, candidates may wish to participate in the ASCS training course via the NADCA website or in person at the Annual Meeting and Exposition or Fall Technical Conference.

Content covered in the training course includes:

- Assessing mechanical systems
- Health and safety
- Performing HVAC system cleaning

NOTE: The training course does not teach to the exam and participation in the training course alone will not adequately prepare candidates for the ASCS examination.

Recommended Reading

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No one single publication, training course or reference guide will prepare a candidate on its own without other supplemental materials.

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NADCA Reference Materials

Reference Document	Area of Focus	Domains Represented
ACR, The NADCA Standard	Entire document, including definitions	I, II, III, IV, V, VI
ASCS Training Course Handouts	Entire document	I, II, III, IV, V, VI
NADCA HVAC Inspection Manual	pg. 13 (Multi-Zone Systems) pg. 16 (Fan Coil Units) pg. 18 (Heating, Cooling & Reheat Coils) pg. 24 (Fire & Smoke Dampers) pg. 25 (Fans & Blowers) pg. 28 (VAV Boxes) pg. 30 (Sound Attenuators) pg. 78 (Example Recommendations)	I, II, III, IV
NADCA Safety Manual	pg. 49 (Confined Space) pg. 205 (Portable Electric Tools) pg. 278 (Lockout/Tagout) pg. 332 (Respiratory Protection)	IV, V, VI
NADCA White Paper on Chemical Applications in HVAC Systems	Entire Document	V, VI
Inspection & Cleaning of Open Air Plenums in HVAC Systems	Entire Document	II, III, IV, VI

Additional Industry Reference Materials

Disclaimer:

No one single publication, training course or reference guide will prepare a candidate on its own without other supplemental materials.

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Reference Document	Source
Standard S520: Standard and Reference Guide for Professional Mold Remediation	IICRC
Cleaning Fibrous Glass Insulated Air Duct Systems (AH-122)	NAIMA
NFPA 90A: Standard for the Installation of Air Conditioning & Ventilation Systems	NFPA
Occupational Safety & Health Administration: Guide to Mold in the Workplace	OSHA

NADCA's Certification Council

NADCA established the Certification Council in 2025 to oversee the association's professional certification programs. The authority of the Certification Council is outlined in the NADCA Certification Council Governance Charter.

Impartiality

The Certification Council is committed to uphold the responsibilities of their appointment with integrity, collegiality and due care. Council members have agreed to abide by NADCA Bylaws, the Certification Council Charter, and policies and procedures of the Council.

The Council pledges to support the operational, administrative, and examination related policies that are free from actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest.

The Certification Council adheres to principles of fairness and due process and endorses the principles of equal opportunity. In administering the certification program, the NADCA

Certification Council does not discriminate or deny opportunity to anyone on the basis of race, color, creed, age, gender, national origin, religion, disability, marital status, parental status, ancestry, sexual orientation, military discharge status, source of income, or any other status protected by applicable law.

Operational Management

NADCA's Executive Director is the designated staff person serving as the primary point of contact for the Certification Council and certification programs. The Executive Director supervises and manages daily operations of the certification programs. Like the Council, the Executive Director will remain impartial and free of conflicts of interest in this role.

The Certification Council accepts program feedback from all interested parties in writing (email or mail) or via phone.

Confidentiality

The Certification Council is committed to protecting confidential and/or proprietary information related to applicants, candidates, or certificants as well as the examination development, maintenance, and administration processes.

NADCA will not disclose confidential personal information unless authorized in writing by the individual. This includes the release of exam results.

The names of certified individuals and their certification status are not considered confidential and are published by NADCA for verification purposes. Verification will be accessible through the NADCA website or by contacting the NADCA offices. Verification of certification status will include only the name of the certificant, current certification status, credential held, and location.

Disclaimer

The Certification Council does not endorse any one method of preparing for a certification exam. No one single publication, training course or reference guide will prepare a candidate on its own without other supplemental materials.

It is strongly recommended that prior to taking any certification exam, candidates review the recommended reading materials listed in the Candidate Guide and prepare themselves with self-guided study.

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