



**ACCREDITATION CRITERIA FOR BUILDING DEPARTMENTS, CODE ENFORCEMENT
DEPARTMENTS AND THIRD PARTIES PROVIDING BUILDING AND/OR PROPERTY
MAINTENANCE CODE ENFORCEMENT SERVICES**

AC251

**July 14, 2021
Effective September 1, 2021**

PREFACE

The attached accreditation criteria have been issued to provide all interested parties with guidelines on implementing performance features of the applicable standards referenced herein. The criteria were developed and adopted following public hearings conducted by the International Accreditation Service, Inc. (IAS), Accreditation Committee and are effective on the date shown above. All accreditations issued or reissued on or after the effective date must comply with these criteria. If the criteria are an updated version from a previous edition, solid vertical lines (|) in the outer margin within the criteria indicate a technical change or addition from the previous edition. Deletion indicators (→) are provided in the outer margins where a paragraph or item has been deleted if the deletion resulted from a technical change. These criteria may be further revised as the need dictates.

IAS may consider alternate criteria provided the proponent submits substantiating data demonstrating that the alternate criteria are at least equivalent to the attached criteria and otherwise meet applicable accreditation requirements.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. **Scope:** These criteria set forth the requirements for obtaining and maintaining International Accreditation Service, Inc. (IAS), accreditation of (1) governmental agencies (i.e., building code regulatory agencies, code enforcement departments) responsible for the enforcement of building and construction laws or other jurisdictional ordinances (such as, property maintenance zoning or traffic laws) related to enhancing the quality of life within their jurisdictions and (2) nongovernmental third-party permitting, plan review and/or inspection service providers (i.e., third-party service providers). These criteria supplement the IAS Rules of Procedure for Building Department/Code Enforcement Agencies Accreditation.

1.2. **Normative and Reference Documents:** Publications listed below refer to current editions (unless otherwise stated).

- 1.2.1. *International Building Code (IBC)* and related construction codes published by the International Code Council.
- 1.2.2. *International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC)*.
- 1.2.3. *British Columbia Building Code (BCBC)* and *Vancouver Building By-law*, current editions.
- 1.2.4. *Building Department Administration*, by Robert E. O'Bannon, published by the International Code Council.
- 1.2.5. IAS Rules of Procedure for Building Department/Code Enforcement Agencies Accreditation.
- 1.2.6. National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Regulations 44 C.F.R Parts 59 and 60.
- 1.2.7 *Building Code Effectiveness Grading Schedule (BCEGS)* published by the Insurances Services Office, Inc.

1.3 **Application of the Insurance Services Office (ISO), Inc. Building Code Effectiveness Grading Schedule (BCEGS) Classification:**

- 1.3.1 Building Departments, Code Enforcement Departments, and Third Parties providing building and /or property maintenance code enforcement services seeking accreditation in accordance with this Accreditation Criteria are only required to submit initial documentation, data, and information to demonstrate conformance with AC251 clauses

for the AC251 Group Designations shown in Annex E. Should an issue or concern arise during an assessment involving documentation not a part of the required initial documentation submittal as indicated in Annex E, additional documentation, data, or information demonstrating conformance with the applicable AC251 requirement may be required.

- 1.3.2 The following are the AC251 Group Designations based upon the BCEGS Classifications:

Group A: BCEGS Classification 1, 2, and 3

Group B: BCEGS Classifications 4, 5, and 6

Group C: BCEGS Classifications 7, 8, 9, 10, and 99

The lower of the commercial and residential BCEGS Classifications shall be used in determining the applicable AC251 Group Designation.

United States Territories and other countries not subject to ISO BCEGS classification shall be designed as AC251 Group C for the purposes of required accreditation documentation submittal.

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1. **Accreditation:** Formal third-party recognition that a body fulfills specified requirements and is competent to carry out specific conformity assessment and regulatory tasks.
- 2.2. **Accreditation Committee:** A committee of government officials appointed by the IAS Board of Directors to monitor the work of and to develop accreditation criteria for IAS.
- 2.3. **Accreditation Review Committee (ARC):** A committee established by the IAS Board of Directors to render accreditation decisions on the IAS Building Department/Code Enforcement Agency Accreditation program.
- 2.4. **Alternate Materials and Methods of Construction/Alternate Solutions:** A material, design or method of construction that has been approved where the authority having jurisdiction finds that the proposed design or product is satisfactory and complies with the intent of the provisions of the code.
- 2.5. **Appeal:** Request for reconsideration of any administrative decision by the agency related to its enforcement authority. Administrative decisions include:
- 2.5.1. Refusal to accept an application for issuance of permit;
 - 2.5.2. Refusal to proceed with plan check or inspections;
 - 2.5.3. Corrective action requests;

