

---

## Certification – What does it mean?

A spotlight has been placed on the security industry like never before increasing job and salary opportunities for locksmiths and security professionals. In North America, the recent construction boom has had the same effect.

With so many flocking to these sectors and vying for the opportunities therein, one way for individuals to move ahead and to distinguish themselves may be to attain a certification.

Being able to present yourself as a certified professional gives others an easy way for others to assess your level of experience and of letting them know you have met standards deemed essential for your occupation. It provides an element of credibility.

If you own a business, a certification can assure prospective customers of your competence and that you have the knowledge to do the job safely and effectively. It increases their comfort levels in dealing with you. Along with a well-planned marketing strategy and excellent customer service, a certification will give you the competitive edge.

If you are looking for a raise, promotion or want to woo a new employer, a certification may help there, too. Your certification not only indicates that you have been formally tested to have a certain range of skills, but also that your knowledge is current and relevant. This is because certified professionals are required to seek re-certification to maintain their certified status. In the case of ALOA, the USA's highest profile certification body, the re-certification term is every 3 years.

### Is a Certification a License?

Certifications are often confused with licenses. Whereas in some states, it may be illegal to practice a profession without a license, certifications are typically not a legal requirement. Licenses are issued by government bodies. Certifications are granted by credentialing bodies after ensuring that the candidate has met a certain level of experience and education.

### Choosing a Certifying Program

For those considering certification, it is important to choose a program which has a good reputation and which provides professional credibility with whomever you work. For example, government and educational institutions are major employers of locksmiths and, if these areas interest you, you need to find out what certifying bodies they recognize and which types of certifications they prefer contractors and employers to have. They may, for example, require that the candidate has been through a program which has tested his/her knowledge and skills through an examination. They may also be looking at what specific skill sets were tested. Since these questions may be asked of you, ask the same when looking for a certifying program. Other questions to ask are:

- ➔ How was the examination developed? Ideally, it should be designed by qualified test development professionals and according to internationally accepted procedures.
- ➔ How much is provide by way of support and reference materials?

We're not specifically recommending certification or any one certifying body. However, statistics reveal that certified professionals as a whole do tend to earn more than their non-certified peers and have an increased chance of being hired. As for locksmiths and security professionals, the Associated Locksmiths of America (ALOA) certification would stand you in good stead because it is so widely recognized, worldwide and provides instant credibility.