

Synthetic Turf Council (STC) Certification Handbook for Certified Turf Installer-Landscape (CTI-L) Program

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About the Synthetic Turf Council

The STC is the world's largest organization representing the synthetic turf industry, representing over 240 companies with operations in over thirteen countries. Founded in 2003, the STC assists buyers and end users with the selection, use and maintenance of synthetic turf systems in sports field, golf, municipal parks, airports, landscape and residential applications. It is a resource for current, credible, and independent research on the safety and environmental impact of synthetic turf, as well as technical guidance on the selection, installation, maintenance, and environmentally responsible disposal of synthetic turf. Membership includes builders, landscape architects, testing labs, maintenance providers, manufacturers, suppliers, installation contractors, infill material suppliers and other specialty service companies.

The STC is a 501(c)6 non-profit trade association serving the synthetic turf industry.

Importance of Certification

With new and evolving challenges, industry trends, and practices, it is important for employers to identify opportunities to further educate their employees to anticipate issues, improve operations, and

stay current with industry trends. Professional certifications frequently go well beyond traditional academic training, instead testing one's management skills and professional knowledge, often gained through work and management experience. Completion of a professional certification signifies competency against a recognized set of standards and continuing education requirements to maintain one's certification require an individual to remain engaged and up-to-date in their field.

STC Certified Turf Installer-Landscape (CTI-L) Program

The Certified Turf Installer-Landscape Program was developed by the STC to help promote industry-recognized best practices for landscape synthetic turf installation.

The Certified Turf Installer-Landscape (CTI-L) program is the premiere program of its type in the synthetic grass landscape market. An extensive two-part process - Part One, the Course and Exam, is a one-day classroom-based course and exam for qualified individuals who are currently employed in the landscape synthetic turf industry seeking education on landscape synthetic turf installation. Part Two, the Application for Certification, is an extensive portfolio completed by the Candidate in specific areas including Years in Business, Experience References, and Code of Conduct. For areas that a Candidate may not actively manage, the STC aids in learning the complexities and technical aspects, which in turn allows for successful hiring and supervision of a project.

Candidate Eligibility

To be eligible for Certification, the Candidate must:

1. Have an acceptable business performance record;
2. Complete an Application for Certification and meet the minimum eligibility criteria and installation experience;
3. Complete the Certified Turf Installer - Landscape course;
4. Receive a passing grade of 80% or higher on the exam;
5. Agree to abide by the STC's Code of Ethics; and
6. Be willing to voluntarily comply with all provisions of the Certification.

Once you have completed the above steps and receive your certification it will be valid for two (2) years. During each two-year term, you must complete eight (8) continuing education hours in order to renew your certification.

Application Process

The Candidate must submit the online application in full, and submit payment for the course. If applying through an STC member, your company must be a Full Member in good standing. Upon successful completion of your course registration, you will receive an invoice receipt via email.

Applications are sent to the STC Office Headquarters for approval and once payment is received, you will be notified of acceptance as a CTI-L Candidate via email. Once registered for the course, the Candidate has thirty (30) days to submit payment to confirm their participation and two (2) years from the course date to complete the Application for Certification.

Once the Candidate has completed the above steps and received certification it will be valid for two (2) years.

Application Fees (subject to change)

\$550 – STC Full Members

\$965 – Non-members

\$600 – STC Full membership annual dues for Regional Landscape Installers

Preparing for the Course Exam

The application test is based on knowledge that an individual pursuing CTI-L certification should already have and no study material is provided.

The exam is 20 multiple choice questions based on different facets of landscape synthetic grass installation such as:

1. Tools
2. Design and planning
3. Ground preparation
4. Infill installation
5. Borders and edging installation
6. Weed barrier installation
7. Base materials installation
8. Turf installation—rolling, cutting, seaming, shaping, and securing
9. Wrap-up
10. Maintenance and repairs

Application Approval

Upon receipt of the Candidate's application for CTI-L certification, the staff headquarters will verify that the application is complete, including the applicant information, experience references, payment, signed commitment agreement form, and course exam results. Approved candidates will be notified of their certification status via email.

