

Model Program for Special Inspection

Based on Chapter 17 of the 2012 IBC®

A guideline to assist building officials in the administration
and enforcement of special inspection code provisions
of the 2012 *International Building Code*®



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Based on Chapter 17 of the 2012 IBC

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FOREWORD

This document provides the building official with guidance on the administration and implementation of the special inspection requirements of Chapter 17 of the 2012 *International Building Code*® (IBC®). The guidance is based on recommended best practices, and the consensus of building officials, design professionals, and inspection and testing agencies. Duties and responsibilities of the building official, special inspector, project owner, engineer or architect of record, and contractor are defined in this guide.

In the past, special inspection tasks were often delegated to the project owner, architect or engineer of record, and sometimes building contractors. In the 21st century, the responsibilities of the building official in providing oversight of special inspection activities are driven by several factors, including legal liability, insistence on competent performance and completion of work as specified and approved, and more involvement of local government. Accordingly, the use of certified individuals or accredited special inspection agencies is becoming increasingly prevalent and necessary. Section 110.4 authorizes the building official to accept reports of approved inspection agencies provided such agencies have been found to satisfy the requirements as to qualifications and reliability.

Under the IBC, special inspection is not a discretionary activity, nor does it replace required structural observations as required by the design professional in responsible charge. The conditions under which special inspection must be utilized are clearly stated in Section 1704 of the IBC; however, there is a provision for the building official to waive special inspection for minor work.

A special inspector is an individual with specialized skills who observes critical building or structural features identified by the design professional responsible for compliance with plans and specifications approved by the building official. Ensuring the competence of special inspectors or special inspection agencies is the responsibility of the building official. Although the IBC lacks specific qualification requirements, this fact does not lessen the importance of diligence in the critical process of approving special inspectors.

Recognizing the need to support its member building departments across the United States and globally, the International Code Council® (ICC®) developed certification and accreditation programs to identify competent individuals and organizations that perform special inspection. ICC Certification and Testing programs require individuals seeking certification as special inspectors to have demonstrated a level of competence in a manner that will protect the safety and welfare of the public. Individuals may become certified through ICC by participating in a number of seminars and training classes, and passing written examinations. Organizations that employ special inspectors and provide inspection services to the building industry can gain accreditation through International Accreditation Service™ (IAS™), a subsidiary of ICC.

The IAS accreditation program requires special inspection organizations to operate under a documented quality management system, to use certified inspectors and to meet comprehensive accreditation requirements, including on-site assessment by subject-matter experts who are either currently practicing or supervising special inspectors or who are building officials. Successful on-site assessment leads to accreditation for a specific scope of special inspection where the organization has been found competent.

Further information regarding the certification of individuals or accreditation of organizations that perform special inspection can be found on the following websites:

IAS www.iasonline.org
ICC www.iccsafe.org/certification

About the International Code Council®

The International Code Council (ICC®), a membership association dedicated to building safety, fire prevention and energy efficiency, develops the codes and standards used to construct residential and commercial buildings, including homes and schools. The mission of ICC is to provide the highest quality codes, standards, products and services for all concerned with the safety and performance of the built environment. Most United States cities, counties and states choose the International Codes, building safety codes developed by the International Code Council. The International Codes also serve as the basis for construction of federal properties around the world, and as a reference for many nations outside the United States. The Code Council is also dedicated to innovation and sustainability and Code Council subsidiary, ICC Evaluation Service, issues Evaluation Reports for innovative products and reports of Sustainable Attributes Verification and Evaluation (SAVE).

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The *Model Program for Special Inspection* debuted in 1986 when it was first offered to building officials, jurisdictions, and inspection and testing agencies. It focused on the field inspection aspects of special inspection and is now used as a standard reference for the special inspector exams.

The original program was the culmination of the efforts of building officials, inspectors and inspection/testing agencies associated with California Council of Testing and Inspection Agencies (CCTIA). Since that time, many others have voluntarily given their time and talents to keep this document current and pertinent to the special inspection profession. This document has been reviewed over the years by special inspector exam committees before and after the consolidation of ICC. The following were participants on these committees:

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Thanks to all who have participated in bringing together a model program for special inspection that can be adapted by others without changing the intent of the performance of the special inspector's work.

The accreditation information that was added in this edition was provided by Pat McCullen, Vice President/Chief Technical Officer of IAS.

William Fitzjohn has provided invaluable assistance in reviewing this document through many editions.

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