

ER Certification - Frequently Asked Questions

If I want to become certified, is an NHI data sharing license required?

Yes. An NHI data sharing license is required in order to access NHI data for writing proposed ER review letters. For more information and to apply for a license, visit the [NHI Data Request page](#)

If my company currently has a data sharing license, do I need to take the certification training?

No. You only need to complete the certification training if you wish to become a Certified Reviewer and write ER Review Letters.

One of the key benefits of certification is the ability to use the No/Low BITP Table 2, which allows certain projects to be covered under listed activities and therefore not require a full ER Review.

Keep in mind that your certification status is personal — it stays with you even if you move to another company. However, the data sharing license belongs to the company, not the individual.

If I currently have an NHI data sharing license, do I need to submit proposed ER reviews for all my look-ups?

No, not necessarily. There are two levels of NHI data users, and it's important to understand the distinctions between them:

- **Authorized NHI Data Users** — Individuals listed on a security protocol for an active NHI data license who have *not* completed the full certification training. Authorized users may use NHI data for purposes such as:
 - Research and education projects
 - Creating maps for others to use and interpret
 - Identifying sensitive areas within project boundaries that may need follow-up field surveys
 - Conducting broad-scale conservation planning
 - Conducting field surveys for rare species and habitats

Authorized NHI data users **may not** use the NHI data to evaluate proposed projects or land management activities for potential impacts to endangered resources. In other words, they cannot make a preliminary “take” or “no take” determination for any proposed activity.

- **Certified ER Reviewers** — Only certified individuals may conduct preliminary “take” or “no take” determinations. Certified reviewers must submit a proposed ER review for each project where a preliminary determination of “take” has been made. All other projects that are formerly covered by Table 2 need to be documented on either the Annual Reporting form or with an ER Verification form.