STC Certified Turf Installer-Landscape (CTI-L) Course Modules

The CTI-L course and exam are completed by the Candidate covering ten specific modules:

- Tools
- Design and planning
- Ground preparation
- Infill installation
- Borders and edging installation
- Weed barrier installation
- Base materials installation
- Turf installation—rolling, cutting, seaming, shaping, and securing
- Wrap-up

- Maintenance and repairs

Successful completion of the CTI-L requires extensive documentation, including a minimum of ten (10) projects and a minimum of 20,000 sq. ft. installed. The application is to be submitted in PDF or online format and must be complete in order for administrators to process and approve. All information provided on the application for membership must be true, accurate, and correct. If an applicant provides false information, the Board shall deny membership to the applicant and may restrict re-application permanently or for a period of time based on the materiality of the facts falsified. The installation experience listed on this application is accurate and represents your direct, on-site participation in the installation projects listed.

CTI-L Exam Results

Upon completion of the exam or the 45-minute time window, you will receive notification of your score by email in 6 to 8 weeks. A minimum passing score of 80% is required to be eligible for the CTI-L designation. Passing is required to complete the certification process.

You may reapply for certification at any time by re-registering for a future course and retaking the exam. You can find courses on our events calendar [here](#). The STC will continue to work with its committee members to develop more CTI-L course opportunities in 2020 and beyond.

The two-year time limit to apply still applies to completion of the CTI-L program if the Candidate must re-take the exam.

Maintaining Your Certification

CTI-Ls are required to submit eight (8) continuing education units (CEUs) every two years during each two-year term. CEUs are due by December 31st the year of the submission deadline and can be submitted online through the PDF form (link).

The Re-Certification Fee Structure is as follows (subject to change):

- STC Members: \$275 per person
- Non-Members: \$485 per person

Reporting Cycle

| <i>CTI-L Earned Year*</i> | <i>CEU Reporting Years</i> |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2018 | 2020, 2022, 2024, 2026, 2028, 2030 |
| 2019 | 2021, 2023, 2025, 2027, 2029, 2031 |
| 2020 | 2022, 2024, 2026, 2028, 2030, 2032 |
| 2021 | 2023, 2025, 2027, 2029, 2031, 2033 |

*If a Candidate becomes a CTI-L between October and December, their CEU renewal period shall start at the beginning of the upcoming year. Example: If a Candidate achieves the CTI-L certification October 14, 2018, they would be due to report earned CEUs by December 31, 2020.

Please note that CEUs obtained during a two year period can only be applied towards the current reporting period and cannot be applied towards future CEU reporting years.

Use of the CTI-L®

STC's Certified Turf Installer-Landscape (CTI-L) certification is a registered trademark of the Synthetic Turf Council and use of the CTI-L designation is limited to CTI-Ls in good standing. A CTI-L who does not submit continuing education units (CEUs) and required fees (if applicable) will be notified in writing that they must cease the use of "CTI-L" until they have submitted the required amount of CEUs and any outstanding fees (if applicable).

Testimonials

"There are many ways to be a good steward of your profession, one way is to always seek out learning and leadership opportunities. The Certified Turf Installer program is a great example of this. Becoming a certified individual gives you the chance to collaborate with other industry professionals while enhancing your knowledge and skill-set at the same time. This is a designation you can take back to your company which will allow you to stand out in a competitive field, but ultimately, one more way you can provide your customers the peace of mind that they are dealing with a respected and trustworthy professional."

Brad Borgman, CPSI, CTI-L, Director of Sales, USGreentech

"Professionalism. The CTI-L course outlines best practices and operational methods used to properly install synthetic grass. Understanding turf design, methods, regions, types and supplies is critical in the development of the industry. Learning from experienced installers, manufacturers, and peers increases one knowledge of their profession and skill. It's a must for anyone calling themselves a professional installer."

Michael McCaskill, CTI-L, Owner/CEO, Turfscapes LLC



George Neagle, CTI-L, Executive VP, SYNLaw

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

If you can't find an answer to your question on the STC website, please contact Melanie Taylor, STC Associate Director, at melanie@syntheticturfcouncil.org or call (443) 640-1067 x1142.

How do I get certified?

