



CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

Program Requirements for Fabricator, Erector and Manufacturer Certifications

Purpose

Program Requirements define the audit program for the full certification cycle and are provided to clearly identify the activities required to demonstrate that the participating company's management system fulfills the requirements for certification to the selected standard(s) and other normative documents. Program Requirements provide for the administration of the audit program from application to certification. They also contain clarifications, explanations and additional requirements to those found in the certification standard(s) and are also used to provide modifications to the requirements in the standards until a formal revision to the standard(s) can be made.

Scope

This document (hereinafter referred to as the *Requirements*) governs the AISC Certification Programs. All Applicants and continuing Participants are required to have available and comply with these *Requirements*. An *Applicant* is a company that is requesting certification for a facility that does not hold a current AISC certification, and a *Participant* is a company that holds a current AISC certification and is seeking to continue the certification at that facility. The words **shall** or **will** denote a mandatory requirement. The word **should** denotes a guideline or recommendation. The words **may** or **can** denote an opportunity to make a choice.

Certification Programs

AISC offers and issues certifications for the steel industry. It also offers endorsements that can be added to the certification scope. The certification programs are described in Section 1. Available endorsements are provided in the Supplemental Program Requirements for each certification.

Section 1 General Requirements

- PR1.1 **Certification Program for Fabricators of Steel Buildings (BU)** applies to Fabricators who fabricate and supply, via bolting and/or welding, the structural steel frames for buildings and similar structures. See Section 2.1 of AISC 303 *Code of Standard Practice for Steel Buildings and Bridges* for the definition of *structural steel*. Applicants and Participants of this program are required to adhere to these *Requirements* and to the *Supplemental Program Requirements for Fabricators of Steel Buildings*.
- PR1.2 **Certification Program for Manufacturers of Bridge and Highway Components (CPT)** applies to Metal Component Manufacturers who manufacture and supply components that include bracing not designed for primary loads (diaphragms, cross frames, and lateral bracing); camera, light, sign and signal support structures; bridge rails; stairs; walkways; grid decks; drains; scuppers; expansion joints; bearings; ballast plates; and mechanical movable bridge equipment. Manufacturers of camera, light, sign and signal support structures; high mast light towers; bridge

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rails; complex expansion joints; high load multi-rotational (HLMR) bearings; and mechanical movable bridge equipment shall also be required to meet other specific contract requirements. Applicants and Participants of this program are required to adhere to these *Requirements* and to the *Supplemental Program Requirements for Manufacturers of Bridge and Highway Components*.

- PR1.3 **Certification Program for Fabricators of Steel Bridges (SBR, IBR, ABR)** applies to Bridge Fabricators who fabricate and supply steel highway and railroad bridges. Applicants and Participants of this program are required to adhere to these *Requirements* and to the *Supplemental Program Requirements for Fabricators of Steel Bridges*. Three categories are provided:
- SBR: Certified Bridge Fabricator – Simple
 - IBR: Certified Bridge Fabricator – Intermediate (Major)
 - ABR: Certified Bridge Fabricator – Advanced (Major)
- PR1.4 **Certification Program for Structural Steel Erectors (CSE)** applies to Erectors who erect, via bolting and/or welding, the structural steel frames for buildings and similar structures. See Section 2.1 of the AISC 303 *Code of Standard Practice for Steel Buildings and Bridges* for the definition of *structural steel*. Applicants and Participants of this program are required to adhere to these *Requirements* and to the *Supplemental Program Requirements for Structural Steel Erectors*.
- PR1.5 **Certification Program for Fabricators of Hydraulic Steel Structures (HYD)** applies to Fabricators who fabricate and supply hydraulic steel structures. Applicants and Participants of this program are required to adhere to these *Requirements* and to the *Supplemental Program Requirements for Fabricators of Hydraulic Steel Structures*.
- PR1.6 The applicable AISC Certification Standard (hereinafter referred to as the *Standard*) is identified in the *Supplements*. Whenever there is a conflict between the *Requirements* or *Supplements* and the *Standard*, the *Requirements* and *Supplements* govern.
- PR1.7 *Requirements* and *Supplements* are included in the site audit scope, and a nonconformance would result in a Corrective Action Request being issued by the auditor.
- PR1.8 *Supplementals* include a Commentary section that provides clarification and further explanation of criteria found in the *Standard*.
- PR1.9 Falsification of records or attempts to influence an auditor or the certification process in any manner by employees or other representatives of the Participant or Applicant, deemed to be a fraud or attempted fraud on the certification process, is not permitted. If this occurs at any time during the application or renewal process prior to a final determination by the AISC Certification Review Group (CRG), the certification process will be suspended and the case referred to the CRG for determination. Any existing certifications remain valid until the CRG has made its determination.
- PR1.10 The Fee Schedules are provided at www.aisc.org/certification and are subject to change.

