



**SSPC-QP7**  
**APPLICATION, INSTRUCTIONS, AND PROGRAM RULES**

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## **Application Form and Instructions for the SSPC Painting Contractor Introductory Program, SSPC-QP7**

### **I. Introduction**

SSPC developed the Painting Contractor Introductory Program to verify the capabilities of contractors with less than 6 months experience performing industrial surface preparation and coating application in the field. The program's objective is to determine if a painting contractor has the personnel, organization, qualifications, procedures, knowledge, and capability to produce quality surface preparation and coating application for complex industrial structures. For the purpose of the Introductory Program, complex industrial structures are defined as those constructed of steel, such as metal producing and rolling mills, bridges (e.g., highways) and processing facilities, including chemical and petrochemical processing plants, pulp and paper mills, power plants and substations, and food and beverage plants and terminals.

Please note that the SSPC-QP7 Contractor Introductory Program does not involve inspection of the contractor's coating work or training of its personnel. It does not cover coating application capability conducted exclusively at a contractor's fixed facility (i.e. shop Painting). Finally, the program is not intended to guarantee the quality or safety performance of a specific contractor on any of its projects. Rather, it is intended to assist facility owners in their evaluation of painting contractors with limited or no industrial painting experience. The procedure is intended only for public works projects set aside by owners willing to hire contractors who meet the requirements of this procedure. While SSPC QP7 confirms a company's capability to perform industrial painting, owners, specifiers and general contractors are encouraged to also assess the painting contractor's financial ability to perform a job as well as any work history, capability to meet site-specific requirements, and other areas not covered under this program. To better ensure the success of a project, owners should write quality specifications, implement a plan to enforce the requirements of the specification through appropriate quality assurance and establish a plan to maintain good communication with the contractor before work begins and throughout the project. This is in addition to ensuring that the contractor meets the requirements of this program.

This package contains information and materials needed to apply for SSPC QP7, Painting Contractor Introductory Program. You will find copies of this application and all other documents detailing program requirements, related procedures, clarifications, etc., on SSPC Online at <http://www.sspc.org>. Click on Qualification and follow the appropriate links. Contractors who desire program information but who do not have access to the Internet can also contact SSPC staff directly to obtain copies of any and all program related documents. Contact the SSPC Qualification Coordinator at: 877-281-7772 X2209. SSPC will assess a shipping and handling fee for hard copies.

While every precaution is taken to ensure that all information furnished is accurate and complete, SSPC cannot assume responsibility nor incur any obligation resulting from the use or misuse of the methods contained herein, or of the Introductory Program itself

## II. General Program Procedures

The SSPC-QP7 contractor introductory qualification process contains this sequence of procedures that you must follow.

1. Complete the application form found in Item III.
2. Gather and prepare the required information outlined in Item III following the application.
3. Send SSPC the application, submittal items, and appropriate non-refundable application fee and any required audit deposit. SSPC will accept email versions of applications, provided we can open the documents and submittals, as well as CD's or hard paper copy.
4. SSPC staff will review your submittals within 10 working days after receipt. If everything is in order, an on-site audit will be performed. If not, SSPC will indicate what must be done, or what additional information is required to complete the submittal.
5. An SSPC program auditor will conduct an office audit to determine if your company is in conformance with QP7 requirements. It usually takes one to two days to complete.
6. At the end of the audit, the auditor will schedule an exit interview for the purpose of advising you of any deficiencies cited during the audit.
7. If your firm has a qualifying score, it will be qualified for a one-time 18 month period subject to its ability to maintain program standards, adhere to the program's administrative rules and avoid any disciplinary actions as described in the Disciplinary Action Criteria (DAC). Qualification lapses after 18 months and cannot be renewed.
8. If your firm does not qualify, you have 90 days after SSPC notifies you of your audit results to submit an acceptable written corrective action plan to correct deficiencies and request a follow-up audit at a later date. If you don't submit acceptable corrective actions within 90 days, you must re-apply for qualification and pay the required fees.
9. The program provides for an appeals procedure, should you contest audit findings.

Note: Companies who have active industrial painting work at the time they submit a QP7 application or immediately afterwards may be ineligible for the Introductory Program. Application for QP1 qualification

### III. Application Form for SSPC Painting Contractor Introductory Program Qualification

Instructions: The application form is used to provide information that will aid in evaluating and rating your firm. To avoid delays in carrying out the evaluation process, you must answer all questions accurately and truthfully. Information must be either typed or clearly printed. Please send SSPC two typed or printed copies of your completed application, along with two copies of submittals and the correct non-refundable fee. Email and CD's will also be accepted provided SSPC can open the files.

1. Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal Officer/Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Business Address: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Web Site Address (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (include Area Code): \_\_\_\_\_

Fax Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Federal I.D.# \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Business:  Sole Proprietorship  Partnership  Corporation

Length of time your company has operated as an industrial painting contractor: \_\_\_\_\_

Is the location listed above your company's main place of business?  Yes  No

List all branch offices and locations below:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Since starting up, has your company undergone or is it planning to undergo any significant changes (e.g. name change; change in ownership; Chapter 7, 11, or 13; purchase or takeover of another contracting firm; joint venture/partnership with another contractor; executive management personnel changes, etc.)  Yes  No

If yes, please attach an explanation that meets the notification requirements described in Item VIII, Part A, "Major Changes in a Company's Organization,"

2. Qualification Category applied for: (Check appropriate box):

Category 1 – Surface Preparation & Coating Application

Category 2 – Hazardous Paint Removal in Conjunction with Coating Application

Note: You must meet Category 1 requirements in order to qualify for Category 2.

