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# FITSI Certification Holder Handbook



Requirements for  
Maintaining  
The Federal IT  
Security Institute  
(FITSI) Sponsored  
Certifications

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## 1. Overview

Congratulations on earning your Federal IT Security Professional (FITSP) Certification! We welcome you to the FITSP Certification Program. The Federal IT Security Institute (FITSI) was founded in 2009 to help secure the Nation's federal information systems by certifying that the federal workforce (civilian personnel, military, and contractors) understands and can apply appropriate federal Information Technology (IT) security standards. FITSI has many certification holders and members around the world and we are pleased you are a part of this exciting group. While it is not a requirement to become a FITSI member to hold a FITSP certification, we recommend you consider the benefits of membership. More information can be found at <http://www.fitsi.org>.

FITSI is an Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Code section 501(c)(6) non-profit membership organization that is supported by exam and annual maintenance fees (AMF) from its certification holders and members. FITSI was established to help provide a certification scheme for the federal IT security workforce in the United States. Candidates can pursue up to four certification roles that are commonly found in federal agencies in the United States government (Manager, Designer, Operator, and Auditor).

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## 2. Applicability

This handbook applies to all FITSP Certification Holders and provides pertinent information regarding the management and maintenance of your FITSP certification.

The most up-to-date *FITSI Certification Holder Handbook* can be found at <http://www.fitsi.org/documents>.

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### 3. Ongoing Certification Requirements

Your FITSP certification is valid for three years from the date of issue. The issue date can be found on the certification and FITSI identification (ID) card. To maintain currency of a FITSP certification, the certification holder must:

- Earn a minimum of 20 Continuing Professional Education (CPE) units each year. A FITSP Certification Holder reports annual CPE units using their individual private portal login information at <http://www.fitsi.org>. A total of 60 CPE units must be reported for the three-year certification cycle. These CPE units must be earned and reported within 30 calendar days of the anniversary date of certification. See Section 4 below for more information.
- Pay an AMF. The *FITSI Fee Schedule* can be found at <http://www.fitsi.org/documents>.

The FITSI Audit Committee conducts audits of reported CPE units as part of an oversight and validation program to ensure that reported CPE units are relevant to the industry and are appropriately quantified. All certification holders must maintain sufficient supporting documentation as discussed in Section 4 of this handbook to validate reported CPE units. Though all certification holders must retain this documentation, not all certification holders will be audited during any given certification cycle. Appropriate supporting documentation enables the Audit Committee to quickly and efficiently complete their review.

Certification holders are notified by email and asked to email appropriate documentation for review when selected for an audit. Upon successful completion of the audit, the FITSP Certification Holder is notified of the findings. If additional documentation is necessary, the auditor will notify the certification holder.

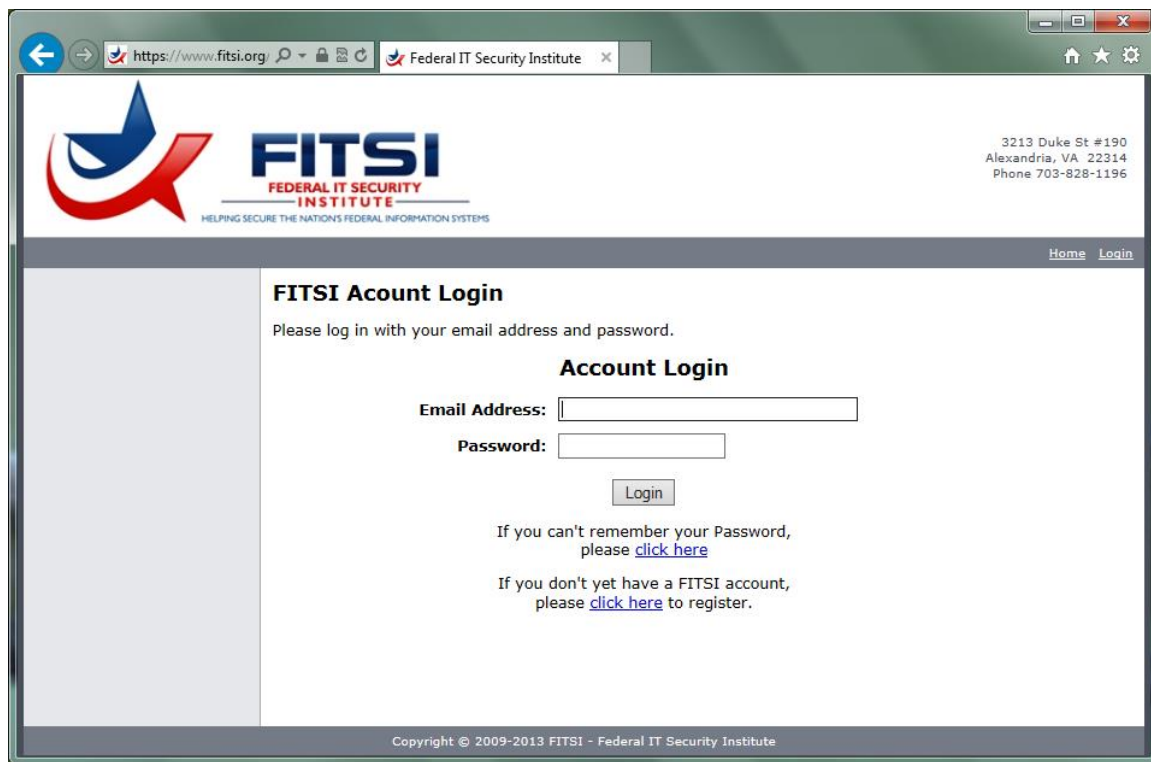
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## 4. Using the Private Portal

