How to Study for the CAFM/CAFS Examinations
Introduction

The Certified Automotive Fleet Manager (CAFM)/Certified Automotive Fleet Specialist (CAFS) certification program is a self-study academic program for current and future fleet managers and fleet supervisors. Created and administered by NAFA staff and professional member volunteers, it is both challenging and rewarding. The achievement of the CAFM or CAFS is an important accomplishment for a professional Fleet Manager or Fleet Supervisor.

Success in the CAFM program depends on passing 8 multiple-choice exams within 3 years.

For the CAFS program, success is gained with passing 4 multiple-choice exams within 2 years.

The exams are available online through NAFA’s Learning Management System (LMS) and can be taken at any time you are ready. Thorough preparation for these multiple-choice exams is necessary.

Everyone starts with a different level of experience and learns at a different pace. The time spent in study to successfully pass each exam will vary so you must establish a unique study plan that works for you.

This Study Guide will help you create a plan for success. It will provide guidance on how to set up a plan based on your unique style and the time you have available to devote to studying.

You may have heard the adage “failing to plan is planning to fail.” Do not let that happen to you!
Time Management

Once you are enrolled in the CAFM or CAFS program, you will create your study plan.

CAFM graduates tell us that about 20 study hours per module is required to successfully prepare and pass the certification exams, so this is a good place to start. You can adjust as needed. Candidates can take up to 3 years for the CAFM program or 2 years for the CAFS program. However, depending on your personal goals, you may choose to complete the program in less time.

Knowing when you want to start and complete the program allows you to allocate how many hours of preparation you need to do each week. Your plan focuses on how you will manage your time. Time management is the process of planning and exercising conscious control of the time you will spend on specific activities. This planning will help you to increase your effectiveness, efficiency, and productivity as you pursue your certification.

In determining what your study plan may be, including how much time to devote to study, please consider the following:

- Familiarity with studying, particularly using study guides
- Weekly time available for study
- Familiarity with the subject matter
- Personal and professional goals

FAMILIARITY WITH STUDYING, PARTICULARLY USING STUDY GUIDES

When was the last time you studied for an exam? Was it last year during your university finals? Or was it 15 years ago during your high school years? What was your study experience like? Those in the military may have experience using study guides others maybe not. These all factor into planning your study time.
WEEKLY TIME AVAILABLE FOR STUDY

What does your weekly schedule look like? Are you a busy parent or a single individual with flexibility in your schedule? Weekly availability will factor into planning your study time.

FAMILIARITY WITH THE SUBJECT MATTER

It is easier to study for a topic when you have a base of knowledge to start. These topics will require less time than those that are brand new to you. Your existing experience with the subject matter will factor into planning your study time.

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL GOALS

Why did you decide to enroll in the CAFM or CAFS certification program? Do you want to gain knowledge to be more confident in your current job? Prepare for a new job or career? Are you currently employed or find yourself seeking a new job? Is your employer requiring the certification? Your personal and professional goals will all factor into planning your study time.

Knowing when you want to start and complete the program allows you to then allocate the hours for preparation you need to do each week. Once you have this number, you will create a plan to include time you will spend on specific study activities. Following your weekly study plan will help you work most efficiently toward meeting your goals.

Let’s look at a few examples.
GOAL: COMPLETE THE CAFM IN ONE YEAR.

Using the average study time of 20 hours per module, or 160 hours per program, and assuming you’d like to take a vacation sometime during the year, you will allocate a minimum of 3.2 hours per week for 50 weeks (160/50). This can be rolled up to 3-1/2 hours per week for easy calculations. Will you divide up your weekly study time by, for example, 5 70-minute blocks in the evenings, or study one 3-1/2-hour block on Saturdays? Divide it any way you want. Just be sure to record it on your plan, and then follow your plan. Record your plan on your computer or phone calendar and set reminders. You can always adjust if you need to.

GOAL: COMPLETE THE CAFM IN 2-1/2 YEARS.

Using the same average study time of 20 hours per module, or 160 hours per program, divide 160 hours by 125 weeks and your weekly study time is 1.3 hours. You can round this up to 1-1/2 hours per week. Where will this study time fit into your schedule? Perhaps 30 minutes in the morning, 3 days per week. Determine what works best for you. Record your plan on your computer or phone calendar and set reminders to study. You can always make adjustments.

For CAFS, follow the same process using 80 total hours as the total time needed to complete the program.

WHICH MODULE TO START?

Each CAFM/S module is independent and does not rely on the content of the others. So where do you begin? That is up to you. Some individuals like to tackle the most difficult part of a project first, and therefore will select the least-understood module. Those who would be motivated by an early success might benefit by starting with a well-known topic. Still others might need to complete a specific module to prepare for a work event. It is up to you.
MILESTONES

Milestones indicate key events in your plan. They are helpful because they ensure you are on track to meet your goals. A logical milestone in your pursuit of CAFM/S certification is the successful completion of a certification exam. Plot the date of when you will take your first certification exam on your calendar about 20 study hours from when you will start.

Using the examples above, if you plan to complete the CAFM in one year you will most likely be ready to take an exam in 5 or 6 weeks. For the 2-1/2-year example, you will likely be ready to take an exam in about 13 weeks. Mark these milestones on your calendar. When you complete this first milestone, celebrate! Review your time leading up to taking the exam and make any adjustments to your calendar. Then mark your next milestone.
Study Methodology

Once you have answered the key questions of when you will undertake the program and how you will allocate your study time, you still need to determine your individual study methodology.