- 2.5.4. Refusal to agree with the designer's code interpretation;
 - 2.5.5. Decisions to deny, suspend or halt construction work;
 - 2.5.6. Any other action that impedes the attainment of a permit for construction or certificate of occupancy.
- 2.6. **Approved:** Acceptable to the official having jurisdiction.
 - 2.7. **Approved Agency:** An established and recognized agency regularly engaged in conducting tests or furnishing inspection services, when such agency has been approved. Accreditation by the International Accreditation Service as a testing laboratory or inspection agency meets the intent of IBC Section 1702.1 relative to approved agencies.
 - 2.8. **Building:** Any structure used or intended to support or shelter any use or occupancy.
 - 2.9. **Building Code Administrator/Building Official/Code Official:** The officer or other designated authority charged with the administration and enforcement of codes as adopted in their jurisdiction.
 - 2.10. **Building Department/Code Enforcement Agency:** Authoritative body which performs functions related to enforcement of construction and other laws.
 - 2.11. **Certified Contractor:** Any contractor who possesses a certificate of competency issued by state regulators and who is allowed to contract in any jurisdiction in the state without being required to fulfill the competency requirements of that jurisdiction.
 - 2.12. **Competent:** Ability to apply knowledge and skills to achieve intended results.
Note: Demonstrated competence is sometimes referred to as qualification.
 - 2.13. **Complaint:** Expression of dissatisfaction, other than appeal, by any person or organization, concerning some matter related to the agency, where a response is expected.
 - 2.14. **Construction Documents:** Written, graphic and pictorial documents prepared or assembled to describe the design, location and physical characteristics of a building project.
 - 2.15. **Contract Staff:** A third-party individual or entity hired by the local jurisdiction to perform plan review and/or inspection services.
 - 2.16. **Control:** The direction, regulation and coordination of procedures and related documents to assure consistency of operations.
 - 2.17. **Document:** Information captured in any medium, including written text (paper or digital), flow charts, drawings or sketches, photographs, audio or video recordings, and others.
 - 2.18. **External/Internal Pressures and Influences:** Interference with due process of code enforcement by persons in a position of power (such as

- elected officials).
- 2.19. **Historic Buildings/Heritage Buildings:** Buildings that are listed in or are eligible for listing in the U.S. National Register of Historic Places, or designated as historic under appropriate state or local law (In British Columbia: Buildings that are defined by the *British Columbia Building Code* as legally protected or officially recognized as a heritage property by the Provincial or local government.)
 - 2.20. **Impartiality:** Possessing the qualities of independence, neutrality, fairness, open-mindedness, even-handedness, detachment, and balance; and freedom from conflicts of interest, adverse influence, bias, and/or prejudice.
 - 2.21. **Internal Audits:** An audit is a systematic, independent and documented process to obtain and evaluate objective evidence to determine the extent to which the audit criteria are fulfilled. An internal audit is an audit conducted by, or on behalf, of the organization itself for the purpose of identifying the extent to which the requirements of the quality management system are followed, as well as the effectiveness of current processes, and is carried out by personnel not responsible for the work or process being audited.
 - 2.22. **Jurisdiction:** The geographic area over which the authority to enforce adopted codes is exercised.
 - 2.23. **Life-safety Error:** Omission or flaw in design or construction that has the potential to negatively impact occupant and/or rescuer safety; or, the failure to meet, in design or construction, a required minimum standard intended to minimize the effects of fire and related hazards to occupants and/or rescuers. (May include, for example, errors in the design, construction or installation of major structural components, exiting systems, fire alarms and sprinklers, smoke control systems, control systems for hazardous materials, etc.)
 - 2.24. **Management or Operational Audits:** Independent evaluations conducted by a qualified entity, at the request of the elected or appointed officials or top management, to measure the operational consistency and overall efficiency of the department/code enforcement agency or third-party service provider.
 - 2.25. **Management Reviews:** Reviews by top management of the organization's quality management system to ensure its continued suitability, adequacy, effectiveness and alignment with the strategic direction of the organization.
 - 2.26. **Nonconformity:** Nonfulfillment of a requirement.
 - 2.27. **Permit:** An official document issued by the authority having jurisdiction which authorizes performance of a specified activity.
 - 2.28. **Permit Applicant:** An individual or corporation applying for a building construction permit or plan review in accordance with local codes or other normative documents.

- 2.29. **Policy:** Directive formally expressed by an organization's top management.
- 2.30. **Procedure:** See "Standard Operating Procedures."
- 2.31. **Process:** A series of actions or operations which are intended to end in a particular result.
- 2.32. **Record:** A document which provides evidence of activities performed or results achieved (see definition for "Document").
- 2.33. **Registered Contractor:** Any contractor who has registered with the appropriate state agency pursuant to fulfilling the competency requirements in the jurisdiction for which the registration is issued. Registered contractors may contract only in such jurisdictions.
- 2.34. **Registered Design Professionals/Registered Professionals:** Individuals registered or licensed to practice their respective design professions as defined by the statutory requirements of the professional registration laws of the state or jurisdiction in which the project is to be constructed. (In British Columbia: Individuals registered or licensed to practice their respective design professions as defined in the BCBC as a person who is registered or licensed to practice as an architect under the Architects Act or a person who is registered or licensed to practice as a professional engineer under the Engineers and Geosciences Act.)
- 2.35. **Service Goals:** Goals set for performance in each area of service offered by the building department or code enforcement agency. Goals must be quantified (expressed as a number, rating or grade) and established in cooperation with users of agency services (citizens, architects, engineers, contractors, etc.) as well as elected and appointed officials. A system must be in place to regularly measure progress in meeting service goals. As part of this system, targets shall be established for improvements in three separate areas of overall service: timeliness (turnaround time); quality (error rate); and professionalism [quality of interactions with staff (e.g., knowledge, attitude, responsiveness, and helpfulness of staff members) as perceived by users of department or third-party services].
Note: A quality (error rate) service goal with zero life-safety errors shall be established for plan review and inspection functions.
- 2.36. **Special Inspection/Field Review:** Inspection as herein required of the materials, installation, fabrication, erection or placement of components and connections requiring special expertise to ensure compliance with approved construction documents and referenced standards (see IBC Section 1704). Special inspection agencies are required to demonstrate competence, to the satisfaction of the building or other code official, for inspection of the particular type of construction or