Installers seeking to become Certified Turf Installers-Landscape can get the complete information [here](#). You need to take a Certified Turf Installer-Landscape Course by checking out the events calendar and

signing up for any of the available courses. Make sure that you fill out and submit the required installation experience application form. If you pass the exam and have the required installation experience, you may be approved to become a Certified Turf Installer-Landscape (CTI-L).

How do I become an STC Certified Turf Installer - Landscape (CTI-L)?

1. Select an upcoming Certified Turf Installer-Landscape (CTI-L) course (view the course calendar, [here](#));
2. Submit payment for the course. The course fee is \$550 per person for STC Members, and \$965 per person for Non-STC Members. In order to receive the \$550 member rate for your course registration, you must be a STC Full Member in good standing;
 - a. If your company is not an STC member and you would like to join today to receive the \$550 course fee rate, simply complete the online membership application, [here](#).
 - b. Your first-year of STC membership dues are due with your membership application.
3. Receive a passing grade of 80% or higher on the Certified Turf Installer–Landscape exam;
4. Complete an Application for Certification and meet the minimum eligibility criteria and installation experience;
5. Agree to abide by the STC Code of Ethics and have an acceptable business performance record; and
6. Be willing to voluntarily comply with all provisions of the Certification, including continuing education.

Once you have completed the above steps and receive your certification, it will be valid for two (2) years. During each two-year term, you must complete eight (8) continuing education hours in order to renew your certification.

How does the CTI-L certification designation apply to my company?

It should be noted that your certification is a *personal designation*, earned by *you* through successful completion of the program. We must bring attention to the fact that it does **not** apply to your company as a whole. Please make sure that company electronic and print publications and documents reflect the personal and individual nature of your designation. In other words, it should indicate that you as a certified professional are a member of your company, not that the company itself is certified. If you have any questions regarding the use of your designation, please call the STC office headquarters at 443-640-1067.

Here are some examples of how to promote your designation:

- I hold a Certification for the STC Certified Turf Installer-Landscape Course
- I am an STC Certified Turf Installer for Landscape (CTI-L)
- Our company employs a Certified Turf Installer for Landscape (CTI-L)
- Our company follows STC’s best practices for installation

What is the basis of certification?

Certification approval is based on your passing exam score, review of your application and your pledge to abide by the terms and conditions of the Certified Turf Installer-Landscape Program Commitment Agreement.

What if I'm not an installer, but I want to take the course?

The course and exam is intended for experienced and qualified installers of landscape synthetic grass who meet the minimum installation experience requirements (minimum of 10 landscape and recreation projects and a minimum of 20,000 sq. ft.).

We will continue to work with our STC committee members to come up with new opportunities for individuals who want to take the course but don't install (design professionals, industry sales representatives, etc.).

What if I am an installer, but I don't meet the installation experience requirements yet?

In order to register for the CTI-L course, the individual must meet the minimum installation experience requirements (minimum of 10 landscape and recreation projects and a minimum of 20,000 sq. ft.). If you currently do not meet the minimum installation experience requirements, you may wait until you do meet them before registering for the course.

How far back am I able to go for my installation experience?

Installation experience should be within the past five years from the date the application is submitted.

What counts as installation experience?

Installation experience refers to active participation on-site in the installation of a landscape synthetic grass system. Do not include any projects on which work has not yet begun, or for which you were not actively involved on the job site.

I am renewing my certification, do I need to complete the Application for Certification?

The Application for Certification is required at the time of renewal in order to maintain an accurate database of certified individuals. Please note that your installation experience needs to be submitted only once. You will not be required to submit this portion of the application again.

How much Continuing Education do I have to complete?

During each two-year certification term Certified Turf Installers will need to complete eight (8) continuing education hours/credits, including attendance to one (1) STC Annual Membership Meeting. In most instances, one hour equals one continuing education credit. On average, the STC Annual Membership Meeting provides you with 4-6 hours of eligible continuing education programming.

What can I attend for Continuing Education?

All STC presentations at the STC Annual Membership Meeting are pre-approved for continuing education, as well as numerous member-sponsored presentations (typically provided by producer or distributor sales representatives).

View a full listing of continuing education programs that have been pre-approved by STC, [here](#).