As a FITSP Certification Holder you will have access to the FITSI private portal. You will receive your unique login information to the portal around the time you receive your Certification Packet welcome packet. The login information will be sent to the email address that was entered during exam registration. If you fail to receive this email, please contact FITSI at [contactus@fitsi.org](mailto:contactus@fitsi.org) with the words PORTAL LOGIN in the subject area. You will need to provide the following information:

- Full Name
- Mailing address used for registration
- FITSI ID and Certification numbers (found on your FITSI ID card)
- Preferred email address for FITSI use

Once you receive your private portal login information, you can access the FITSI private portal via the **Account Login** section of <http://www.fitsi.org>. The login screen will look like this:



**Figure 1:** The FITSI Private Portal Login Screen

The **Member and Certification Holder Services** section allows the certification holders to complete a host of services items. Such items include, but are not limited to:

- Update profile information
- Record CPE units
- Join the FITSI evangelist program

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FITSI provides certification holders and members the option to include contract information in an online directory via the FITSI private portal. The type and scope of information published is controlled by the certification holder or member through their online account profile. When a new online account is created, the default policy is set to “Not Published.” The user can indicate the type of information they wish published in the directory.

FITSI may, from time to time, employ a third-party vendor to provide information to the FITSI certificant base. In this event, FITSI will only authorize the vendor a one-time use privilege regarding certificant data. FITSI does not sell, rent, or distribute personal information at any time.

No person may solicit for or use the official FITSI certificant list for any commercial purpose. This is in direct violation of the FITSI Privacy Policy. Failure to follow this policy will result in a revocation of certification. The FITSI Privacy Policy can be found at <http://www.fitsi.org/documents>.

Individuals who feel personal information has been misused should contact the FITSI Corporate Office immediately. Contact information for FITSI can be found Appendix A.



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## 5. Continuing Professional Education

As stated above, each FITSP Certification Holder must earn and report 60 CPE units per certification lifecycle (three years). This section provides details about FITSP certification CPE requirements.

### A. What is a CPE?

CPE units are obtained through the completion of activities that demonstrate growth and development of skills related to one's profession. Typically, one CPE unit is equivalent to one hour of activity in pursuit of additional industry knowledge and experience.

It is important to understand that CPE units are earned outside of one's day-to-day employment activities. Activities that are directly related to a job do not qualify as CPE units. If a FITSP Certification Holder conducts the activity within the scope of normal job responsibilities, that activity cannot be used for CPE credit.

While the activities that qualify for CPE credit must be outside the scope of an individual's day-to-day work-related responsibilities, this does not mean the activity must occur outside of normal work hours to qualify as a CPE unit. For example, a FITSP Certification Holder may attend a security-related conference that is conducted during the certification holder's normal work hours. In this situation, the certification holder may use this as an opportunity to earn CPE credit. While the activity occurs during normal working hours, because it is outside the scope of normal work-related responsibilities and contributes to the professional development of the FITSP Certification Holder, this activity can be used to earn CPE credit.