operation requiring special inspection. IAS-accredited special inspection agencies satisfy the requirements of Section 1702 of the IBC. (In British Columbia: Inspection required of material, installation, fabrication, erection or placement of components and connections requiring expertise to ensure compliance with approved construction documents and reference standards shall be conducted by Registered Professionals or by consultants approved by the Authority Having Jurisdiction.)

- 2.37. **Standard Operating Procedures:** Established or prescribed methods to be followed routinely for the performance of designated operations or in designated situations.
- 2.38. **Structure:** That which is built or constructed (see “Building”).
- 2.39. **Third Party:** A competent, independent entity approved by the building or other code official having jurisdiction to perform specified tasks.
- 2.40. **Third Party Service Provider (TPP):** Non-governmental third-party permitting, plan review and inspection service providers.
- 2.41. **Top Management:** The person or group of people who direct and control the organization, body, department, division or company seeking accreditation.
Note: If the scope of accreditation shall cover only part of an organization, then top management refers to those who direct and control that part of the organization.

3. ELIGIBILITY

Accreditation services are available to regulatory agencies and third-party service providers that provide any of the following services (or any combination thereof) related to building and/or property maintenance code enforcement:

- 3.1. Permitting;
- 3.2. Plan Review;
- 3.3. Inspections;
- 3.4. Property Maintenance Code Enforcement;
- 3.5. Construction Code Adoption, Promulgation and/or Oversight.

4. REQUIRED BASIC INFORMATION

- 4.1. Regulatory agencies and third-party service providers must demonstrate compliance with the following requirements:
 - 4.1.1. The requirements of these accreditation criteria;
 - 4.1.2. Regulatory agencies and third-party service providers must comply with the IAS Rules of Procedure for Building Department/Code Enforcement Agencies Accreditation.

- 4.1.3. Regulatory agencies providing building code enforcement services must comply with Annex A of this document.
 - 4.1.4. Third-party providers of building department services must comply with Annex B of this document.
 - 4.1.5. Building departments in British Columbia, Canada, must comply with Annex C of this document.
 - 4.1.6. Regulatory agencies providing property maintenance inspection services must comply with Annex D of this document.
- 4.2. All applicants must comply with the following sections of this document (as applicable to services provided):
- 4.2.1. **BUILDING/PROPERTY MAINTENANCE CODE ENFORCEMENT--ADMINISTRATION**
 - 4.2.1.1. **GENERAL OPERATIONS**
 - 4.2.1.1.1. **EFFECTIVELY** coordinate workflows with other related functions, such as zoning, transportation, stormwater, floodplain management, fire inspections, contractor licensing, occupational licensing, etc., when responsibility for components of plan review, permitting, inspection and/or other functions are under separate departments or agencies. Have a system in place to coordinate, track and manage operational activities (such as for plan reviews, permit issuance, inspections, etc.)
 - 4.2.1.1.2. Have **EMERGENCY** response plans in place (coordinated with other departments, as applicable), and be adequately prepared and ready to identify damaged buildings and conduct safety inspections following a natural hazard event.
 - 4.2.1.1.3. Have policies, statutes and/or other adequate measures in place which provide code officials freedom from external/internal pressures and influences (as defined in Section 2) that could possibly impair the enforcement of codes.
 - 4.2.1.1.4. The organization shall document and communicate its requirements for impartiality and nondiscrimination.
 - 4.2.1.1.5. **QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM:** There shall be established and maintained a quality management

system capable of achieving the consistent fulfillment of the requirements of the accreditation criteria (AC251) and shall address the following:

- 4.2.1.1.5.1. **Management Commitment:** Top management shall demonstrate customer focus and commitment to and support of the quality management system.
- 4.2.1.1.5.2. **Internal Audits:** Internal audits shall be conducted annually to provide information on whether the quality management system and service goals conform to its own requirements for its quality management system and the requirements of AC251 and is effectively implemented and maintained. In addition:
 - 4.2.1.1.5.2.1. Internal audits shall be planned and implemented with consideration to areas of responsibility, importance of processes to be audited, changes affecting the organization, and results of previous audits;
 - 4.2.1.1.5.2.2. Competent auditors shall be selected to ensure objectivity and impartiality of the audit process;
 - 4.2.1.1.5.2.3. Internal quality management system audit results shall be documented and retained. Service goals audits shall be documented in a summary report that compares audit findings to the stated service goals;
 - 4.2.1.1.5.2.4. Audit results shall be reported to relevant management;
 - 4.2.1.1.5.2.5. Appropriate corrections shall be made, and corrective actions taken without undue delay.
- 4.2.1.1.5.3. **Management Reviews:** Top management shall review the quality management system annually to ensure its continuing suitability, adequacy, effectiveness and alignment with the strategic direction of the organization and shall:
 - 4.2.1.1.5.3.1. Consider status of actions from previous management reviews;
 - 4.2.1.1.5.3.2. Examine changes in external and internal issues relevant to the quality management system;

