

American Tree Farm System  
Inspecting Forester Compliance Policy

Qualified ATFS Inspectors, as defined by 2015-2020 ATFS Standards of Sustainability and Guidance, are expected to comply with all policies and procedures of the American Forest Foundation (AFF) and American Tree Farm System (ATFS), as well as any applicable legal or professional requirements associated with the forestry profession in the states or counties of practice. These include but are not limited to ATFS Standards of Sustainability, ATFS Database Use and Nondisclosure Policy, ATFS inspections procedures, state forestry registration laws and professional codes of ethics sanctioned by partnering organizations such as the Society of American Foresters (SAF) and the Association of Consulting Foresters (ACF). Failure to comply with such policies may result in revocation of credentials as a Qualified ATFS Inspector. Qualified ATFS Inspectors serve at the discretion of the AFF; privileges and affiliation with ATFS may be withdrawn by AFF staff after completion of the review process outlined below.

Review Process and Procedures

In the event that nonconformance with relevant codes of ethics, legal or professional requirements or AFF/ATFS policies is alleged, the following steps will be taken to review relevant information and identify corrective actions, including expulsion from the Qualified ATFS Inspector rolls. All investigations, discussions and meetings would be held in confidence and on a “need to know” basis to protect the interests of parties associated with the allegations.

1. Complaint is received or identified by a State Committee or AFF;
2. AFF staff undertake investigation of the credibility of the complaint;
3. In the event an AFF staff member brings the complaint, actions will be investigated by the AFF Certification Committee or representatives they designate;
4. Actions are investigated by AFF staff, or designated representatives, including review of any relevant documents, to determine the nature and extent of allegation;
5. The complainant and Inspector are each interviewed by AFF Staff;
6. State Committee members, or others who may be in competition with the Inspector, may present information to AFF staff for consideration in the investigation but are not, in any circumstances, engaged in recommendations or decision-making regarding the revocation of credentials or affiliation;
7. Any AFF staff recommendation for the revocation of credentials as a Qualified ATFS Inspector or affiliation with ATFS will be reviewed and approved by the AFF Certification Committee to ensure due process;
8. Minutes of the AFF Certification Committee’s review and rulings will be documented to ensure a record of decision is available, upon request;
9. AFF Staff findings and the recommendations for action, including sanctions, if appropriate, are presented to the Inspector and respective State Committee;
10. In the event Inspector does not agree with the decision, he/she has the ability to dispute the decision, in accordance with AFF Disputes and Appeals Procedures.