Not every program a Certified Turf Installer attends needs to be "pre-approved" in order for it to count toward CE credit; however, pre-approved programs have gone through a review and approval process, and are sure to meet STC's guidelines for Continuing Education for Certified Installers.

If you are having difficulty finding programs near you, check with your local synthetic turf manufacturer sales representative or distributor to see if they are offering any continuing education programs. Let us know if you hear about them - we would love to see more programs added to the pre-approved list.

Additionally, if you know of any synthetic turf-related seminars, workshops, or presentations that you think should be approved for continuing education, please contact the STC office headquarters at office@syntheticturfcouncil.org, and we will review the content for approval of continuing education.

Why do I have to do Continuing Education?

Continuing education is an important part of a certification program. If an organization certifies a participant's competency (earning a passing exam score and meeting a minimum amount of installation experience are the criteria determined for the STC Certified Turf Installer-Landscape certification program), the organization must also have a way to keep those who are certified up to date on changes in the industry and keep their training current. Continuing education is the most common way for organizations to accomplish this.

Where can I find courses?

You can find courses by checking out the [events calendar](#). We have courses all over North America. Please check the events calendar to see if there is a course near you.

What's the difference between membership and certification?

Membership belongs to the company. Certification belongs to the individual. It is the individual who is certified, not the company. Any company who does not have a Certified Installer on staff is not allowed to use the Certified Installer logo.

How do I qualify for STC Membership?

Companies seeking to join the STC as a Full Member may apply online [here](#). Upon receipt of your application and dues payment for the first year, the STC Board of Directors will review your application. If approved, we will forward your new member welcome materials and information on how to make the most of your STC membership.

Annual Membership Dues for Regional Landscape Installers start at \$600 per company (based on gross-revenues in synthetic turf).

Can I join after becoming certified as a Non-Member?

Yes. Non-member participants may upgrade their status to a Full Member at any time during their two-year certification period. Refunds, credits, or discounts will not be granted to individuals who pay the non-member rate before joining.

What is the difference between STC Certified member companies and STC Certified Installers?

STC Certification is available to Full Member companies. It is not a technical certification but is intended to inform buyers and end-users of synthetic turf that the STC member company meets certain experience and customer satisfaction criteria. After one year of membership, a company may apply for

STC Certification. For more information about this program, please visit the [STC Certification Program](#) page.

The Certified Turf Installer-Landscape certification program was developed to promote industry-recognized best practices for the synthetic turf installation profession. Individuals who are presently installing landscape synthetic turf and meet the eligibility criteria and installation experience are eligible to apply for CTI-L certification.

Can I sponsor a course?

If your company is a member in good standing with STC, the company may sponsor an installer course. Please contact STC Office Headquarters for more information at 443-640-1067 x1142 or email office@syntheticturfcouncil.org.

How long is the certification good for?

Certification has to be renewed every two years and expires on December 31 in Year 2. Please check your expiration year and renew before your certification is up.

Can I have a reprint of my certificate/can I have my certificate re-issued?

Requests for reprints of any certificates or IDs have a \$25 reprint charge. Please contact the STC office headquarters at office@syntheticturfcouncil.org for reprints.

How long before I get my test results?

Your test results will be processed within 6-8 weeks after the materials have been shipped back to the STC Office.

Disclaimer

The STC Certified Turf Installer Program is intended to communicate industry guidelines to landscape synthetic turf installers for estimating, planning and executing residential and commercial projects and to educate individuals in applicable construction and general business practices for landscape synthetic turf applications. The STC recognizes only that a Record of Completion awarded to a participant conveys that the participant has completed the required course of instruction and earned a passing grade on the examination administered by STC at the conclusion of the course. For a participant obtaining Certification designation status, the STC recognizes only that the certificate holder has earned a Record of Completion and has also met the minimum eligibility requirements for installation experience. The STC exercises no control or direction over certified landscape turf installers and does not in any manner endorse, guarantee, or certify the performance or quality of services rendered or products used. The STC further disclaims any and all liability for injuries or damages to persons or property or for monetary damages arising out of or resulting from the failure of performance of services rendered or products used by an installer holding an STC certification or designation.