

It's a Bird, It's a Plane, It's... AISC Certification!

BY BRIAN RAFF

**AISC Certification is earned, not given.
If you're a Certified company, display the logo proudly.**

CONSIDER THIS: AISC CERTIFIED COMPANIES

are the Superman of the steel construction industry.

Allow me to explain: AISC Certification represents a company's heroic passion for continual improvement, its valiant determination to complete an extremely rigorous audit process, and its gallant dedication to the overall quality of the steel construction industry.

The first quarter of 2009 has been particularly noteworthy. AISC has received more applications than any other quarter in history, a staggering statistic considering the state of our current economy. While competition is fierce, fabricators, erectors, and specifiers all see the value that an AISC Certified company can add to their projects. For example, AISC Certified fabricators may be able to "leap over" code-required special inspection requirements in a single bound, or certainly simplify those requirements, saving project owners a substantial amount of money.

Super Goals

Like Superman, AISC Certified companies must fight for "truth, justice, and the American way." Within the past several months, I have experienced a handful of situations where non-certified companies have falsely purported to be Certified in order to bid on jobs that require AISC Certification. It is up to all of us as law-abiding citizens of our steel construction Metropolis to ensure that everyone plays by the rules.

AISC takes a hard stance on false Certification claims that undermine our brand and damage the reputation that AISC has worked so hard on preserving since 1921. The value and credibility of AISC Certification and its companies could be diluted as fast as a speeding bullet if unqualified, non-certified imposters are allowed to run rampant. So, what can we collectively do about it?

I ask all specifying engineers, architects, contractors, code officials, Certified fabricators and/or erectors to inform us about any company falsely claiming to be AISC Certified. We will act on any and all leads we re-

ceive that provide actionable evidence, such as business cards, title blocks, bid documents, websites, etc., that erroneously display the AISC Certification logo or the words "AISC Certified."

Based on the feedback we've received from industry stakeholders, we have taken our stance one step further. AISC is currently in the process of registering trademarks related to what it means to be AISC Certified. Activities certified by the phrase "AISC Certified" will represent steel fabrication, erection, and bridge and highway metal component manufacturing services. This phrase and the related logo will certify that a fabrication facility or erector's operation has implemented a nationally recognized quality management system specific to the steel construction industry, and has undergone an independent third-party audit. Companies will no longer be able to make false Certification claims without being held accountable to U.S. trademark law. This decision to register our trademarks will give our program the additional teeth our industry has asked for.

We've covered truth and justice, but what about the American way? The American Institute of Steel Construction relies on several other domestic information sources to support our program. These institutions include the American Welding Society, the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM), the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) among others.

You might be asking what AISC Certified companies can do to promote or market themselves. Below is a brief description of how the AISC Certification logo can be used to effectively promote your organization:

Any appearance of the name and/or mark of AISC creates an impression of our organization and yours. Over time



Brian Raff is AISC's manager of certification business development.

the collective impressions of those whose opinions help shape our success also shape our identity. Thus it is critical that all who are entrusted with the privilege of sharing AISC's identity do so with the utmost discipline. To aid that process, I would like to share the following guidelines for the application of the AISC Certification mark (logo).

AISC Certification has developed one logo that may be used by our Certified customers. This logo may appear in one-color: black. When used in close proximity to the classic AISC Membership logo, or your company logo, those logos should complement the Certification logo, not overwhelm it. In most cases the logos should match visually in scale and color (see sidebar).

X-Ray Vision

In order for everyone to uphold the truth, it is important to have the right tools. Superman has the ability to fly.

We all have an equally important ability: to search for currently certified companies. The new AISC Certification search engine is online at www.aisc.org/certsearch and allows the user to search for certified companies in a multitude of new ways including a proximity search. Users now have the ability to search for AISC Certified companies within a specific distance from any location and then export that data to a downloadable spreadsheet. Please visit the Certification search engine to find out who is certified in your area.

For specifiers requiring the use of an AISC Certified company, it is imperative that you ask your bidders to provide a copy of their *current* AISC certificate. In the past, dishonest companies have used expired certificates to manipulate designers and contractors into accepting their bid. Understand that an AISC Certification audit is conducted on an annual basis, and the certificate explicitly

states the expiration date of a company's Certification. It would be a good idea to ask for a copy of this certificate as a prerequisite to bidding.

If you've ever read comics or watched comic inspired television shows or movies, you'll notice that most superheroes, or villains for that matter, wear a symbol on their chest (in addition to tights and a cape). Superman proudly wore the iconic "S" set within a shield of red and yellow. This is no different than the AISC classic logo that has been an icon within the steel industry for more than 70 years. In 1945, National Periodical Publications (later simply known as DC Comics) trademarked Superman's symbol. I have asked myself where NPP got the idea to trademark the Superman logo, and the only conclusion I can come to is that they got the idea from AISC! Why else would they still refer to Superman as the Man of Steel?

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A Tale of Two Logos

In the past, there has been some confusion about how the standard AISC logo and the AISC Certification logo can be used. The AISC logo and its variations can only be used by members of AISC, while the AISC Certification logo can only be used by those who are currently AISC Certified. It is extremely important to remember that only AISC Certified companies have undergone a third-party independent audit to certify that their quality management system meets a minimum level of acceptable quality. Additionally, AISC members do not have to be Certified, and Certified companies are not required to become members of AISC. For more information on the benefits of AISC membership, please visit www.aisc.org.

The AISC Certification logo should be reproduced in black. Do not crowd the logo with type or illustration. The logo should always have clear and sufficient margin of space around it.

If you are an AISC Certified company, please feel free to place the AISC Certification mark on your business cards, websites, company letterhead, title blocks, etc. For more

information, or to obtain high resolution image files, please email certinfo@aisc.org.



1.125" preferred



Min 0.687"