



# **Certified Utility Safety Professional CANDIDATE HANDBOOK**

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## ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

This handbook contains information that you will need to apply, register and prepare for the Certified Utility Safety Professional (CUSP) exam, including eligibility requirements, exam policies, exam content and exam preparation resources. Keep this handbook as a resource to refer to after you have registered for the exam.

## CUSP CERTIFICATION

CUSP certification is a program of the Utility Safety & Ops Leadership Network (USOLN). The purpose of CUSP certification is to promote safety leadership in the utility industry through:

1. Formally recognizing those individuals who meet the eligibility requirements of the CUSP program and pass the CUSP exam.
2. Encouraging continued personal and professional growth in the practice of utility safety leadership.
3. Creating a uniform standard of understanding utility safety regulations, competencies and task-directed skills for both utility companies and their contractor partners.
4. Providing employers the assurance of an individual's broad knowledge, skills and abilities in the utility work environment when hiring or promoting.

CUSP certification is the only program that offers utility-specific safety credentials to meet the unique requirements of utilities and related contractors. The CUSP credential will be assigned to those who meet specific eligibility requirements and pass the exam. Grandfathering is not permitted. All CUSA and CSP professionals along with other aspiring applicants must take the CUSP exam to be considered for the certification.

## CUSP EXAM & ENDORSEMENTS

The CUSP exam is designed to test a well-defined body of knowledge representative of professional practice in the discipline of the utility safety professional. Successful completion of the CUSP exam verifies broad-based knowledge of the utility safety discipline.

The format of the exam is a two-hour timed test. The basic CUSP exam is comprised of 100 multiple-choice questions. In addition, all candidates will be asked to designate an endorsement exam, which consists of 30 questions, from the following utility work environments:

- Transmission & Distribution
- Gas
- Generation

Future endorsement exams serving Communications and Canadian Standards are being considered.

An exam proctor will be on-site to administer the exam. You will be asked to provide a photo ID, most typically a drivers license or work ID. All desktops will be cleared and cell phones must be turned off during the 2-hour period. Notes cannot be used during the exam. There are no math questions on the CUSP exam so calculators are not necessary.

All those who take the exam will be notified of their results by email within 10 business days.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

CUSP certification is a two-tiered, color-designated program. To be eligible for the CUSP exam, candidates must fulfill the following requirements:



### CUSP GREEN

#### SAFETY MANAGEMENT

- 3 years of experience in a dedicated safety/training role in the utility industry
- Pass the CUSP Green exam



### CUSP BLUE

#### OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT, SUPERVISORY & FOREMAN

- 3 years of utility operations leadership experience
- At least 1 year in a role where safety activities are a part of your job description, e.g., tailboards, safety committees, safety meetings
- Pass the CUSP Blue exam

The two-day Utility Safety Leadership Review is recommended, but not required, before taking the CUSP Green or CUSP Blue exam.

## APPLYING FOR THE CUSP EXAM

The following steps outline the application process:

1. Complete the CUSP application, which is available at [www.usoln.org](http://www.usoln.org). The USOLN reserves the right to verify information supplied by or on behalf of a candidate. Any misrepresentation of information shall be considered grounds for prohibition from testing or revocation of CUSP certification.

An application is considered complete only if all information requested is included, legible and accurate. Required information includes personal information, utility work and safety experience, and the desired date/location to take the CUSP exam. The application is not complete without a signature.

2. Fax or email the application to the USOLN as indicated on the application. The application will be processed and the USOLN CUSP Application Review Committee will review each application to determine eligibility. A confirmation notice of approval to take the exam is sent via email within approximately two weeks.

## STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION

The USOLN and the CUSP program do not discriminate among candidates on the basis of age, gender, race, color, religion, national origin, disability, marital status, sexual orientation or military status.

## CUSP EXAM FEES

### Fees for USOLN Members

The best value is to support the USOLN by becoming a member. Individual membership is \$135 annually.

CUSP application fee	WAIVED
CUSP exam fee	\$ 250
Optional 2-day Utility Safety Leadership Review	<u>\$ 799</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1049</b>

CUSP annual maintenance fee	\$ 130
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### Fees for Non-Members

CUSP application fee	\$ 75
CUSP exam fee	\$ 399
Optional 2-day Utility Safety Leadership Review	<u>\$ 999</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1473</b>

CUSP annual maintenance fee	\$ 130
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## REGISTERING FOR THE CUSP EXAM

After you have been notified that your CUSP application has been approved, you must register for the CUSP exam by going to [www.usoln.org](http://www.usoln.org). Under the CUSP Certification tab at the top of the page, go to CUSP Registration, click on the Online Registration Form link in step two and follow the instructions. You must complete the online registration in order to confirm your place in a CUSP class.

## SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR CANDIDATES WITH DISABILITIES

USOLN complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and makes every effort to ensure that no individual with a disability is deprived of the opportunity to take the CUSP exam solely by reason of that disability. USOLN will provide reasonable accommodations for candidates with disabilities.

Should a candidate require reasonable accommodations for a documented disability as defined by the ADA, the candidate must advise the USOLN of their needs in writing when submitting the application.

## NOTIFICATION OF EXAM RESULTS

All examinees will be notified by email if they pass or fail the CUSP exam. Grading of the CUSP exam is pass/fail and letter grades will not be issued. Examinees who pass will be sent their CUSP certificate and wallet card within six to eight weeks. Those who fail will be forwarded information on how to reapply for the exam.

## RETESTING

Any candidate who was approved to take the exam but did not pass is allowed to retest. Candidates who do not pass are required to wait a minimum of six months and no longer than one year before applying to retake the exam. Should the candidate not reapply before the eligibility retest end date, the candidate shall be required to resubmit the application and the application fee, and restart the process.

Within the waiting period, candidates must contact the USOLN by email or phone to alert them of their intent to retake the exam. The USOLN will then give the candidate approval to retake the exam. No fee is required for retaking the exam one time.

## PRIVACY POLICY

The USOLN will keep all USOLN personal and examination records confidential and will obtain your approval before releasing information from your USOLN records other than your name in the CUSP Roster or verification of your certification to the public. The USOLN will publish the name only of each CUSP in the CUSP Roster on the USOLN website.

## USE OF THE CUSP CREDENTIAL

The CUSP credential is only for the authorized use of the individual to which it has been awarded. The “Certified Utility Safety Professional” title and the letters “CUSP” can be used anywhere that you use your name such as resumes, business cards, correspondence and email signatures.

Examples of correct use of the CUSP credential:

- John P. Smith, CUSP
- John P. Smith, Certified Utility Safety Professional

The CUSP credential is only authorized for use during the period the certification is valid; it expires if you have not met the recertification requirements. Use of the CUSP beyond the period that it is valid is considered unauthorized use.

The CUSP credential is recognition that you have achieved a high standard of safety knowledge and skills in the utility industry. It is something to be proud of and any use of the CUSP credential or the USOLN name in a disparaging or misleading way is strictly prohibited. Misrepresenting the scope of your CUSP credential is also strictly prohibited.

## STANDARDS OF ETHICAL CONDUCT

The Utility Safety & Ops Leadership Network (USOLN) has adopted the following Standards of Ethical Conduct to promote and maintain the highest standards of utility safety leadership and personal conduct among its members. These standards serve to assure utility industry confidence in the integrity of utility safety leaders. Ethical leadership is expected from members of USOLN.

These principles are intended to strengthen our critical safety mission. However, they will not cover every situation or challenge that one may face. The following principles shall serve as guidance in making sound, ethical decisions in both business relationships and the routine execution of our professional duties.

USOLN members shall use the following ethical guidelines and as a member in good standing shall pledge themselves to the following Standards of Ethical Conduct:

- Obey all applicable laws
- Honesty, fairness, acting with responsibility and integrity
- Open, candid communications
- Mutual respect and trust for each individual and company one deals with
- Proactive dispute resolution
- Promise only what can be delivered
- Refuse to offer or accept gifts, favors, or entertainment that obligates or appears to obligate me to act in any way contrary to ethical business practices and avoid compromise of professional judgment by conflicts of interest
- Proper management of confidential and/or proprietary information as it applies to each unique business relationship
- Conduct professional relations by the highest standards of integrity
- Refuse to engage in negative communications either privately or publicly that disparage other individuals or entities of the triangle
- Act in a manner free of bias with regard to religion, ethnicity, gender, age, national origin, sexual orientation or disability
- Encourage all businesses within my sphere of influence to adopt these principles
- Seek opportunities to be of constructive service in civic affairs and work for the advancement of the safety, health and wellbeing of the community and our profession by sharing knowledge and skills

I understand that it is my solemn responsibility to demonstrate the content as well as the spirit of this document within my industry and profession.

