



PATIENT FOCUSED CERTIFICATION



a project of Americans for Safe Access Foundation

www.PatientFocusedCertification.org

PFC Industry Course Guide

Americans for Safe Access (ASA) has been a trusted source of *Cannabis* education and training for almost 20 years. As a leader in *Cannabis* education since 2002, ASA has conducted thousands of legal and advocacy trainings nationwide. ASA created Patient Focused Certification (PFC) as a certification and training program to help regulators, operators, and advocates ensure regulatory compliance for cannabis and hemp businesses.

The PFC training and education program prepares individuals to understand state and local regulations and to learn required safety and operational protocols while teaching them the basics of cannabinoids as medicine and common therapeutic uses of cannabinoids. PFC training provides content that will also save businesses time and money, whether they are drafting policies and procedures, applying for a license, or trying to pass various state inspections at an existing operation.

As cannabis and hemp laws and regulations continue to evolve, specific training has become increasingly mandated. PFC's training and education program is designed to meet the specific requirements of each individual state's mandated training and can help companies reduce the cost of developing, implementing, and operating in-house training programs.

PFC training is available online or in-person by a PFC Instructor.

PFC Training is available in three levels and in four disciplines, or you can take each course a la carte.

Certification Levels (choose which level is best for you):

- ◆ Staff
- ◆ Verified Professional (recommended for management-level personnel)
- ◆ Auditor

Disciplines (pick 1 or more disciplines to study):

- ◆ Distribution
- ◆ Cultivation and Processing
- ◆ Manufacturing
- ◆ Laboratory



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Staff Training Course (8–10 hours)

Requirements:

- ◆ No prerequisites required
- ◆ Attend the entirety of required courses
- ◆ Pass tests with a score of 70% or better

Courses include:

- ◆ Core Cannabis Training
 - ◇ Cannabinoids as Medicine (1.5 hours)
 - ◇ Business Operations (1 hour)
 - ◇ Understanding Cannabis Law (1 hour)
- ◆ State Compliance Training (2 hours)
- ◆ National Cannabis Standards Training (choose 1 or more of the below disciplines)
 - ◇ Distribution Operations (1 hour)
 - ◇ Manufacturing, Packaging, Labeling, and Holding Operations (2 hours)
 - ◇ Cultivation and Processing Operations (1.5 hours)
 - ◇ Laboratory Operations (1 hour)

Verified Professional Training Course (18–20 hours)

Requirements:

- ◆ No prerequisites required
- ◆ Attend the entirety of required courses
- ◆ Pass tests with a score of 80% or better (tests can be retaken at additional cost)

Courses include:

- ◆ Core Cannabis Training
- ◆ State Compliance Training
- ◆ National Cannabis Standards Training
- ◆ Enrichment Course
 - ◇ Pesticide Guidance and Integrated Pest Management (2 hours)
 - ◇ Quality Control/Quality Assurance and Batch Sampling (2 hours)
 - ◇ Advanced Endocannabinoid System (2 hours)
 - ◇ Sustainable Cultivation (2 hours)
 - ◇ Cannabis Extraction Safety (2 hours)
 - ◇ Health and Sanitation (1 hour)



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Auditor Course (20+ course hours, 2 observed audits, and 2 shadow audits)

Requirements:

- ◆ Prerequisites (outlined at the bottom of this document) and approved application
- ◆ Attend the entirety of required courses
- ◆ Pass tests with a score of 80% or better (tests can be retaken at additional cost)
- ◆ Complete field requirements

Courses include:

- ◆ Core Cannabis Training
- ◆ State Compliance Training
- ◆ National Cannabis Standards Training (choose 1 or more of the below disciplines)
- ◆ Enrichment Course
 - ◇ Pesticide Guidance and Integrated Pest Management (2 hours)
 - ◇ Quality Control/Quality Assurance and Batch Sampling (2 hours)
 - ◇ Advanced Endocannabinoid System (2 hours)
 - ◇ Sustainable Cultivation (2 hours)
 - ◇ Extraction Safety (2 hours)
 - ◇ Health and Sanitation (1 hour)
 - ◇ Internal and External Auditing for Cannabis Operations (2 hours)



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PFC Course Descriptions

Core Cannabis Training (CCT)

CCT provides the foundation of all PFC educational programs and is the prerequisite for any additional training. The CCT program is taught in sections, providing a well-rounded understanding of the history of cannabis laws, science, and research and running a safe cannabis business.