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Section 2 Applying for Certification (For Applicants; Participants should refer to Section 8, Scope Changes)

- PR2.1 Application begins by submitting the online application. Within the following 10 days, applicants must then submit the completed Application Document Submittals checklist along with the documents required for the applicable certification program(s). Full payment must be received before the application will be reviewed. More information on applying for certification, including the online application, can be found at www.aisc.org/certification/applicants.
- PR2.2 An eligibility review is the first step in the application review process. This review will confirm that the applicant meets the necessary prerequisites for certification. This step will also confirm whether the applicant will have work in the shop or active jobsite (see Supplemental Program Requirements for more information) during a future site audit to demonstrate capability to meet the program requirements. If work in shop will not be available, then mock exercises will need to be performed to demonstrate capability. If an Applicant does not meet the requirements of the application and eligibility review process, the original payment less the Application Review Fee will be refunded, and the application process will be terminated.
- PR2.3 Initial audits for applicants are performed in two stages. Stage 1 is a Documentation Audit of the applicant's Quality Management System (QMS). After Stage 1 is satisfactorily completed, the Stage 2 (Site Audit) will be scheduled. All Stage 1 reviews follow the process in Section 3.
- PR2.4 Following the successful completion of a Stage 1 document audit, the Stage 2 site audit must be completed within 1 year. If the Stage 2 site audit does not occur within one year, the application will be terminated, and the application fee will not be refunded.
- PR2.5 If the applicant cannot complete the Stage 1 document audit in the allotted time, the Stage 1 process will be terminated and the application fee refunded less the Documentation Audit Fee. The applicant must wait at least three months before reapplying.
- PR2.6 An Expedited Application Process (EAP) is available on the Fee Schedule for domestic applicants. The EAP places a priority on the Stage 1 document audit, and the Stage 2 Site Audit will be scheduled within the timing indicated on the Fee Schedule. The success of this process relies on timely responses from the Applicant during the Stage 1 availability of work in the field or shop and the scheduling of an auditor.

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Section 3 Document Audit—Stage 1 (required for Applicants and may be required for Scope Change)

- PR3.1 Following the first review of the Stage 1 or other document audit, an Applicant or Participant will be issued a Document Deficiency Audit Report (DDAR). All deficiencies noted on the DDAR must be responded to within 30 days of receipt, or the Stage 1 process will be terminated and the application fee refunded less the Documentation Audit Fee.
- PR3.2 If revised DDARs are issued, they must be responded to within 15 days of receipt, or the Stage 1/scope change process will be terminated and the application fee refunded less the Documentation Audit Fee.
- PR3.3 The resolution process for the DDAR will continue for up to 90 days after the date of the initial DDAR. If the Stage 1 audit is not completed within 90 days, then the process will be discontinued and the application fee refunded, less the Documentation Audit Fee. If the application is terminated, the applicant may reapply at any time.
- PR3.4 All documents required for the Stage 1 document audit shall be submitted in English.