# EXAM PREPARATION



## CUSP BLUE EXAM CONTENT OUTLINE

This is the matrix by which the CUSP Blue exam was developed. It is expected that a utility safety professional will meet and/or exceed the required knowledge in these subject areas.

### **STANDARDS: 15%**

1. OSHA Federal Regulations
2. Cranes and Derricks in Construction
3. Performance and Consensus Standards
4. OSHA Recordkeeping Requirements
5. Certification or Qualification
6. Legal Considerations
7. Enforcement Policies of Regulatory Agencies
8. Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSR)
9. Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)

### **HAZARD ID: 15%**

1. Typical Workplace Hazards
2. Hazards vs. Risk
3. Responsibilities
4. Common Utility Industry Practices
5. Monitoring
6. Evaluating Program Effectiveness

### **INCIDENT PREVENTION: 15%**

1. Define Incident Prevention
2. Fundamentals of Incident Prevention
3. Tracking and Interpreting Incidents
4. Incident Investigation
5. Typical Incident Prevention Programs

### **LEADERSHIP SKILLS: 25%**

1. Communicating Safety Values and Expectations
2. Identify/Explain Critical Safety Data Measurements
3. Safety Program Accountability
4. Proactive vs. Reactive
5. Building Effective Relationships

### **HUMAN PERFORMANCE: 5%**

1. What is Human Performance?
2. Recognizing Active and Latent Errors
3. Understanding Latent Organizational Weaknesses
4. Anatomy of Events

### **OPERATIONS: 25%**

1. Operations Responsibilities and Accountabilities in the Safety Process
2. Understanding the Difference Between Compliance and Safety
3. Implementing Operational Practices
4. Gap Analysis

**RECOMMENDED:** Two-day Utility Safety Leadership Review as established by the USOLN.

# EXAM PREPARATION



## CUSP GREEN EXAM CONTENT OUTLINE

This is the matrix by which the CUSP Green exam was developed. It is expected that a utility safety professional will meet and/or exceed the required knowledge in these subject areas.

### **STANDARDS: 30%**

1. OSHA Federal Regulations
2. Cranes and Derricks in Construction
3. Performance and Consensus Standards
4. OSHA Recordkeeping Requirements
5. Certification or Qualification
6. Legal Considerations
7. Enforcement Policies of Regulatory Agencies
8. Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSR)
9. Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)

### **HAZARD ID: 20%**

1. Typical Workplace Hazards
2. Hazards vs. Risk
3. Responsibilities
4. Common Utility Industry Practices
5. Monitoring
6. Evaluating Program Effectiveness

### **INCIDENT PREVENTION: 20%**

1. Define Incident Prevention
2. Fundamentals of Incident Prevention
3. Tracking and Interpreting Incidents
4. Incident Investigation
5. Typical Incident Prevention Programs

### **LEADERSHIP SKILLS: 15%**

1. Communicating Safety Values and Expectations
2. Identify/Explain Critical Safety Data Measurements
3. Safety Program Accountability
4. Proactive vs. Reactive
5. Building Effective Relationships

### **HUMAN PERFORMANCE: 5%**

1. What is Human Performance?
2. Recognizing Active and Latent Errors
3. Understanding Latent Organizational Weaknesses
4. Anatomy of Events

### **OPERATIONS: 10%**

1. Operations Responsibilities and Accountabilities in the Safety Process
2. Understanding the Difference Between Compliance and Safety
3. Implementing Operational Practices
4. Gap Analysis