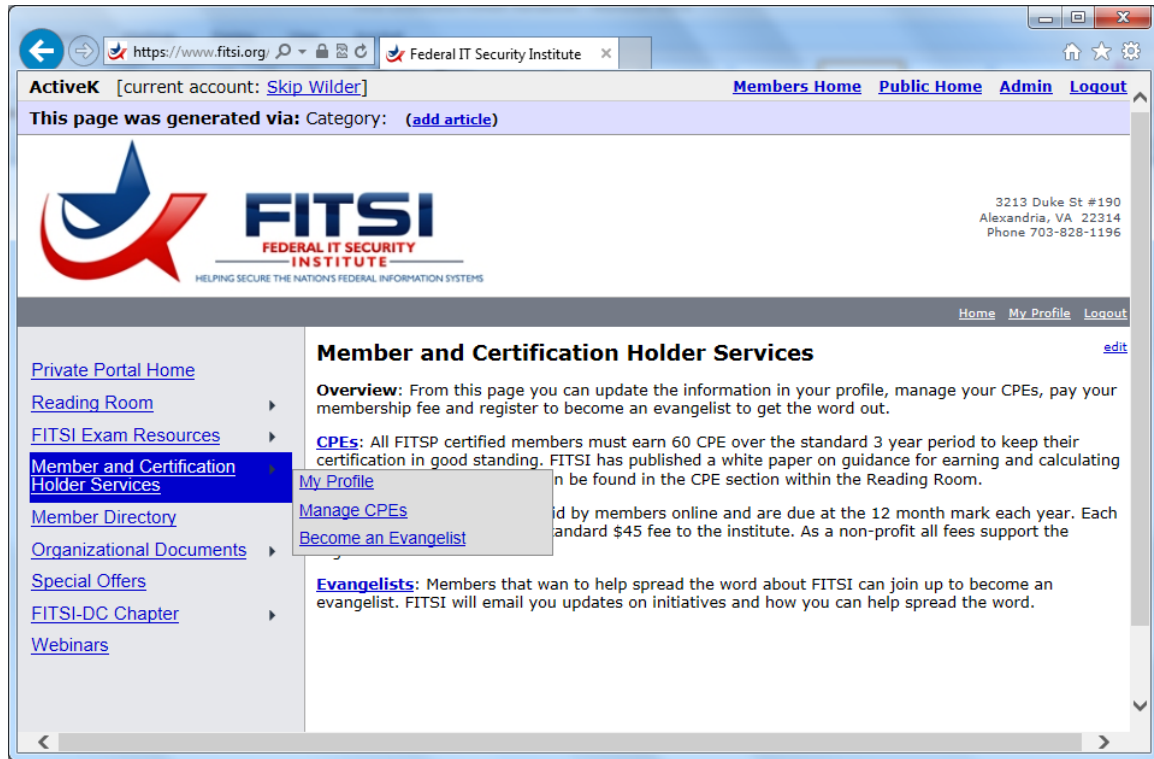
### B. CPE Requirements

Each certification holder must earn a minimum of 60 CPE units during each three-year cycle for each FITSP certification held. A minimum of 20 CPE units must be earned each year. These CPE units must be reported within 30 calendar days of the anniversary of the original date of certification.

For example, if John Doe earned the FITSP-Manager credential on January 1, 2011, his certification is valid until January 1, 2014. He has until January 30, 2012 to earn and report 20 CPE units for year one, January 30, 2013 for year two, and January 30, 2011 for year three.