Section 4 Planning for the Site Audit

- PR4.1 The current fee schedule is posted on the AISC website and is subject to change. Payment of applicable fees are required before the site audit can be performed. Applicants refer to PR2.1 concerning payment of fees.
- PR4.2 Applicants and Participants are eligible to apply for as many AISC certifications and endorsements as provided by these *Requirements*. Separate certificates are issued for fabricator/manufacturer and erector programs and require separate applications, documentation audits, and site audits. Refer to Section 8 to add programs to an existing certificate, or see Section 2 if not currently certified.
- PR4.3 The Participant/Applicant will be notified of the assigned audit date via email. Any requests to reschedule a site audit will be assessed the Rescheduled Site Audit Fee.
- PR4.4 Any requests from AISC to confirm the site audit date must be responded to within the prescribed timeframe, or the audit may be cancelled and the Rescheduled Site Audit Fee will be assessed.
- PR4.5 When rescheduling occurs, the site audit must be completed a minimum of 45 days prior to expiration of the certificate to avoid the expiration of the certificate before a renewal is issued.
- PR4.6 AISC reserves the right to reschedule a site audit due to circumstances beyond its control (i.e., weather, flight cancellations, political environment changes, unexpected auditor unavailability, etc.). If this occurs, no rescheduling fees will be assessed, and every attempt will be made to reschedule the audit as soon as possible.

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- PR4.7 A 3-year Certification Cycle consists of the following phases:
- Initial Certification (INIT) or a Full Certification Renewal (RF)
 - First Continued Certification Renewal (R1)
 - Second Continued Certification Renewal (R2)
- PR4.8 A quality manual, documented procedures, and records shall be made available upon request of AISC and provided in English.
- PR4.9 Key certification variables include company information and contact information. Failure to provide timely notification of changes to key certification variables may result in a canceled or incomplete site audit or suspension of certification. Changes in ownership, location, and company name may require additional audits. Therefore, the Participant is required, within 30 days of the change, to complete the *Update Key Variables* form on the AISC website to inform AISC of changes to any of the following:
- Facility: Company name, physical address of facility, mailing address, and ownership
- Contacts: The names, telephone, and email of the following designated individuals:
- Principal Officer
 - Marketing Representative
 - Certification Contact or Management Representative (may be the same person)
 - Accounts Payable
- While positions identified above may be combined, a minimum of TWO unique email addresses for two DIFFERENT employees is required to ensure proper communication. The Participant's continued certification is at risk if proper email addresses are not provided.
- PR4.10 Applicants must submit the record of the internal audit and management review as required by the Application Document Submittal process. Records of the internal audit and management review must include evidence of the audit results, when these activities took place, the person(s) performing the audit/review, and evidence that all applicable certification programs and endorsements were audited.
- PR4.11 For Participants seeking renewal of certification, the internal audit must include all required certification programs and any endorsements. The internal audit and management review must be completed at least 30 days prior to, but not greater than 12 months before, the site audit. Records of the internal audit and management review must include evidence of the audit results, when these activities took place, the person(s) performing the audit/review, and evidence that all applicable certification programs and endorsements were audited. Participants may perform a single audit or perform several audits throughout the year, as long as all applicable certification programs and endorsements are audited.
- PR4.12 The designated Management Representative may perform the entire internal audit, including endorsements. It is preferred to use other personnel to perform the internal audit so that independence from the function being audited can be maintained.

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- PR4.13 International Travel Advisory: If the Participant/Applicant company is located in a country for which the U.S. Department of State has issued a “Travel Alert” or “Travel Warning” advising U.S. citizens against travel, the AISC certification site audit could be at risk of not being conducted. The certificate will not be issued or renewed until the alert or warning is canceled and the site audit has been completed.