◆ Cannabinoids as Medicine

This course gives participants an overview of different cannabinoids and terpenes, how cannabinoids work in the body, the most current cannabinoid research, and the various cannabinoid-based pharmaceutical drugs currently available.

◆ Business Operations

This course teaches how to deliver the best quality of care to customers, how to handle interactions with law enforcement, what to do in an emergency situation, and how to safely handle and store cannabis and hemp products.

◆ Understanding Cannabis Law

The course is an overview of federal cannabis and hemp laws, the history of cannabis laws, which states have cannabis laws, and the conflict between state and federal laws.

State Compliance Training (SCT)

These courses are designed to give individuals a comprehensive foundation of knowledge of the laws pertaining to cannabis businesses as well as the regulations that govern day-to-day operations in their location. PFC offers the following State Compliance Training courses and continuously working to add more:

- ◆ California
- ◆ Illinois
- ◆ Maryland
- ◆ Michigan
- ◆ New Jersey
- ◆ Pennsylvania
- ◆ Washington, DC



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National Cannabis Standards Training (NCST)

NCST courses are designed to educate industry professionals about the particulars of compliance specific to the AHP Cannabis monograph, AHPA guidelines, Good Agricultural (Collection) Practices, Good Manufacturing Practices, Good Laboratory Practices, and PFC standards.

◆ Cultivation and Processing Operations

Learn the skills necessary to implement good agricultural practices, including pesticide guidance, facility requirements, water resource management, recordkeeping, product safety recall systems, adverse event recording, and information disclosure.

◆ Manufacturing, Packaging, Labeling, and Holding Operations

This training is designed for individuals engaged in the manufacturing of cannabis, hemp, and cannabis- and hemp-derived products and provides the tools necessary to comply with Good Manufacturing Practice guidelines.

◆ Laboratory Operations

This guide is designed for individuals performing laboratory analysis of cannabis, hemp, cannabis-derived, and hemp-derived products. The guide will examine good laboratory practices, facility security, sample handling and disposal, data management, personnel safety and hygiene, and reporting activities that may be unique to laboratories analyzing these types of products and matrices.

◆ Distribution Operations

In this course, students will learn the skills necessary to implement best management practices relating to the distribution of cannabis and cannabis-derived products directly to compliant individuals through storefront operations, delivery services, direct-from-garden operations, and cultivation cooperatives. This course also discusses best management practices for hemp CBD distribution.

PFC Advanced Courses

Advanced Courses offer individuals specialized industry education ranging from Pesticide Guidance and Integrated Pest Management to Quality Assurance/Quality Control and Batch Sampling. PFC Advanced Courses are part of the required courses for PFC Verified Professionals and PFC independent auditors seeking to achieve and maintain accreditation.

◆ Pesticide Guidance and Integrated Pest Management

This course offers specialized education that includes key definitions pertaining to pesticides, properly reading pesticide labels, the importance and function of tolerance thresholds, major chemical families, restricted-entry intervals (REI), and personal protective equipment (PPE) as well as employee safety and employer responsibilities. Students will also learn the key components to developing a successful Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program. This course is highly recommended for all cultivation and processing management personnel.