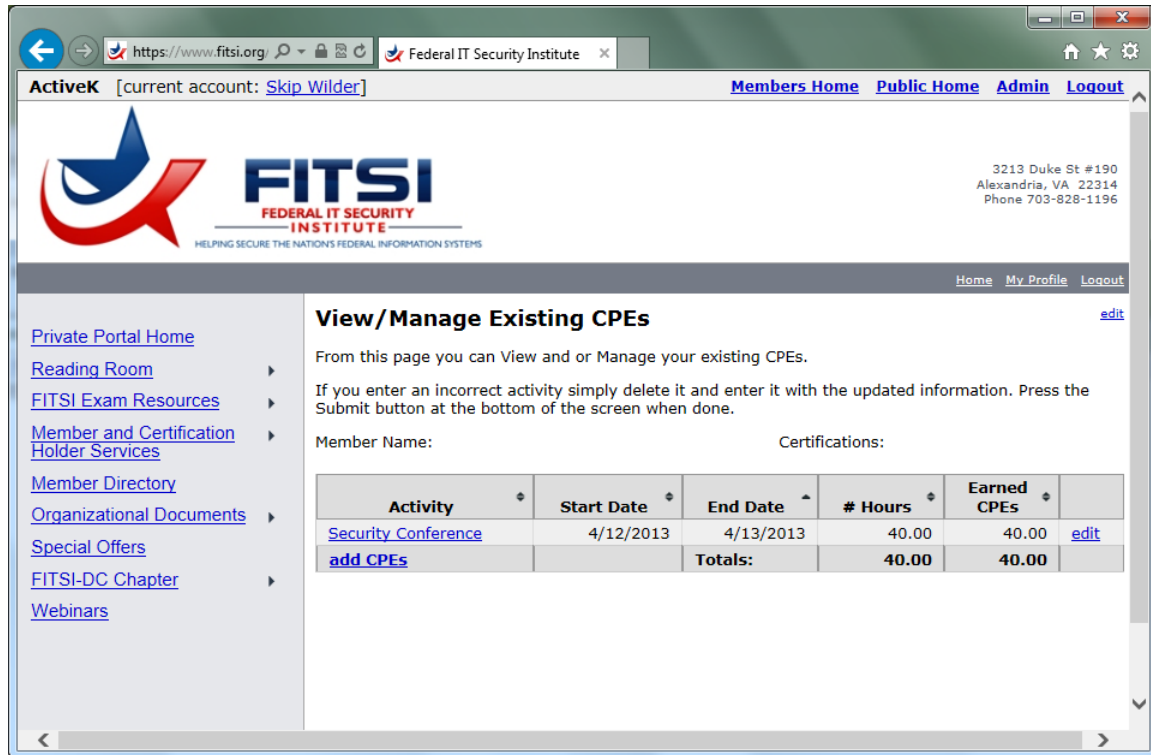
### C. Where to Log CPE Units

CPE units are reported at the private portal using the *Manage CPEs* interface in the *Member and Certification Holders Services* section. See Section 3 for more information on the private portal. Figure 2 illustrates the reporting process.



**Figure 2:** Reporting CPE Units Using the FITSI Portal

Using the *Manage CPEs* interface, certification holders perform CPE management actions. Figure 3 shows an overview of this interface. Reminder: FITSP Certification Holders should plan on reporting 20 CPE units per year through this interface to keep each FITSP certification held current.



**Figure 3: CPE Management Page**

#### **D. Qualifying Activities**

Certification holders may pursue a wide range of activities to earn CPE credit. All professional activities must be completed outside of normal job-related responsibilities and must contribute to professional development in IT security. One CPE unit can be earned for each hour of related activity.

Activities that certification holders can use to qualify for CPE units are listed below.

- Attend security conferences – One CPE unit for each hour of IT security discussion covered in the conference
- Attend security training classes – One CPE unit for each hour of instruction. These classes can be instructor lead, online, or computer based training modules.
- Publish security whitepapers – One CPE unit for each hour spent writing a whitepaper, not to exceed five CPE units per published whitepaper
- Publish security books – One CPE unit for each hour spent writing a book, not to exceed 30 CPE units per published book
- Teach IT security training classes – Three CPE units for each hour of in-class time
- Read IT security books – One CPE unit for each hour of reading a book, not to exceed five CPE units per book
- Provide National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) commentary on draft documents – One CPE unit for each hour spent working on submitting commentary, not to exceed five CPE units per activity

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Examples:

1. Example #1 – Attending a security conference: conference time is broken down into the number of hours of the conference. For a 35-hour conference (five days) the FITSP Certification Holder can report 35 CPE units for this activity.
2. Example #2 – Taking a college level course (college-level courses are based on in-class time): a class meets one day a week for 10 weeks and includes 1.5 hours of instruction, would result in 15 CPE units (10 X 1.5 = 15).
3. Example #3 – Reading an IT security book: a certification holder reading an IT security book can report one CPE unit for each hour of reading, up to five CPE units.