Section 5 During the Site Audit

- PR5.1 To ensure that the audit maintains impartiality and avoids any conflicts of interest, Participants/Applicants cannot have used the auditor assigned to them as a consultant in the two years prior to the audit date, nor can the auditor have been an employee of or contracted by the Participant/Applicant within the previous five years. If either conflict of interest exists with the assigned auditor, the Participant/Applicant is obligated to notify AISC Certification within five business days of receiving the auditor assignment, and the audit will be reassigned to a different auditor at no expense to the Participant/Applicant. If notification is not received within this time frame, the audit reassignment will be at the Participant’s/Applicant’s expense.
- PR5.2 All correspondence, discussions and interviews will be conducted directly with or in the presence of the Participant’s/Applicant’s designated representative (normally the management representative or certification contact). Consultants may be present during the site audit as an observer, but they cannot participate in the audit nor can they be named as a designated representative.
- Consultants include those who have participated in the establishment and implementation of the quality management system through activities such as preparing/producing manuals and procedures or who give specific advice, instruction or solutions toward development and implementation of the quality management system. Consultants who are under contract to provide specific services such as safety management, NDE inspection, translators, etc., may participate during the site audit as directed by the auditor.
- PR5.3 Observers may be present during the site audit but shall not participate in or influence the audit process or the outcome of the audit, as determined by the auditor. At the auditor’s discretion, observers may be asked to leave the audit. Noncompliance will result in the audit being suspended, and an Additional Site Audit Fee will be assessed to conclude the audit later.
- PR5.4 AISC retains the right to send observers to any site audit for the purpose of monitoring program compliance, internal audits, or third-party audits. AISC will provide advance notification of the observer and the purpose of the observation to the Participant/Applicant.
- PR5.5 All references, procedures and forms required in Section 3 of the *Standard*, Quality Management System Manual, must be available in English.

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- PR5.6 Interpreters must be provided by the Participant/Applicant for the auditor's communication during the site audit, as necessary. Interpreters must be knowledgeable of the appropriate industry terminology.
- PR5.7 All personnel involved in the quality management system may be either employees of or contracted by the Participant/Applicant. In the case of the latter, contract status and qualifications must be demonstrable.
- PR5.8 During the site audit, the auditor will identify and document in the Site Audit Findings report four types of audit findings. These audit findings and the needed action for each is:
- **Identified Strengths.** These are written to summarize a participant's abilities to meet or exceed conformance to the Site Audit Scope. They may include functions or processes that could represent a unique ability or potential competitive advantage. These are to be reviewed during the management review meeting, and no action is required.
 - **Opportunities for Improvement.** These are suggestions or opinions based on the auditor's experience that could add value to the QMS or the erector's safety management systems. These are to be reviewed during the management review meeting, and no action is required.
 - **Areas of Concern.** The Participant **SHALL** engage its Quality Management System or the erector Quality/Safety Management Systems to review, evaluate and implement correction of the items listed. Areas of concern will be reviewed at the next site audit for effective implementation. Any found to be not effectively implemented will be viewed as a breakdown of the Quality/Safety Management System, and a Corrective Action Request will be issued.
 - **Corrective Action Request.** See Section 6.

Section 6 Corrective Action Process

- PR6.1 An auditor may issue Corrective Action Requests (CARs) for nonconformities during the site audit. If so, the Participant/Applicant has 30 calendar days from the last day of the site audit to respond to each CAR. Each response must include the completed CAR form which contains:
- Actions to immediately correct or contain the nonconformance
 - Root cause analysis
 - Actions taken to correct root cause and prevent recurrence
 - Supporting evidence files that verify the planned actions have been implemented
- PR6.2 The CAR response will be reviewed. The reviewer may make a request for more information, in which case, the Participant/Applicant has 14 days to respond. The reviewer may make a second request for more information, in which case, the Participant/Applicant has seven days to respond. Failure to respond to a CAR within the stated timeframes will result in the review being

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marked “incomplete” prior to being forwarded to the CRG. All reviews of corrective action, whether complete or incomplete, are forwarded to CRG.

- PR6.3 If the Participant/Applicant chooses to dispute the issuance of a CAR, a challenge may be submitted by emailing certification@aisc.org with the reason(s) for the challenge within 30 days of the conclusion of the site audit. The Participant/Applicant will then be contacted concerning the challenge, and an investigation will follow. The investigation concludes with a decision on the challenge, and the Participant/Applicant will be advised of the results and any additional actions needed.
- PR6.4 All documents required for the corrective action process process, including evidence, shall be submitted in English.