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◆ Sustainable Cultivation

Designed to help cultivators reduce their impact on the environment, this course provides tools for reducing the carbon footprint of cultivation operations as well as information on the use, reuse, and recycling of mediums. In addition, this course discusses appropriate nutrient use, the environmental consequences of using mined and imported materials, and the proper storage of chemicals. Water source development, use, storage, and reduction techniques are also addressed in this course, as is the proper tracking of materials used during the cultivation process.

◆ Quality Assurance/Quality Control and Batch Sampling

This course offers specialized education that includes developing and implementing quality assurance (QA) and quality control (QC) systems, including method validation and good manufacturing practices as they relate to QA/QC topics. Additionally, this course will explore representative sampling techniques and how to apply them to cultivation, processing, and manufacturing operations to ensure consistent product quality as well as accurate labeling. This course is strongly recommended for management-level employees of cannabis and hemp businesses.

◆ Advanced Endocannabinoid System

This course offers specialized education that covers how cannabinoids (e.g., THC, CBD) and other constituents of cannabis work in the human body by stimulating the endocannabinoid system (ECS) and provides an in-depth look at the current state of ECS research. It is recommended for people with a base of knowledge in cannabinoids and in areas such as manufacturing, marketing, education, product development, laboratory operations, and health care.

◆ Extraction Safety

This course provides a comprehensive review of current methodologies and best practices in the extraction and processing of cannabis and hemp. Participants will learn the latest developments in extraction and analysis technologies, receive guidance on meeting standards and complying with regulations, and understand how to operate safely.

◆ Health and Sanitation

Health and sanitation requirements keep consumers and workers safe from disease and infection. Each operation requires a unique set of protocols. This training will provide information on general types of cleaning, personal hygiene, measures such as social distancing, and guide students through the differences between general cleaning, sanitation, and sterilization. The training includes a review of the different types of personal protective equipment, and when and how they should be used. Students will also learn what to do in the event of a public health emergency.

◆ Internal and External Auditing for Cannabis Operations

This course offers specialized education in audit protocols. Students will learn how to administer checklists, questionnaires, and document reviews, hone the organizational techniques necessary for writing a final audit report, familiarize themselves with guidelines for conduct (i.e., etiquette and appropriate protocols for interacting with staff and management at the location being audited), and receive travel tips.



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Auditor Prerequisites

PFC independent auditors have extensive experience in cannabis, hemp, and similar industry auditing, including herbal products. All PFC auditor trainees are required to successfully complete the PFC training and are assigned a mentoring auditor to oversee their PFC audits until the mentor can verify the trainee's readiness to audit without mentor oversight. All auditor trainees are required to conduct a minimum of two audits per discipline with their mentor before being allowed to audit independently.

◆ **PFC Cultivation and Processing Auditors**

Must have five years' or more direct experience in the field of cannabis or hemp cultivation and processing or at least five years of direct experience in the field of agricultural inspection and must demonstrate a thorough understanding of the standard operating procedures associated with all modalities of cannabis and hemp cultivation and processing.

◆ **Manufacturing, Packaging, Labeling, and Holding Auditors**

Must have five years' or more direct experience in the field of cannabis or hemp manufacturing and must be food-safe certified, or must have three years' or more direct experience in the inspection and auditing of facilities engaged in the manufacturing of food, food products, or botanical and nutraceutical products. In addition, all manufacturing, packaging, labeling, and holding auditors must demonstrate a fundamental knowledge of extraction processes used in the cannabis and hemp industry.

◆ **Laboratory Auditors**

Must have a degree in chemistry, microbiology, or the equivalent or a minimum of five years of experience conducting laboratory analyses of cannabis, hemp, cannabis-derived products, hemp-derived products, other raw botanicals, botanical products, or nutraceutical products.

◆ **Dispensary Auditors**

Must have at least three years of direct experience in managing a cannabis or hemp distribution facility offering patient services or the equivalent experience in offering patient services and managing a pharmacy or complementary or alternative medicine store.

If you are interested in becoming a PFC auditor, please send a cover letter, CV, and three references to info@patientfocusedcertification.org.