- 4.2.1.1.5.3.3. Review information on the performance and effectiveness of the quality management system, including trends in:
 - 4.2.1.1.5.3.3.1. Customer satisfaction and stakeholder feedback;
 - 4.2.1.1.5.3.3.2. The extent to which service goals have been met;
 - 4.2.1.1.5.3.3.3. Process performance;
 - 4.2.1.1.5.3.3.4. Nonconformities and corrective actions;
 - 4.2.1.1.5.3.3.5. Monitoring of data and measurement results;
 - 4.2.1.1.5.3.3.6. Audit results (including results of external audits);
 - 4.2.1.1.5.3.3.7. Performance of external providers.
- 4.2.1.1.5.3.4. Examine adequacy of resources;
- 4.2.1.1.5.3.5. Consider risks and opportunities for improvement;
- 4.2.1.1.5.3.6. Document, and retain, decisions and actions related to:
 - 4.2.1.1.5.3.6.1. Opportunities for improvement,
 - 4.2.1.1.5.3.6.2. Need for changes to quality management system,
 - 4.2.1.1.5.3.6.3. Resource needs.
- 4.2.1.1.5.4. **Corrective Actions:** A nonconformity arising from an audit or complaint shall be addressed by:
 - 4.2.1.1.5.4.1. Reacting to control and correct it and manage consequences;
 - 4.2.1.1.5.4.2. Ensuring it does not recur or occur elsewhere by determining the cause and looking for the existence of similar nonconformities:
 - 4.2.1.1.5.4.2.1. Implementing corrective action,
 - 4.2.1.1.5.4.2.2. Reviewing effectiveness of corrective action,
 - 4.2.1.1.5.4.2.3. Updating opportunities for improvement documented during management review,
 - 4.2.1.1.5.4.2.4. Making changes, if necessary, to the quality management system,

- 4.2.1.1.5.4.2.5. Retaining documented information on the nature of the nonconformity, actions taken, and results of corrective action.
- 4.2.1.1.5.5. **Control of Documents and Records:** Documented information (including records) required by the quality management system, and by AC251, shall be controlled to ensure availability and suitability for use where and when needed.
 - 4.2.1.1.5.5.1. The organization shall identify which documents and records are to be controlled and have a process to achieve and demonstrate control of the following activities:
 - 4.2.1.1.5.5.1.1. Distribution, access, retrieval and use of controlled documents and records;
 - 4.2.1.1.5.5.1.2. Storage and preservation, including preservation of legibility of controlled documents and records;
 - 4.2.1.1.5.5.1.3. Changes to controlled documents (e.g. version control);
 - 4.2.1.1.5.5.1.4. Retention and disposition of controlled documents and records.
 - 4.2.1.1.5.5.2. Controlled documents and records shall be adequately protected (e.g. from loss of confidentiality, unauthorized access, improper use, or loss of integrity).
- 4.2.1.1.5.6. Complaints and Appeals
 - 4.2.1.1.5.6.1. Complaints against personnel or contractors; and complaints or reports of code violations, building bylaw violations (in British Columbia), and other similar violations, shall be logged, investigated and resolved.
 - 4.2.1.1.5.6.2. There shall be evidence of the establishment of, and rules of procedure for, a board of appeals as required by Section 113 of the IBC (or Section 108 of the International Fire Code, or Section 111 of the IPMC, as applicable); or procedure for hearing and deciding appeals in accordance with

applicable adopted construction code(s). There shall be a process to achieve and demonstrate that members appointed to the board are qualified to hear appeals and impartial.

- 4.2.1.1.6. Provide suitable and adequate facilities and equipment to enable all work to be carried out in a competent and safe manner. All equipment shall be maintained in accordance with applicable organizational requirements and instructions shall be assessed periodically to ensure continued suitability, and defective equipment replaced or repaired in a timely manner.
- 4.2.1.1.7. Identify which tools and equipment require calibration and maintain records of required calibrations.
- 4.2.1.1.8. (This section intentionally left blank for future content)
- 4.2.1.1.9. Data (such as that related to plan reviews, permitting, inspections, etc.,) shall be tracked to allow for analysis and improvement in workflows and/or staff or stakeholder training/education.
- 4.2.1.1.10. Be provided adequate information technology (IT) support.
- 4.2.1.1.11. (This section intentionally left blank for future content)
- 4.2.1.1.12. Have access to legal counsel and prosecution support.
- 4.2.1.1.13. Engage with stakeholders and the community (for example, by conducting stakeholder meetings, safety awareness programs and community outreach activities).

4.2.1.2. PERSONNEL

- 4.2.1.2.1. Have an organizational chart (or equivalent) providing employee names and titles for all full- and part-time staff positions within the code enforcement/third party organization which shows total number of employees.
- 4.2.1.2.2. Have job descriptions (or equivalent) which specify required competencies such as: minimum qualifications, education, training, technical knowledge, skills, experience, and certification/licensing requirements for all full-time, part-time and contract positions.
- 4.2.1.2.3. Maintain records of monitoring, education, training,

technical knowledge, skills, experience, and standings of required licenses and certifications, for each person performing work for the organization.