Here are some common methodologies to consider:

STUDY SPACE

Allocating a good place to study may seem like a trivial concern but finding the right study space is an important contributing factor to your success.

According to HowToStudy.com a good study area should have the following characteristics:

Available when required. Your study space does you little good if you cannot use it when you need it. If you are using a study space that you must share with others for any reason, work out a schedule so that you know when you can use it.

Free from interruptions. It is important to have uninterrupted study time. You may have to hang a DO NOT DISTURB sign on the door or silence the phone.

Free from distractions. Research shows that most students study best in a quiet environment. If you find that playing a stereo or TV improves your mood, keep the volume low.

Study materials available. Be sure your study space includes reference sources and supplies such as pens and pencils, paper, ruler, calculator, and whatever else you might need. If you use a computer for your schoolwork, it should be in your study space.

Adequate desk space. While working on an assignment or studying for an exam, use a desk or table that is large enough to hold everything you need. Allow enough room for writing and try to avoid clutter.
Adequate storage space. You need enough room to store your study materials. Be sure you have enough storage space to allow you to keep your desktop or other work surface clear of unnecessary materials that can get in the way.

Comfortable chair. A chair that is not comfortable can cause discomfort or pain that will interfere with your studying. A chair that is too comfortable might make you sleepy. Select a chair in which you can sit for long periods while maintaining your attention.

Enough light. The amount of light you need depends on what you are doing. The important thing is that you can clearly see what you need to see without any strain or discomfort.

Comfortable temperature. If your study space is too warm, you might become sleepy. If it is too cold, your thinking may slow down and become unclear. Select a temperature at which your mind and body function best.

STUDY MATERIALS

With the ideal study space secure, you can turn your attention to your retrieving your study materials.

NAFA provides the following materials to use in preparation for the CAFM/CAFS exams:

▪ Reference Guide (one per module)
▪ Study Guide (one per module)
  ○ Learning Objectives
  ○ Questions with References
  ○ Practice Questions

Each is available in your "My Digital Library and Certification" once you are enrolled in either the CAFM and CAFS Program. Download the materials from "My Digital Library and Certification" available by logging into the NAFA website and navigating to your profile. Please review the Instructions Page and bookmark for easy reference.

Use the computer to study the PDF or print hard copies of the entire study package and organize in a binder as needed.

You will also need appropriate paper, pens, laptop, etc., according to your chosen study method.
STUDY METHOD

To guarantee your success in the CAFM/CAFS exams it is recommended you take a systematic approach to studying that focuses on the areas highlighted in the Study Guide.

Thorough preparation necessitates answering all Study Guide questions and studying the areas they cover.

While all information contained in the Reference Guide is deemed relevant for Fleet Managers or Supervisors, only the areas covered by the Study Guide will appear as exam questions.

Therefore, the following steps should provide candidates with a good preparation for each module:

- Answer all of the questions in the Study Guide.
- Read the questions covering a particular reference.
- Next read the reference.
- Record the answer to the question either in the electronic version or paper version of the Study Guide.
- Finally, review the reference to ensure your answer is complete and understood.
- Prepare review notes.
- From the answers to Study Guide questions, summarize areas you think are most important.
- Study review notes.
- Read and study your notes until you are comfortable with all of the material.
- Ask for clarification.
- If there are any areas of confusion, refer the questions to the CAFM or CAFS Online Community, your Chapter Study Group, or NAFA staff as appropriate.
- Complete the Practice Questions to verify your level of knowledge.
Taking Certification Exams

Each CAFM/CAFS certification exam consists of 50 multiple-choice questions, to be taken in a one-hour timeframe.

Multiple-choice exams are a very specific type of exam that requires knowledge and preparation.

The multiple-choice questions you will find on the CAFM/CAFS exams are NOT designed to test your ability to take an exam.

The questions are of two types – fact recall and application of knowledge.

Fact recall questions are the most straightforward. They simply test your ability to recall a fact covered in the Study Guide.

Applications of knowledge questions, however, take a principle from the Study Guide and require you to apply it in order to answer the question. They may take the form of a computation or a comparison.

On the CAFM/CAFS exams you will not find ‘all of the above’ or ‘none of the above’ as choices.

For every question there is one correct answer.

Time is rarely a factor in answering all questions.

Ample time is allocated for candidates to carefully consider, answer and review all questions.

Here are some general guidelines that will help you correctly answer multiple-choice items.

- Note important words in the question. This will help you focus on the information most needed to identify the correct answer choice.
- Read all the answer choices before selecting one. It is just as likely for the last answer choice to be correct as the first.
- Eliminate answer choices you are certain are not correct. This will help you narrow down the correct answer choice.
- Look for answer choices that contain language used by the reference. An answer choice that contains such language is usually correct.
- Do not change your initial answer unless you are sure another answer choice is correct. More often than not, your first choice is correct.
- Knowing how multiple-choice items are constructed and using these guidelines will help you improve your score on a multiple-choice exam.
- When you are ready to take an exam, go to Preparing to Take Certification Exams.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact NAFA Headquarters directly at 609-720-0882 or send e-mail to certification@nafa.org.