

GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING ANNUAL INSPECTIONS TO THE IAS ACCREDITATION CRITERIA FOR INSPECTION PRACTICES OF METAL BUILDING ASSEMBLERS (AC478)

Purpose

This guide is to assist inspection agencies in the planning and performing of annual inspections that meet the requirements of IAS Accreditation Criteria for Inspection Practices of Metal Building Assemblers (AC478).

AC478 Section 4.1 requires that organizations accredited under this criteria (AC478) must obtain the services of an IAS-accredited inspection agency, which is accredited for the specified discipline, to conduct, at a minimum, an annual inspection at a selected jobsite. The inspections shall be each year with variances permitted within plus or minus 60 days from the previous inspection.

Introduction

Prior to arriving at a jobsite location, personnel who perform inspections to the AC478 requirements should contact the technical representative, on file with IAS, to discuss safety consideration for viewing necessary procedures at the jobsite.

Rather than check every aspect of the metal building assembler's quality system during each inspection, this guideline focuses on key quality indicators, those elements that are critically important in meeting the requirements of AC478. Typically, between six and fifteen inspection objectives are provided for review during each annual inspection. The review should include both a broad review of whether the metal building assembler has procedures in place and meets the basic requirements, and a closer, detailed review of records to verify that the requirements have been implemented for the actual project and daily quality assurance activities.

By probing different elements, different procedures and different processes during each inspection, IAS-accredited inspection agencies must inspect the metal building assembler's management system, encompassing all the elements of AC478, within a two-year time period. It is not necessary to cover **all** the elements of AC478 at the assembler's project site and in the summary narrative for each inspection visit. You are expected to evaluate the metal building assembler's system in an efficient and focused manner; you should limit the depth of coverage when necessary to meet a suggested time frame.

There are a variety of ways to perform an inspection:

- Inspecting is largely about understanding requirements
- Inspections should add value to the assembler's operations and will include recommendations, opportunities for improvement and identify best practices
- Inspections should identify the assembler's strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for improvement as well as ensuring compliance to AC478.

Section 1: Arrival – Opening Meeting

Upon arrival at the metal building assembler's location for the inspection, the inspector should identify himself/herself to the assembler's management and ask for a copy of the metal building assembler's management system procedures, as appropriate, to ensure compliance to the following:

- A site-specific project plan
- Daily jobsite checklist
- Job Safety Analysis (JSA)
- Site layout plan
- Quality control plan
- A narrative regarding the erection plan

The inspector should inform the assembler that the review of these procedural documents will facilitate the inspection. If any revisions or changes to management personnel are found, they must be noted in the inspection report. As a minimum, the following documents should be considered upon arrival at the jobsite location and in the inspection agency's report:

- Quality manual, procedure manual and/or written work instructions (latest revisions)
- Organizational chart
- Location of the facility and the jobsite
- Contact information changes
- Internal audits
- Management reviews
- A project currently under production
- Where possible, a project in process and nearly completed will provide objective evidence that the procedures set forth in the management system have been effectively implemented.

Section 2: Inspection Reports

All reports must be sent to IAS and include the following:

- The name of the organization, including the metal building assembler's (MBA) number assigned by IAS, the physical street address, name and title of the person serving as the metal building assembler's contact (including the telephone number, fax number and e-mail address).
- The report must include the IAS listing (AA) number of the inspection agency, the date of the inspection and the signature of the inspector who performed the inspection.
- The inspection report must be reviewed by the IAS-accredited inspection agency program contact and must include the date of review. The report must be signed by personnel who reviewed it.
- An organizational chart of the organization, including the name of the responsible quality manager. This chart must show the relationships among the safety manager, training manager, project manager and quality manager. The organizational "chart" may be more than one document.
- Indicate if any changes have been made to the procedures and personnel at the facility since the last inspection, and describe how these changes may affect the operations at the facility.

Section 3: Performing the Annual Inspection

Review of safety program documentation. This program must describe the procedures and activities for ensuring that all employees, subcontractors and processes comply with the project requirements that address minimum OSHA standards and/or applicable regulatory requirements.

The contract review procedure must include provisions attesting the review is appropriate and that the workmanship will meet the specifications. The procedure must also include a provision for the approval of exceptions or change order requests. Reviews shall be performed by personnel who have access to the appropriate information and who have adequate knowledge of the requirements. The reviews must be approved by the quality manager. Each project must have an approval from the organization's authorized person assigned this activity. Verification may be in the form of a signed checklist, form or other methods as appropriate.

- Internal audits: The organization shall identify the frequency, method of documentation and the content of internal audits to determine the effectiveness of the quality system. Audits shall include a summary that compares the most recent audit to the previous audit, and include the principal elements of AC478 as a minimum. Include a summary for the most recent internal audit performed at the facility within the past twelve months.

- Control of nonconforming work: The organization shall have documented methods for identifying, documenting and assigning the disposition of nonconforming items. Include the nonconformance log (punch list) and include a summary that describes how nonconforming work leads to remedial measures.
- Corrective action: The organization will have documented methods for investigating, documenting and correcting nonconformances. The procedure must include a provision to preclude repetition. Include a summary of corrective actions implemented that provide for the improvement of operational efficiency or quality. The nonconformance log or customer feedback log will be reflected through the corrective action. Keep in mind that a corrective action is not the same as a repair.
- Training of all personnel who have an effect on the quality of the finished product shall be documented. Review training records and, as a minimum, submit or note the training records of project managers, safety managers, quality managers, inspectors and craftsmen, including welding personnel.
- Ensuring traceability of calibration of measurement tools or equipment to nationally recognized standards.

Note: It is recognized there may not be nationally recognized standards available for unique testing equipment. When such instances exist, calibration procedures must be in compliance with the organization's recommendations to the extent that such testing equipment is calibrated to ensure consistency with the required measuring capabilities. It is the organization's responsibility to ensure that such testing equipment is approved prior to use.

Summary

- Conduct an opening meeting that identifies the inspection's objectives and scope. This meeting can be short and held anywhere.
- After the opening meeting, ask for a tour of the jobsite. The tour should be to familiarize you with the project and for you to take note of the quality of workmanship.
- After the tour, have an audit plan that, based on time availability of personnel with whom you will need to talk, is agreed upon.
- Ask questions: Who, what, when, where, how and why. Carefully observe processes and outputs. It is important to ask open-ended questions, since the answers will abound in information about process performance and personnel competence. An open-ended question is one that requires more than a **yes** or **no** answer.

- Gather information, analyze what is seen and heard, form opinions, and reach conclusions. Inspectors must be prepared, fair, objective, impartial and unbiased.
- Probe to understand that processes are in conformance with the AC478 requirements. Gather objective evidence to determine compliance. For example, a welding procedure specification must not only meet the requirements of AWS, there must also be a method of communicating the requirements to personnel who do the welding. Effectiveness can be measured by the quality of the weld. Whether the WPS is posted, or not, if the weld quality is not acceptable to contract requirements, then communication to the welder may not be effective.
- Take notes frequently. It is difficult to remember actual events that have occurred hours before.
- Conduct a closing meeting with the person in charge of the area inspected. At this closing meeting, inspectors should share their overall opinion on what they have observed, outlining the negative and positive observations. Explain the process for corrective action as regards any significant adverse findings. ■