Section 7 Certification Decisions

- PR7.1 The AISC Certification Review Group (CRG) makes decisions concerning certification. This group consists of four voting members:
- Director of Certification
 - Manager of Technical Services
 - Certification Program Analyst
 - Subject Matter Experts, as needed
- PR7.2 After each site audit is completed and any corrective action requests have been reviewed, the results will be forwarded to the CRG. The CRG will also be provided with the prior three-year certification history and audit findings, and any complaints or allegations that have been received by AISC, to review as part of the basis for determining certification.
- PR7.3 CRG reserves the right to deny/reduce/suspend/withdraw certification to a Participant/Applicant who fails to provide objective evidence of the ability to satisfy these *Requirements*.
- PR7.4 CRG may choose to grant certification for less than one year if it is determined that an additional site audit is needed to provide evidence of an effective QMS. When this occurs, any associated costs will be assessed according to the current fee schedule for the Additional Site Audit. No additional scope(s) will be considered in this site audit. AISC also reserves the right to conduct short-notice or unannounced audits, if required.
- PR7.5 CRG may require a Supplemental Audit to be conducted. This will be coordinated with the participant, and all costs associated with the Supplemental Audit will be incurred by AISC.

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- PR7.6 AISC will make information concerning certification status publically available on its website. The information disclosed includes company name, location, contact name, email and phone number, certifications held, and status of certification.
- PR7.7 Participants who hold a current valid certificate are eligible to use and display the Certified Fabricator/Manufacturer logo or Certified Erector logo, as applicable.
- PR7.8 Multiple fabricator/manufacturer certifications and endorsements are included on a single certificate. Erector certification and endorsements are included on a single certificate.
- PR7.9 For Participants/Applicants of the Erector Certification Program, the certificate will cover their regional office(s) or operation(s) only if all of the following conditions are met:
- The regional office(s) or operation(s) is doing business under the same company name.
 - The Executive Management is the same as for the main office.
 - The Quality and Safety Management Systems are the same as what was audited for the main office and project site.
- PR7.10 The Certificate contains the following information:
- Name of the company holding the certification
 - Address of the certified facility which is the address where the site audit occurs (for Erectors, this is the address of the office)
 - Listing of the certifications held
 - Date certificate was issued
 - Date certificate expires
 - Signature of AISC officer
 - Unique identification number

Certificates are nontransferable, and only one facility address will be listed on a certificate.

Section 8 Making changes to the Certification Scope (for Participants changing a current certificate)

- PR8.1 A Participant may request changes to its certification. All forms are found at www.aisc.org/certification.
- **Adding to the scope of certification.** Participant must complete the AISC Certification Scope Change Application.
 - **Reducing the scope of certification.** The Participant may reduce scope prior to or during the site audit.
 - **Canceling certification.** The Participant may withdraw certification by completing a Certification Withdrawal Request found at www.aisc.org/certification.

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- PR8.2 Changes to the certification scope may require additional submittals, document audits, site audits, mock exercises, and fees. All scope change requests shall be submitted to AISC for review.
- PR8.3 Scope Change Requests received at least 180 days prior to the certificate expiration may be included in the next regularly scheduled certification renewal audit (site audit), as long as all prerequisites, document reviews, and payments are completed at least 60 days prior to the next scheduled site audit. Additional fees will be applied for scope changes that are requested to be completed prior to the next site audit.

Section 9 Complaints, Allegations and Appeals

- PR9.1 Participants/Applicants that have their certification withdrawn/denied may appeal the decision using the AISC *Appeal Policy*. Certification fees will not be refunded. Certification may be reapplied for six months from the date of the of the certification withdrawal/denial letter from AISC.
- PR9.2 Participants will, at all times, abide by the AISC *Progressive Action Policy for Certification Complaints and Allegations (Complaint Policy)* and the AISC *Appeal Policy for Certification Determination (Appeal Policy)*. Both policies are available at www.aisc.org/certification.
- PR9.3 The *Complaint Policy* establishes the process for resolving allegations and complaints involving Participants that have been certified by AISC through any of the certification programs. Investigations and resulting actions will follow a prescribed series of progressive steps to evaluate the information provided and determine the appropriate course of action.

An “Allegation” is an informal request for action from any party with knowledge of activities by a AISC Certification Program Participant that are alleged to be in violation of these *Requirements*. Submission of written substantiating information is not required.

A “Complaint” is a formal request for action from a party involved in the contract of a construction project for which an AISC Certification Program Participant has provided materials or services. Submission of written substantiating information is required along with adequate supporting documentation.

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