



How To Study
for the CAFM/CAFS Examination

Introduction

The Certified Automotive Fleet Manager (CAFM/CAFS) program is a challenging self-study academic program for current and future fleet managers and fleet supervisors. It has been created and is administered by NAFA staff and volunteers. It is intended to be a challenging and rewarding program. The achievement of the CAFM/CAFS is an important accomplishment for a professional Fleet Manager or Fleet Supervisor.

Success in the CAFM/CAFS program depends on thorough preparation for the multiple-choice exams. Everyone learns differently, so each candidate must establish a study program that meets their own needs. The guidelines which follow can be used by candidates to develop their individual study program.

Consider the following very different situations and study profiles:

Mr A has been a mechanic for eight years and wants to progress to a management position. He graduated from High School 12 years ago and took a one-year technical course ten years ago. He works shifts and spends his leisure time coaching Little League for his three sons. He wants to do the CAFM/CAFS to improve his professional knowledge and make him competitive for management/supervisor positions.

Mr B is new to Fleet Management or Fleet Supervision. He completed a University degree four years ago and immediately did a Master's of Business Administration. His first job for his current firm was in Accounting. After two years he was moved to his present position in Fleet. He works long hours but doesn't have family commitments yet. He wants to do the CAFM/CAFS right away for the basic knowledge he needs to do his job.

These individuals are ideal candidates for the CAFM/CAFS and their approach to preparing for the exams will be significantly different. In determining what their individual approaches should be, the most important criteria are:

1. Familiarity with studying
2. Weekly time available for study
3. Familiarity with the material

There is no template for figuring out the exact amount of preparation time you will need. On average, candidates require 100 hours of preparation. If you are above or below average in the categories above, you may need less time, or more time.

In the examples given, Mr A is not familiar with studying, has less time available weekly for study, but is likely quite familiar with the information in several of the CAFM/CAFS modules. He would probably need a bit more time than the average time stated. He might decide to take the 8 or 4 modules over three exam sittings over the course of a year to 18 months.

Mr B, on the other hand, is very comfortable with academic study and has more time available weekly to prepare, but is less familiar with the material. Still, he would likely need slightly less preparation time than the average. He might decide to write all 8 or 4 modules at one sitting after 3-5 months preparation time.

The hints and guidelines that follow are designed to assist you in determining the time you need and how to best spend this preparation time.

Time Management

You are considering enrolling in the CAFM/CAFS. Your first major decision should be made even before you enroll. You need to consider when is the best time to dedicate 3-36 or 3-24 months (depending on your background and approach) to this important professional endeavor. Remember that there is never a perfect time, but you need to ensure that you are available at scheduled exam times over the period that you plan to take the program.

Having selected an enrolment period, it is important to know, from the start, how long you plan to spend completing the program. Candidates can take up to 36 months for CAFM program or 24 months for CAFS program, but many choose to complete the program in less than that.

Knowing when you want to start and complete the program allows you to then allocate how many hours of preparation you need to do each week. Once you have this number, you need a deliberate plan on when you will find these hours for study. You need to then adhere to this plan and ensure your weekly study goals are met.

Here is how Mr A and Mr B approached the issue of time management for the CAFM program:

Question	Mr A	Mr B
1. When will you start the program?	June 08	15 Jul 08
2. When do you want to complete the program?	November 09	Oct 08
3. How many exam sittings?	Oct 08/ May 09/Oct 09	Oct 08
4. How many total hours do you estimate you need?	120 hours	80 hours
5. How many hours per week do you need to study?	18 months x 4 weeks = 72 120 hours/72 weeks = 1.7 hours/week	3 months x 4 weeks = 12 80 hours/12 weeks = 6.7 hours/week
6. When will you study?	2 hours/week Saturday mornings 0800-1000	2 hours each evening Mon to Thurs

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 work out your individual study methodology. In other words – “What works for you?” Here are some common methodologies that you should consider.

Study Space

The first thing you need to get started is a good place to study. It may seem like a trivial concern but finding the right study place is an important contributing factor to your success. According to <http://www.how-to-study.com/MultipleChoice.htm> a good study area should have the following characteristics:

1. Available when required. Your Study Place does you little good if you cannot use it when you need it. If you are using a Study Place that you must share with others for any reason, work out a schedule so that you know when you can use it.
2. 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 take the phone off the hook.
3. 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.
4. Study materials available. Be sure your Study Place 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 Place.
5. Adequate desk space. While working on an assignment or studying for a test, use a desk or table that is large enough to hold everything you need. Allow enough room for writing and try to avoid clutter.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. Comfortable temperature. If your Study Place 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 getting your study materials organized. NAFA provides the following materials to use in preparation for the CAFM/CAFS exams:

1. CD ROM with Study Guide and all References
2. Web site with individual LOGIN to access:
 - a. Learning Objectives
 - b. Study Guide
 - c. References
 - d. Practice Test Questions
3. How to Prepare for CAFM/CAFS Guidelines (this reference)

You need to decide how comfortable you are with using technology or how much you will do on the computer. Most people prefer to have hard copies of the Study Guide as a minimum, and many people like to have hard copies of the entire study package. Judge your requirement for paper copies and have them available and organized in a binder as needed.

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

Study Method

You cannot guarantee your success in the CAFM/CAFS exams without taking a systematic approach to covering the areas highlighted in the Study Guide. Thorough preparation, then, necessitates answering all Study Guide questions and studying the areas they cover. While all information contained in the references is deemed relevant for Fleet Managers, 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:

1. Answer all of the questions in the Study Guide. First 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.
2. Prepare review notes. From the answers to Study Guide questions, summarize areas you think are most important.
3. Study review notes. Read and study your notes until you are comfortable with all of the material.
4. Ask for clarification. If there are any areas of confusion, refer the questions to your Chapter Study Group, CAFM e-community, or NAFA staff as appropriate.
5. Do the Practice Test Questions. Try the PTQs to verify your level of knowledge.

Taking Exams

Multiple-Choice Tests 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 write tests. 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.

1. Circle or underline important words in the item. This will help you focus on the information most needed to identify the correct answer choice.
2. Read all the answer choices before selecting one. It is just as likely for the last answer choice to be correct as the first.
3. Cross out answer choices you are certain are not correct. This will help you narrow down the correct answer choice.
4. Look for answer choices that contain language used by the reference. An answer choice that contains such language is usually correct.
5. 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 test.

Conclusion

Congratulations for undertaking the CAFM/CAFS program. Making the decision to upgrade your professional knowledge is the first step towards certification. The road ahead is not easy but the CAFM/CAFS designation is achievable if you commit to thorough preparation and follow the recommendations in this guide. There is not a single strategy for all candidates but these guidelines can be personalized to design a study program to ensure your personal success.