**RECOMMENDED:** Two-day Utility Safety Leadership Review as established by the USOLN.

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## UTILITY SAFETY LEADERSHIP REFERENCE MATERIALS

<a href="#"><u>OSHA 1910.269</u></a>	U.S. Department of Labor
<a href="#"><u>OSHA 1910.268</u></a>	U.S. Department of Labor
<a href="#"><u>OSHA 1904 Record Keeping</u></a>	U.S. Department of Labor
<a href="#"><u>OSHA 1910 Subpart A, Subpart F, Subpart I, Subpart K, Subpart L, Subpart N, Subpart S</u></a>	U.S. Department of Labor
<a href="#"><u>OSHA 1926 Subpart K, Subpart M, Subpart N, Subpart P, Subpart V</u></a>	U.S. Department of Labor
<b>National Electric Safety Code® (NEESC)® 2012 Part 4</b>	IEEE Online Store
<a href="#"><u>Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) 2009 Edition - Part 6, Chapters 6E and 6G</u></a>	Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration
<a href="#"><u>Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSR) Part 40, Part 382, Part 391, Pre-Trip and Post-Trip</u></a>	U.S. Department of Transportations, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration
<b>Fundamentals of Occupational Safety &amp; Health By Dr. Mark A. Friend &amp; Dr. James P. Kohn</b>	Amazon
<b>Supervisor's Safety Manual - 10th Edition</b>	National Safety Council or Amazon
<b>You've Just Been Made a Supervisor...Now What? By Meredith Onion &amp; Michael O'Toole</b>	National Safety Council or Amazon
<a href="#"><u>Human Performance Improvement Handbook</u></a>	U.S. Department of Energy
<b>Working Safe by E. Scott Geller</b>	Amazon
<b>Lineman's and Cableman's Field Handbook By Thomas Shoemaker &amp; James Mack</b>	Amazon



# MAINTAINING YOUR CUSP CREDENTIAL



Your CUSP credential is valid for a two-year period beginning on the day that you become certified. In order to maintain your CUSP credential, you must fulfill continuing professional development requirements and submit an annual CUSP maintenance fee of \$130.

**CUSP GREEN** - Utility safety professionals and managers who have achieved the CUSP Green credential are required to earn **40 CUSP Points** over a two-year time period.

**CUSP BLUE** - Utility operations managers who have achieved the CUSP Blue credential are required to earn **30 CUSP points** over a two-year time period.

## CUSP RECERTIFICATION GUIDE

CUSP Recertification Activities	Maximum Points/Year	Description	Points Earned
Continuing Education Units (CEUs)	Unlimited	Safety-related education courses that are assigned CEUs	1 CEU = 4 CUSP points
Other Safety Education	Unlimited	Participation in relevant safety-related education and seminars	Contact hours/10 x 4 = CUSP Points
College or University Courses	Unlimited	Relevant safety or management courses	Maximum of 2 CUSP points per credit hour
Achieving Relevant New Certifications	Unlimited	Must be safety-related	Maximum of 30 points per certificate
Volunteer Service to Safety Organization (other than your own company)	5 CUSP points	Examples: service as an officer, board or committee member of a national safety organization; member of an editorial board; or chair or member of conference organizing committee	Based on hours of volunteer service
Attending Professional Development Conferences**	Unlimited	Must have safety-related content	iP Safety Conference & Expo = 20 points Others = 10 point maximum Points based on contact hours and relevance of content
Publications/Presentations	5 CUSP points	Must be safety-related	Up to 5 CUSP points per activity
Planning and Facilitating Safety Meetings	5 CUSP points	Must be a minimum of 6 meetings per year	Up to 5 CUSP points
Company Voluntary Protection Programs (VVP) Certification	N/A	An OSHA Cooperative Program	Certification = 10 points Recertification = 5 points

\*\*Examples: EEI Occupational Safety & Health Conference, SWESE, IUOTA, NSC Safety Congress, Lineman's Rodeo Safety Conference, ASSE

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## PROCESS TO REQUEST CREDITS

1. As you complete continuing professional development activities, fill out the CUSP Points Request Form.
2. Provide appropriate supporting documentation to verify your request. Supporting documentation might include:
  - Safety Education — copies of certificates, transcripts and registration forms
  - Publications/Presentations — copies of presentations or publications
  - Professional Development Conference — copy of event registration and agenda/description of conference
  - Safety Meetings — copies of sign-in sheets and meeting agendas
  - Volunteer Service — a letter from the organization documenting the dates and descriptions of the service provided
3. Submit the CUSP Points Request Form and supporting documentation to the USOLN:
  - Email to: [Catherine@usoln.org](mailto:Catherine@usoln.org)
  - Fax to: 815-425-6305
  - Mail to: USOLN  
360 Memorial Drive, Suite 10  
Crystal Lake, IL 60014

It is your responsibility to maintain your CUSP credential. You will receive a statement twice a year to inform you of the status of maintaining your CUSP credential. You will also receive an invoice once a year prior to the due date of your renewal fees becoming due. If you have any questions, please contact:

Catherine Cox, USOLN Member Services  
[Catherine@usoln.org](mailto:Catherine@usoln.org)  
815-459-1796