- 4.2.1.2.4. Staff shall be trained periodically on the organization's requirements for staff impartiality (as defined in Section 2).
- 4.2.1.2.5. Evaluate employees regularly to ensure continued competence and compliance with all applicable organizational and legal requirements. Records of evaluations shall be maintained.
- 4.2.1.2.6. Encourage staff to obtain continuing education units (or equivalent) to maintain required certifications.
- 4.2.1.2.7. Encourage staff participation in code development activities.
- 4.2.1.2.8. Employ or contract with a sufficient number of persons with the required competencies, including, where needed, the ability to make professional judgments, to perform the type, range and volume of services provided.

4.2.1.3. PERMITTING

- 4.2.1.3.1. There shall be a process to achieve and demonstrate compliance with all applicable organizational and legal requirements for the issuance of permits.
- 4.2.1.3.2. There shall be a process to achieve and demonstrate compliance with all applicable organizational and legal requirements for issuing permits for *designated historic buildings* (or equivalent).
- 4.2.1.3.3. **Establish, and periodically re-evaluate in consultation with stakeholders, service goals for the issuance of permits.** There shall be a program to regularly monitor performance toward meeting stated goals and take remedial actions as necessary. Service goals shall be expressed in a quantifiable manner and specifically defined for each of the following areas:

- 4.2.1.3.3.1. **Timeliness** (i.e., turnaround time);

Note: IAS recommends that the service goal for timeliness of permits should not include the time it takes to review and

approve plans, since additional time to correct and re-review plans may be beyond the control of the organization. Instead it is recommended that the “timeliness” goal for permitting be broken down into “intake” (time to review and accept application and assign plans for review) and “output” (time taken to issue permit after the plans are approved).

4.2.1.3.3.2. **Quality** (i.e., tolerance rate for errors due to staff or the system);

4.2.1.3.3.2.1. **For major errors** on issued permits

4.2.1.3.3.2.2. **For minor errors** on issued permits

4.2.1.3.3.3. **Staff Professionalism** (i.e., quality of interactions with staff)

Note: This may also be called “Customer Service;” however, AC251 specifically allows for organizations to limit the customer’s assessment of staff in terms of professional qualities (such as knowledge, attitude, responsiveness and helpfulness). More general customer service ratings could be negatively affected by code-enforcement decisions made to enhance life safety that, through no fault of the code official, may result in increased time or cost to the customer.

4.2.1.3.4. There shall be a process to achieve and demonstrate compliance with all applicable organizational and legal requirements for expired or inactive permits.

4.2.1.4. FINANCE

4.2.1.4.1. Budget shall take into consideration risks affecting services provided and shall be adequate to achieve and maintain service goals as defined in Section 2.

4.2.1.4.2. (This section intentionally left blank for future content)

4.2.1.4.3. (This section intentionally left blank for future content)

4.2.1.4.4. There shall be a process to achieve and demonstrate with all applicable organizational and legal requirements for the establishment and collection of fees.

4.2.2. PLAN REVIEWS

4.2.2.1. There shall be a process to achieve and demonstrate compliance with all applicable organizational and legal requirements for plan

reviews.

4.2.2.2. There shall be a process to achieve and demonstrate compliance with all applicable organizational and legal requirements for partial plan approvals or deferred submittals.

4.2.2.3. There shall be a process to achieve and demonstrate compliance with all applicable organizational and legal requirements for the approval of alternate materials and methods of construction (called “alternate solutions” in British Columbia).

4.2.2.4. **Establish, and periodically re-evaluate, in consultation with stakeholders, service goals for the performance of plan reviews.**

There shall be a program to regularly monitor performance toward meeting stated goals and take remedial actions as necessary.

Service goals shall be expressed in a quantifiable manner and defined for each of the following areas:

4.2.2.4.1. **Timeliness** (i.e., turnaround time),

4.2.2.4.2. **Quality** (i.e., tolerance rate for errors due to staff or the system),

4.2.2.4.2.1. **For zero life-safety errors** missed in plan reviews,
Note: A rate of zero (or zero percent) in this category is mandatory to achieve accreditation. (This may be expressed differently such as “100% correct” as long as the meaning is not changed.)

4.2.2.4.2.2. **For major (non-life safety) errors** missed in plan reviews,

4.2.2.4.2.3. **For minor errors** missed in plan reviews.

4.2.2.4.3. **Staff Professionalism** (i.e., quality of interactions with staff)

Note: This may also be called “Customer Service;” however, AC251 specifically allows for organizations to limit the customer’s assessment of staff in terms of professional qualities (such as knowledge, attitude, responsiveness and helpfulness). More general customer service ratings could be negatively affected by code-enforcement decisions made to enhance life safety that, through no fault of the code official, may result in increased time or cost to the customer.

4.2.3. VERIFICATION OF PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALS/LICENSES

- 4.2.3.1. There shall be a process to achieve and demonstrate compliance with all applicable organizational and legal requirements for the verification of builder/contractor licensing and insurance.
- 4.2.3.2. There shall be a process to achieve and demonstrate compliance with all applicable organizational and legal requirements for the verification of licenses of registered design professionals.
- 4.2.3.3. There shall be a process to achieve and demonstrate compliance with all applicable organizational and legal requirements for the verification of special inspector/special inspection agency credentials.

