

III. RECOMMENDED SPECIAL INSPECTOR QUALIFICATIONS

A. Code Knowledge and Plan Reading Competency Standards

The building official has the responsibility to ascertain that special inspectors and/or agencies are qualified for the type(s) of inspection required. In some geographic areas, cooperative jurisdictional programs for the recognition of competent inspectors/agencies are available to assist in satisfying this requirement. Qualification standards may include:

1. Individuals maintaining current certification by ICC as a special inspector for the discipline(s) for which he or she is requesting approval.
2. Agencies maintaining current accreditation as a special inspection agency by IAS with a scope of accreditation covering the discipline(s) for which the agency is requesting approval. See Appendix C for the IAS-required minimum qualifications for special inspection.
3. Written or oral examination to verify the applicant's knowledge of jurisdictional procedures and code requirements.

B. Experience Standards

The specialized knowledge and skills needed to perform special inspection should be obtained by experience in some aspect of the discipline being inspected. Industry standards typically require one to five years of verifiable practical experience, depending upon the discipline and the level of inspection, a portion of which may be satisfied by applicable technical education. There are also provisions for trainees who may work under the direct supervision of qualified special inspectors. An example of detailed guidelines for special inspector experience standards is contained in Appendix C.

The building official may require that special inspector applicants provide evidence of experience through the following and/or other means:

1. Written references verifying related work experience; and/or
2. Personal interview to evaluate the applicant's work experience and suitability to be a special inspector.
3. Evidence of compliance with a recognized industry experience guideline (see examples in Appendix C).

C. Performance Standards

The building official may use the job task lists for special inspector certification exams as guidelines for evaluating the performance of special inspectors in each of the applicable disciplines. These lists are included in Appendix B, and contain comprehensive tasks that may be performed by special inspectors on large and complex projects. Actual tasks required on specific projects will typically be fewer.

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IV. RECOMMENDED TESTING AND INSPECTION AGENCIES ACCREDITATION

A. Special Inspection Agencies Accreditation Program

In response to a request from several ICC governmental members, IAS has developed an accreditation program for agencies providing the special inspections that are required for specific construction projects under Chapter 17 of the 2012 IBC. The IAS Special Inspection Agency Accreditation Program is based primarily on the requirements of the IBC and the applicable portions of ISO/IEC 17020, *General Criteria for the Operation of Various Bodies Performing Inspection*. The program requires special inspection agencies to operate under a quality management system that is documented in a manual, and also requires the agency to be assessed in the field to determine if it is competent to perform specific inspections or types of inspections. IAS accreditation is based on the assessment of a special inspection agency's inspection procedures, the competence of its inspection staff and its reporting procedures.

B. Testing Laboratories Accreditation Program

Industry depends on reliable assessment of testing and calibration laboratories, inspection agencies and fabricator inspection programs. Accurate test, calibration and inspection results are vital for the protection of public health and safety, and to facilitate trade. IAS operates nationally and internationally recognized accreditation programs, some of which are specifically tailored to the needs of the building official. The IAS laboratory accreditation program is modeled on ISO/IEC 17025 and is recognized globally by the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC), and by the Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (APLAC). Laboratory accreditation, traceability of measurements and uniform testing requirements minimize technical barriers to trade and reduce the financial burden on manufacturers. Evaluation of a product, material or piece of equipment should be based on reports from accredited testing laboratories that are supported by accredited calibration laboratories to ensure traceable and repeatable measurements.

C. Public, Affected Parties and Regulator Access

The IAS accreditation programs are monitored by an accreditation committee that is composed of code regulators who approve all accreditation criteria. Through its accreditation committee, IAS follows a public hearing process that allows for input from regulators, laboratories, inspection agencies and other interested parties. Members of the accreditation committee are appointed by the IAS Board of Directors. The accreditation committee provides a transparent process that provides access to all interested parties. On technical matters IAS maintains formally appointed Technical Advisory Councils (TACs) consisting of experts drawn from accredited calibration and testing laboratories, and special inspection agencies. Each TAC provides technical guidance to IAS on matters relating to calibration and testing or special inspection as the need arises.

Requiring accreditation is an alternative that can significantly reduce unnecessary oversight burden on a building department. Through this comprehensive program, a building department has the assurance that special inspection agencies have fully demonstrated that their experience and knowledge is sufficient, and that they are competent to determine if construction meets the material and workmanship requirements of the jurisdiction's contract documents and codes.

The steps recommended to implement a program requiring IAS accreditation for special inspection agencies are:

1. Drafting a jurisdictional ordinance requiring special inspection agencies to become accredited to work in the jurisdiction.
2. Establishing a timeline for the agencies to complete the accreditation process.
3. Educating special inspection agencies on the program and the accreditation process.
4. Educating design professionals and contractors on the effective date of compliance.

Special inspection administration is one of the areas evaluated by IAS for accreditation of building departments, fire prevention departments and code enforcement agencies.