## **E. CPE Documentation**

FITSP Certification Holders must retain documentation of completion of the activity being reported for CPE credit. This documentation may be requested by the Audit Committee if the certification holder is selected for audit. Documents that should be retained for each type of activity are:

1. Attend security conferences
  - a. Receipt showing payment of conference and name of attendee
  - b. Conference guide provided to attendee detailing speakers and topics discussed – should also include the time the certification holder spent in conference sessions
  - c. Conference completion certificate (if provided)
2. Attend security training classes
  - a. Receipt showing payment for course and name of attendee (free classes need confirmation email or communication in lieu of receipt)
  - b. Course name and description
  - c. Course syllabus
  - d. Document detailing number of hours the certification holder spent in class
  - e. Course completion certificate
3. Publish security whitepapers
  - a. Whitepaper name
  - b. Detailed log of time spent preparing the whitepaper
  - c. A copy of the published whitepaper and reference for where it can be located (such as a website URL)
4. Publish security books
  - a. Book name, author, publication date, and International Standard Book Number (ISBN) number
  - b. Detailed log of time spent writing and editing the book
5. Teach IT security training classes
  - a. Course name and description
  - b. Course syllabus
  - c. Course timeline indicating time spent in class conducting class (CPE units are calculated as three times the total hours spent teaching class)
6. Read IT security books
  - a. Book name, author, publication date, and ISBN number
  - b. Detailed log of time spent reading the book

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- c. A summary of lessons learned from the book related to the reader's FITSP certification area
  7. Provide NIST commentary on draft IT security documents
    - a. List titles of draft document reviewed
    - b. Copy of commentary provided to NIST
    - c. Detailed log of time to complete analysis and draft commentary

The certification holder should retain this documentation for full accountability in the event of a CPE audit. Upon completion of the three-year cycle and recertification of qualifications by FITSI, retention of the documentation for the previous three-year cycle is not required.

### **F. Non-Compliance**

A certification holder will be declared to be in a non-compliant state for failure to report the requisite CPE units each year or failure to pay the necessary AMF. For this reason, it is important that all FITSP Certification Holders report at least 20 CPE units each year for each FITSP certification held.

Additionally, in the event a certification holder is audited and is unable to provide appropriate documentation for reported CPE activities, the certification holder's related certification(s) may be revoked.

If a certification holder is determined to be in a non-compliant state, the certification holder has 90 calendar days to rectify the non-compliant state. Failure to rectify the non-compliant state within the 90 calendar days will result in revocation of the related certification. After 90 calendar days, FITSI will not re-instate the certification status even if the certification holder is able, at that point, to achieve compliance. FITSI may make exceptions to this policy for documented hardship cases.

FITSI will notify certification holders who are determined to be in a non-compliant state due to a failure to report CPE units or non-payment of the AMF.

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## 6. Use of the FITSI Certification Logo

An individual who has been granted a FITSP certification may list the specific certification on stationary, websites, resumes, business cards, and other promotional materials. Certification should appear as:

First name, Last name, Federal IT Security Professional – *Role*  
or

First name, Last name, FITSP – *Role*

Where *Role* indicates the area of expertise certified in: Designer, Operator, Manager or Auditor.

For example, if Mary Jones earned her FITSP certification as an Operator, she would indicate it by:

Mary Jones, Federal IT Security Professional – Operator  
or

Mary Jones, FITSP – Operator

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## 7. Request for Certification Duplicates

A certification holder may request additional copies of a certificate or FITSI ID card. The *FITSI Fee Schedule* provides the most current duplicate copy fees and can be found at <http://www.fitsi.org/documents>. The request for a duplicates should be emailed to [contactus@fitsi.org](mailto:contactus@fitsi.org).

Requests for duplicates will be fulfilled within 30 calendar days of receipt.

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## 8. FITSI Code of Ethics

All FITSP Certification Holders must abide by the FITSI Code of Ethics which can be found in the *FITSI Code of Ethics Handbook* at <http://www.fitsi.org/documents>. Violations of any tenet of the FITSI Code of Ethics may be grounds for revocation of a certification holder's FITSP certification(s) and possibly FITSI membership (where applicable).

FITSI can only be as good as its representative base. If a FITSP Certification Holder is believed to be in violation of the FITSI Code of Ethics, a complaint may be submitted to the FITSI Corporate Office. Individuals may file a complaint against a certification holder at any time. FITSI will take all necessary measures to ensure anonymity of the complainant, but cannot guarantee it. The complaint will be reviewed by the Certification Director to ascertain if the criteria for acceptance of a complaint are met. The acceptance criteria are as follows:

- Complainant must have personal knowledge of the alleged violation or misbehavior and must be in a position to provide relevant and reliable documentation.
- Complainant must demonstrate by documentation and factual evidence that the complaint involves an issue directly related to the certification standards or FITSI Code of Ethics. Matters of a personal nature not related to the criteria will not be considered.