4.2.4. INSPECTIONS

- 4.2.4.1. There shall be a process to achieve and demonstrate compliance with all applicable organizational and legal requirements for inspections.
- 4.2.4.2. There shall be a process to achieve and demonstrate compliance with all applicable organizational and legal requirements for overseeing inspections provided by private inspectors hired by owners.
- 4.2.4.3. There shall be a process to achieve and demonstrate clear, concise and accurate inspection reports.
- 4.2.4.4. **Establish, and periodically re-evaluate in consultation with stakeholders, service goals for the performance of inspections.**
There shall be a program to regularly monitor performance toward meeting stated goals and take remedial actions as necessary.
Service goals shall be expressed in a quantifiable manner and defined for each of the following areas:
 - 4.2.4.4.1. **Timeliness** (i.e., turnaround time),
 - 4.2.4.4.2. **Quality** (i.e., tolerance rate for errors due to staff or the system),
 - 4.2.4.4.2.1. **For zero life-safety errors** missed during inspections,
Note: A rate of zero (or zero percent) in this category is mandatory to achieve accreditation. (This may be expressed differently—such as “100% correct,” etc.—as long as the meaning is not changed.)
 - 4.2.4.4.2.2. **For major (non-life safety) errors** missed during inspections.

4.2.4.4.2.3. **For minor errors** missed during inspections.

4.2.4.4.3. **Staff Professionalism** (i.e., quality of interactions with staff)

Note: This may also be called “Customer Service;” however, AC251 specifically allows for organizations to limit the customer’s assessment of staff in terms of professional qualities (such as knowledge, attitude, responsiveness and helpfulness). More general customer service ratings could be negatively affected by code-enforcement decisions made to enhance life safety that, through no fault of the code official, may result in increased time or cost to the customer.

4.2.4.5. Where the department/division/third party is responsible for flood plain management, for construction in high-risk flood zones, Elevation Certificates shall be collected prior to issuance of the certificate of occupancy. Elevation Certificates shall be permanently retained.

4.2.5. CERTIFICATES OF OCCUPANCY

Certificates of Occupancy (including certificates of completion or temporary certificates of occupancy) shall be issued only after all applicable organizational and legal requirements have been met. Certificates of Occupancy shall list the information required by the administrative provisions of the adopted code (e.g., information required in 2015 IBC Section 111.2).

5. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (AS APPLICABLE)

Any other state, provincial and national regulatory requirements.

6. LINKS TO ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

6.1. IAS – www.iasonline.org

6.2. International Code Council – www.iccsafe.org

These criteria were previously issued September 2004, May 2005, October 2005, August 2006, May 2007, April 2008, September 2008, May 2010, May 2011, August 2012, June 2013, February 2015, October 2015, April 2017, September 2018 and October 2020

ANNEX A

REQUIREMENTS

Building Departments must comply with Section 4 of this document (as applicable to the services provided) as well as the requirements of Annex A.

- A1. If the department performs work for other jurisdictions by local agreement, a current contract defining the scope and responsibilities shall be in effect.
- A2. Where the department/division/third party is responsible for flood plain management, negative findings (if any) identified in the most recent FEMA or State Community Assistance Visit report, where applicable, shall have been addressed or in the process of being addressed.
- A3. Department shall establish valid contracts with third-party firms, individuals, or other governing bodies for any outsourced activities. These firms and individuals must operate under the building department's management system and statutory/regulatory requirements applicable to the specific project(s).
- A4. Department shall adopt and enforce current national construction codes (unless otherwise justified) or a state-mandated code based on a national construction code. **Note:** The accreditation certificate for accredited agencies will reflect the editions of the various codes in effect during the full evaluation.
- A5. Procedures for adopting local amendments to administrative provisions of the building and related construction codes shall be followed.
- A6. Procedures for adopting local amendments to technical provisions of the building and related construction codes shall be followed.
- A7. There shall be a process to achieve and demonstrate compliance with all applicable organizational and legal requirements for Special Inspections and Tests (i.e., IBC Chapter 17), or the equivalent requirements of other locally adopted construction code.
 - A7.1. Policies and procedures concerning the use of and requirements for special inspectors, structural observers, and approved fabricators/welders shall be established and controlled.
 - A7.2. Policies and procedures concerning accreditation requirements or field monitoring of special inspection agency work shall be established and controlled.
 - A7.3. Policies and procedures concerning acceptance of approved fabricators shall be established and controlled.

- A7.4. Policies and procedures concerning the approval of third-party inspection and testing agencies shall be established and controlled.
- A7.5. Policies and procedures concerning special inspector reporting requirements shall be established and controlled.

ANNEX B

REQUIREMENTS

Third-party Providers of Building Department Services must comply with Section 4 of this document (as applicable to the services provided) as well as the requirements of Annex B.

