

certification



yes,
it's that
important!

what is AISC quality certification?



The AISC Certification program was developed to improve the overall quality of the structural steel fabrication and erection industries. This Certification requires a rigorous examination to evaluate a company's quality management system rather than just a specific product, and is based on a third party audit conducted by quality professionals experienced in fabrication and/or erection. Certification focuses on processes and procedures, since it's easier to manage quality into a project and impossible to inspect for it after the fact. Engineers who include the requirement for AISC Certification in their project specifications can rest assured that a Certified fabricator or erector bidding on their project has proven they have the personnel, organization, experience, procedures, knowledge, equipment, capability and commitment to produce quality work. To provide you with peace of mind, auditors conduct on-site visits to:

- review the company's entire system from receipt to contract through final delivery;
- review project requirements and project records;
- interview personnel — from the shop to the president;
- and observe practices and equipment to confirm — with confidence — that proper quality standards and procedures are in place.

specify certification — don't waive it!

AISC Certification sets the standard for the steel industry and helps the job get done right the first time. So why do some contractors pressure the engineer and owner to waive the requirement?

“We'll just hire an inspector later for a couple of thousand dollars.”

Fact: Finding—and fixing— mistakes after they're made is expensive and time consuming. It's important to remember that special inspection costs are covered directly by the owner. Often the increased costs of using non-certified fabricators are overlooked and result in inaccurate bid comparisons.

“Certified companies are more expensive.”

Fact: Regardless of whether bids are high or low, Certification shouldn't have any influence on the price. The average sized Certified company spends about 1/2% of their annual gross revenue on Certification, which is just too small to influence bid prices on a project by project basis.

“There are no certified fabricators or erectors in the area”

Fact: Today, most companies work in a multi-state region. So just because there are no Certified companies in the same city as the project, there are usually plenty among the more than 700 AISC Certified fabricators and erectors who perform work in that city.

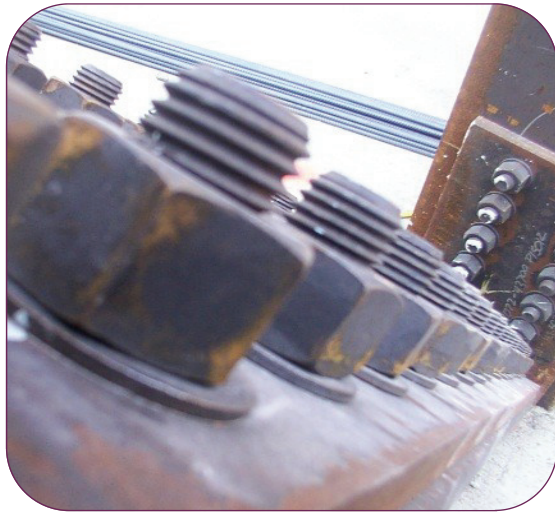
“They aren't certified, but they've been in business for a long time”

Fact: There are some good companies who are not Certified, but it is very difficult for an individual engineer to assess and evaluate a specific company. The AISC Certification program audits against real codes and contracts and requires the fabricator or erector to demonstrate that they can follow current code and contract requirements. AISC Certification ensures that even a good firm doing quality work for over 60 years is up-to-date—a positive for the fabricator and erector and especially the customer.



Specifying AISC Certification

is the best way to ensure the
quality of your project.



certification vs. inspection

Inspection and certification are different. Certification looks at processes and procedures, while inspection looks at product. Inspection requirements are based on the engineer's project-specific quality needs—maybe the geometry is unique or the connections are difficult to make. Some engineers specify both when working with an unfamiliar fabricator or when their project is particularly complex, such as a high-rise or a stadium.

As designers, we want to make sure that our plans and details are realized in the field without deviation from the contract documents. So, you've done your part in designing an efficient structure, and have approved the appropriate shop drawings. It takes a giant leap of faith to assume that everything will go according to plan. No designer has the time or resources to visit each fabrication shop bidding on a project and inspect their procedures and qualifications. AISC has developed and implemented its Certification program to perform this pre-approval process—so you as the designer don't have to.

Just as experienced builders measure twice and cut once, experienced engineers specify quality going into a project rather than inspecting for it afterwards. Remember, you can only build quality in, you can't inspect it in.

special testing and inspection

Adoption and enforcement of model building code provisions for structural tests and special inspections is increasing throughout the United States. A quality management system implemented for AISC Certification can reduce the scope or eliminate the need for structural tests and special inspections for many building projects.

Can an AISC Certified fabricator or erector's process control, provided by their quality management system, assure the level of quality that special inspection can? Yes, when the quality management system includes written procedures for developing inspection plans, conducting inspection activities, and training inspection personnel as the AISC Certification programs require.

Special inspectors cannot be everywhere at once, and adding inspection hold points to production increases cost and schedule time. Process control often provides better assurance of quality than special inspection where important aspects are not visible when the work is completed. Consider as examples welding where joint preparation and fit-up are important or coating application where surface preparation can be critical to the quality of the finished product.



“Specifying AISC Certification saves me time and provides me with peace of mind that I'm getting a qualified fabricator without the need to visit the shop of everyone bidding my job.”

— Greg Lakota, Principal
Halvorson & Partners
Structural Engineers, Chicago

examples of key qualifications

Auditors verify that a quality system is in place, implemented, and effective.

certified FABRICATORS

- All welders are qualified per American Welding Society (AWS) D1.1. Written welding procedures, compliant with AWS specifications, are available and used by welders.
- Written bolt tightening procedures, compliant with Research Council of Structural Connections (RCSC) specifications, are in place and used.
- An effective procedure for contract and project specification review that provides necessary information to all responsible individuals in the organization to assure contract compliance, including a system for requests for information necessary to resolve discrepancies or variations from contract requirements.
- A procedure for inspection and the qualification of inspection personnel to verify that product quality meets project requirements.
- Material is ordered in accordance with design drawings and specifications, and an inspection procedure is in place to ensure material received meets the purchase order and ASTM requirements.
- Written procedures for correction of non-conforming work are understood and used.

certified ERECTORS

- The firm's written safety plan, compliant with governmental regulations, is understood and implemented by supervision and the erection crew
- All welders are qualified per American Welding Society (AWS) D1.1. Written welding procedures, compliant with AWS specifications, are available and used by welders.
- Written bolt tightening procedures, compliant with Research Council of Structural Connections (RCSC) specifications, are in place and used.
- A written procedure for fall protection is periodically monitored and recorded by a person trained in fall protection and authorized to require needed corrections.
- Crane operators are CCO certified or equivalently trained and/or experienced.
- Project specific erection plans with hoisting and erection requirements are communicated and implemented in the field.
- There is evidence of safety orientation for newly hired workers.



Ask a non-certified bidder to get a third-party, quality audit professional to verify their qualifications. Doing so will protect your project!

just ask us

If you want to know more about AISC Certification and the peace of mind it provides, please call or email us.

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