Complaints can be submitted using the *Appeals and Complaint Application* found at <http://www.fitsi.org/documents>. Instructions for submission are included in the application package.



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## 9. Recertification Requirements

The FITSP certification is valid for three years. FITSP Certification Holders may renew a certification that is at the end of the three-year cycle for an additional three-year cycle.

Certification holders must meet the following requirements to be eligible for renewal:

- Candidates must have earned and reported a total of at least 60 CPE units (per certification role) over that certification's three-year life cycle.
- Candidates must have passed the FITSI internal CPE audit (if chosen).
- Candidates must not be in violation of any part of the FITSI Code of Ethics or have an active complaint filed in his or her name.
- Candidates must be current with their AMF.

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## 10. Reinstatement after a Voluntary Lapse

An individual who has voluntarily allowed a certification to lapse is not certified and may not use any certification designation. Certified status may be reinstated with the following actions if the certification lapse is within the 18 month recertification cycle:

- Submit the *FITSI Certification Reinstatement Application* and associated fees
- Report the required yearly twenty CPE units for every year the certification was current and an additional penalty requirement of 10 CPE units for every six months after your revocation/termination date

Certifications which have been expired for more than 18 months cannot be reinstated. Candidates in this situation must reapply using the FITSI examination and application process. The *FITSI Certification Reinstatement Application* can be found at <http://www.fitsi.org/documents>.

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## **11. Resignation of Certification**

A FITSP Certification Holder may resign by filing a written resignation with the FITSI Corporate Office. Resignation does not relieve an individual of unpaid dues or other charges previously incurred. Any person resigning a certification may be required to return the FITSI ID card, challenge coin, and certification certificate.

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## 12. Appeals

A FITSP Certification Holder has the right to appeal a FITSI Appeals Committee decision to revoke a certification. An *Appeals Form* must be filed with the Appeals Committee within 30 calendar days of receiving notification the decision to revoke a certification. The *Appeals Form* is included in the *FITSI Appeals and Complaint Application* and can be found at <http://www.fitsi.org/documents>. The completed form should be emailed to FITSI at [contactus@fitsi.org](mailto:contactus@fitsi.org).

Once an *Appeals Form* is received, FITSI will carry out the following steps:

1. **Initial Appeal Acknowledgement.** The Appeals Committee will acknowledge receipt of the appeal within 30 calendar days of receipt. The email acknowledgement will include:
  - Explanation of the appeals process for issue at hand
  - The Appeals Committee member point of contact
  - A timeline for response and decision by the Appeals Committee
2. **Appeals Review.** The Appeals Committee will render a decision within 30 calendar days of receipt of the appeal unless additional information is required. In the event additional information is required, the Appeals Committee will render a decision within 30 calendar days of receipt of the required information. The decision will be provided via email to the appellant.
3. **Appeals Decision/Response.** The Appeals Committee response will be either appeal denied or appeal accepted. All responses will include a detailed explanation of the decision.
4. **Appeals Escalation.** All decisions made by the Appeals Committee are considered final.

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## 13. Forms

The most current version of the forms referenced in this handbook can be downloaded from <http://www.fitsi.org/documents>.

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## Appendix A, FITSI Contact Information

**FITSI Corporate web site address:**

<http://www.fitsi.org>

**FITSI Corporate Office:**

Federal IT Security Institute (FITSI)

3213 Duke St.

Suite 190

Alexandria, VA 22314

Phone: 703-828-1196

Fax: 703-754-8215

Web site: <http://www.fitsi.org>

General Email: [contactus@fitsi.org](mailto:contactus@fitsi.org)

<b>Revision History</b>					
<b>Version</b>	<b>Description of Change</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Approved By</b>	<b>Approval Date</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
1.0	Initial Release	Maribeth Kuzmicki Jim Wiggins	Scheme Committee	6/13/2013	6/13/2013
2.0	Revised to comply with new FITSI Style Guide and ensure consistency with other handbooks	Maribeth Kuzmicki Jim Wiggins Alana McCullough	Board of Directors	12/19/2019	12/19/2019