- B1. List of duly adopted construction codes used as a basis for the services provided by the third-party service provider shall be provided.
- B2. Procedures followed for maintaining awareness of local amendments to any administrative provisions of the building code, fire code and related construction codes shall be documented.
- B3. Procedures followed for maintaining awareness of local amendments to any technical provisions of the building code, fire code and related construction codes shall be documented.
- B4. Where the third party is responsible for flood plain management, the method for implementation of applicable Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) requirements, as applicable, shall be provided (if any).
- B5. There shall be a process to achieve and demonstrate compliance with all applicable organizational and legal requirements for Special Inspections and Tests (i.e., IBC Chapter 17), or the equivalent requirements of the locally adopted construction code.
 - B5.1. Policies and procedures concerning the use of and requirements for special inspectors, structural observers, and approved fabricators/welders shall be established and controlled.
 - B5.2. Policies and procedures concerning accreditation requirements or field monitoring of special inspection agency work shall be established and controlled.
 - B5.3. Policies and procedures concerning acceptance of approved fabricators shall be established and controlled.
 - B5.4. Policies and procedures concerning the approval of third-party inspection and testing agencies shall be established and controlled.
 - B5.5. Policies and procedures concerning special inspector reporting requirements shall be established and controlled.

ANNEX C

REQUIREMENTS

Building Departments in British Columbia, Canada, must comply with Section 4 of this document (as applicable to the services provided) as well as the requirements of Annex C.

- C1. Evidence shall be provided of adoption of current Provincial Building Code or sections thereof or the *Vancouver Building By-law*.
- C2. Construction-related and building bylaws shall be provided.
- C3. Process for verification of areas of practice for registered professionals shall be documented and followed.
- C4. Process for verification of credentials of agencies/individuals conducting field review shall be documented and followed.
- C5. Use of and compliance with regulatory requirements regarding field review (as defined Special Inspection/Field Review in Section 2), shall be demonstrated.
 - C5.1. Use of and requirements for registered professionals and consultants shall be documented and followed.
 - C5.2. Procedures for approving third-party inspection and testing agencies shall be documented and followed.
 - C5.3. Field review reporting requirements, including collection of letters of assurance as required by British Columbia Building Code and applicable Building Bylaw(s), shall be documented and followed.
- C6. There shall be evidence of the establishment of, and rules of procedure for an appeal process.

ANNEX D

REQUIREMENTS

Organizations seeking accreditation of Property Maintenance Inspections shall comply with Section 4 of this document (as applicable to services provided) as well as the requirements of Annex D.

- D1. There shall be enabling state laws, codes and/or ordinances and regulations that define nuisances, substandard conditions, and other property maintenance requirements to be enforced.
- D2. There shall be a process to achieve and demonstrate compliance with all applicable organizational and legal requirements for accessing properties, buildings and structures for the purpose of code enforcement (including securing access when right of entry is denied).
- D3. There shall be a process to achieve and demonstrate compliance with all applicable organizational and legal requirements for performing property maintenance inspections.
- D4. There shall be a process to achieve and demonstrate compliance with all applicable organizational and legal requirements for issuing notices or orders.
- D5. There shall be a process to achieve and demonstrate compliance with all applicable organizational and legal requirements for issuing citations, assessing fines and monetary penalties, recovering unpaid fines and penalties, and filing liens against properties.
- D6. There shall be a process to achieve and demonstrate compliance with all applicable organizational and legal requirements for the abatement of violations when voluntary compliance is not achieved.
- D7. There shall be a process to achieve and demonstrate compliance with all applicable organizational and legal requirements for structures or equipment determined to be unsafe, unfit for occupancy, or unlawful.
- D8. There shall be a process to achieve and demonstrate compliance with all applicable organizational and legal requirements for responses to eminent danger.
- D9. There shall be a process to achieve and demonstrate compliance with all applicable organizational and legal requirements for securing or demolishing a structure.
- D10. There shall be a process to achieve and demonstrate compliance with all applicable organizational and legal requirements for the recovery of costs, as allowed, of emergency repairs, closing or demolishing structures, etc.

D11. Establish, and periodically re-evaluate in consultation with stakeholders, service goals for the performance of inspections. There shall be a program to regularly monitor performance toward meeting stated goals and take remedial actions as necessary. Service goals shall be expressed in a quantifiable manner and defined for each of the following areas:

D11.1 Timeliness (i.e., turnaround/response time)

D11.2 Quality (i.e., tolerance rate for errors due to staff or the system)

D11.2.1 For zero life-safety errors missed during inspections

Note: A rate of zero (or zero percent) in this category is mandatory to achieve accreditation. (This may be expressed differently—such as “100% correct,” etc.—as long as the meaning is not changed.)

D11.2.2 For major (non-life safety) errors missed during inspections

D11.2.3 For minor errors missed during inspections

D11.3 Staff Professionalism (i.e., quality of interactions with staff)

Note: This may also be called “Customer Service;” however, AC251 specifically allows for organizations to limit the customer’s assessment of staff in terms of professional qualities (such as knowledge, attitude, responsiveness and helpfulness). More general customer service ratings could be negatively affected by code-enforcement decisions made to enhance life safety that, through no fault of the code official, may result in increased time or cost to the customer

ANNEX E

Requirements

Building Departments, Code Enforcement Departments, and Building Department Third-Party Services Providers seeking accreditation in accordance with this Accreditation Criteria are only required to submit documentation, data and information to demonstrate conformance with the AC251 Clauses for the AC251 Group Designations shown in the below table. The lower of the commercial and residential BCEGS Classifications shall be used in determining the applicable AC251 Group designation. Should an issue or concern arise during an assessment involving documentation not a part in the required initial documentation submittal as indicated in the below table, additional documentation, data or information demonstrating conformance to AC251 requirements may be required.

AC251 BUILDING DEPARTMENTEN ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENTS BASED UPON AC251 GROUP DESIGNATIONS					
APPLIES TO:	REQUIREMENT	AC251 Clause(s)	GROUP A (BCEGS SCORE RANGE 77-100)	GROUP B (BCEGS SCORE RANGE 39-76.99)	GROUP C (BCEGS SCORE RANGE 0-38.99 AND UNSCORED)
	Emergency Response	4.2.1.1.2	•	•	•
	Freedom from Internal/External Pressure	4.2.1.1.3	•	•	•
	Impartiality	4.2.1.1.4		•	•
	Established Quality Management System	4.2.1.1.5	•	•	•
	Management Commitment	4.2.1.1.5.1	•	•	•
	Internal Audits of Management System	4.2.1.1.5.2	•	•	•
	Management Reviews	4.2.1.1.5.3	•	•	•
	Corrective Actions	4.2.1.1.5.4	•	•	•
	Documents and Records	4.2.1.1.5.5	•	•	•
	Complaints and Appeals	4.2.1.1.5.6	•	•	•
	Facilities and Equipment	4.2.1.1.6			•
	Tools/Equipment Calibration (when required)	4.2.1.1.7			•
	Permitting, Plan Review and Inspection Data Tracking and Analysis	4.2.1.1.9			•
	IT Support	4.2.1.1.10			•
	Legal Counsel and Prosecution Support	4.2.1.1.12		•	•
	Stakeholder and Community Engagement	4.2.1.1.13	•	•	•
	Organizational Chart	4.2.1.2.1	•	•	•
	Job Descriptions/Minimum Qualifications	4.2.1.2.2			•
	Records of Staff Licenses, Certifications, Training	4.2.1.2.3	•	•	•
	Impartiality Training	4.2.1.2.4	•	•	•
	Employee Evaluations	4.2.1.2.5	•	•	•
	Encourage Continuing Education	4.2.1.2.6			•
	Encourage Code Development Participation by Staff	4.2.1.2.7			•
	Adequate Staffing Levels	4.2.1.2.8		•	•
	Permitting Process	4.2.1.3.1		•	•
	Permitting for Historic Buildings	4.2.1.3.2		•	•
	Service Goals for Permitting	4.2.1.3.3	•	•	•
	Expired Permits	4.2.1.3.4	•	•	•
	Budget Consideration of Risks	4.2.1.4.1			•

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AC251 BUILDING DEPARTMENT ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENTS BASED UPON AC251 GROUP DESIGNATIONS (Continued)					
APPLIES TO:	REQUIREMENTS	AC251 Clause	GROUP A (BCEGS SCORE RANGE 77-100)	GROUP B (BCEGS SCORE RANGE 39-76.99)	GROUP C (BCEGS SCORE RANGE 0-38.99 AND UNSCORED)
All Building Departments, Code Enforcement Departments, and Third Parties	Requirements for Establishing and Collecting fee	4.2.1.4.4			•
	Plan Review Process	4.2.2.1	•	•	•
	Partial Approvals and Deferred Submittals	4.2.2.2	•	•	•
	Alternate Materials and Methods	4.2.2.3	•	•	•
	Service Goals for Plan Reviews	4.2.2.4	•	•	•
	License and Credential Verification for Contractors, Designers, Special Inspection Inspectors/Agencies	4.2.3		•	•
	Organizational and Legal Requirements for Inspection	4.2.4.1		•	•
	Process for Owner-Hired Private Inspectors	4.2.4.2			•
	Clear, Concise, Accurate Inspection Reports	4.2.4.3			•
	Service Goals for Inspections	4.2.4.4	•	•	•
	Elevation certificates in High-risk Zones	4.2.4.5	•	•	•
	Certificates of Occupancy	4.2.5	•	•	•
All Building Departments, (except in British Columbia)	Contracts with Other Jurisdictions	Annex A, A1	•	•	•
	FEMA/State Report Findings Addressed	Annex A, A2		•	•
	Contracts with Third-Party Providing Services	Annex A, A3		•	•
	Adoption of Construction Codes	Annex A, A4	•	•	•
	Adoption of Administrative Code/Amendments	Annex A, A5	•	•	•
	Adoption of Technical Codes/Amendments	Annex A, A6	•	•	•
	Special Inspections Requirements (IBC Chapter 17)	Annex A, A7	•	•	•
Third-Party Providers	Adoption of Construction Codes	Annex B, B1	•	•	•
	Adoption of Administrative Code/Amendments	Annex B, B2	•	•	•
	Adoption of Technical Codes/Amendments	Annex B, B3	•	•	•
	FEMA Requirements Implementation (as applicable)	Annex B, B4	•	•	•
	Special Inspection Requirements (IBC Chapter 17)	Annex B, B5	•	•	•
British Columbia Building Departments	All Provisions of Annex C Are Applicable - British Columbia Building Departments (ISO does not evaluate Building Department in British Columbia as part of the BCEGS program)				
Property Maintenance Code Enforcement	All Provisions of Annex D Are Applicable - Property Maintenance Inspection Services ISO does not evaluate Property Maintenance Inspection Services as part of the BCEGS program)				