3. Provide evidence of Worker's Compensation Insurance

4. Attach copies of any serious or willful federal, or state/provincial or local regulatory agency worker safety and health or environmental non-compliance, or other regulatory citations or violation (e.g. wage & hourly violation) and citations issued to any of your firm's industrial painting operations since start up. Provide resolution/settlement/notice of contest documentation if applicable, as well as a brief summary of policy changes and actions your company has taken as a result of the citations or violations. Submit required copy of OSHA Form 170 or equivalent regarding any fatality that has occurred on any of your job sites since start up.

5. Has your company or any of its owner's, management or supervisory personnel been involved in any of the following practices with any company in the past 36 months: (1) fraud; (2) alteration of test results or reports; (3) criminal conviction; (4) misrepresentation of information; (5) illegal business practices. (Refer to the Disciplinary Action Criteria [DAC])

Yes  No

If yes, please explain \_\_\_\_\_

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6a. Is your company now or has it in the past been associated or affiliated in any way with a contracting firm operating under another name, which has been disciplined by the SSPC under the DAC?

Yes  No

If yes, please explain \_\_\_\_\_

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6b. Are any of your company's officers, directors, owners, managing agents, or managers now exercising (or have previously exercised) direct or indirect control, management or ownership of another contracting firm which has been disciplined by the SSPC under the DAC?

Yes  No

If yes, please explain \_\_\_\_\_

If your company *has absolutely not* had such association with a firm previously disciplined under the DAC exists, please check this box.

Note: Failure to answer truthfully or any instance of providing inaccurate information will result in immediate revocation or denial of qualification status.

7. Has your company been disqualified or disbarred from any bidder's list since start up?

Yes  No

If yes, please provide the reason for the disqualification and the name of the facility owner issuing the disqualification.

\_\_\_\_\_

8. Please attach copy of most recent (12 months) OSHA accident & illness summary. (OSHA Form 300 and 300A), if applicable.

9. Please enclose a copy of your current written Safety & Health Compliance Program. If also applying for Category 2, attach a copy of your Environmental Compliance Program.

10. Average number of workers you've employed since start up: \_\_\_\_\_

11. Is your firm an organizational member of SSPC?  Yes  No

If yes, indicate category of membership:  Patron  Sustaining

Membership Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Date membership expires: \_\_\_\_\_

Note: By my signature below, I acknowledge that I have read and understood the Introductory Qualification Program Application Form and Instructions, the procedure set forth therein, and the Disciplinary Action Criteria. As a principal officer of the application contractor, we agree to abide by and be bound by the rules, regulations and procedures set forth therein. (Must be signed by the President or CEO)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name and Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Submitted: \_\_\_\_\_

Qualification Fee and Deposit Submitted with this Application: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Note: Failure to report accurate, complete information will delay your evaluation. Omission or falsification of information may result in withholding or denial of qualification status. Your firm will be checked against the provisions of the Disciplinary Action Criteria (DAC). If your firm has critical faults as defined in the DAC and these faults fall under one of its categories of "suspension" or "revocation," your application will be returned. If your firm has critical faults that fall under "warning" or "probation," you may be issued qualification status under "probation" or warning and will be subject to further disciplinary action if future problems arise, provided your firm is qualified after successfully completing the initial audit.

## Required Information

In order to rate and evaluate your firm, the program uses specific criteria, organized into four business areas outlined below. The Evaluation Checklist in the following section contains more detailed information.

**Management Procedures:** Measures utilized by your company to organize, coordinate, and otherwise manage the various activities required to prepare surfaces and apply coatings properly.

**Technical Capabilities:** Resources maintained by your company to properly interpret and execute job specifications and requirements.

**Quality Control:** Procedures implemented by your company to verify that all stages of work are performed in accordance with contract documents and specifications.

**Safety Procedures and Record keeping:** Practices and procedures implemented by your company to see that safe operations are maintained. Companies applying for Category 2 qualification are required to also submit environmental compliance programs and procedures.

Each of these four areas contains several subcategories focusing on your company's policies, personnel, procedures and resources. Seventeen (17) items must be submitted in writing with the application. (Twenty [20] if applying for Category 2) They must be typed on separate sheets of paper and clearly identified. Documents such as charts or file documents, which already exist, must be submitted and identified in the same manner.

The auditor will verify and evaluate thirty-two (32) evaluation items during the on-site visit. (Thirty-five [35] if applying for Category 2) The auditor may also evaluate DAC-related items as directed by the program administrator.

Item IV lists and describes the thirty-two (32) required items of information. (Thirty-five [35] if applying for Category 2) A score of 2 is required on all seventeen (17) critical items. (Twenty [20] if applying for Category 2)

## IV. Evaluation Checklist

This is a list and description of all items of required information for QP 7 qualification. Following each item is a statement indicating whether it is a critical or non-critical item, and whether documentation related to the item must be submitted with the application.

### A. Management Procedures

- Company Policy
  1. Mission Statement (Submit with application.) It must contain specific statements (declarations) regarding quality control, safety, health and environmental protection practices. Must be on company letterhead, signed by the President or CEO, dated, and posted at the office.
  2. Procedures for Disseminating Company Policies within the Organization (Do not submit with application.) Show that management has procedures to disseminate all policies to workers (e.g., employee manual or handbook, new employee orientation, workforce conferences).
- Organization and Personnel
  1. Organization Chart (Submit with application.) Provide a diagram that shows lines of authority and responsibility for major activities of the company. The organization chart must be dated and clearly show key positions (e.g., CEO, Health & Safety Officer, QC Supervisor, Production Manager.)
  2. Job Descriptions (Submit with application.) For key personnel (e.g., management, quality control supervisor, and safety officer/director) provide job descriptions that clearly state their responsibilities and duties. Include their work experience, licenses, and required qualifications. Documentation must confirm that actual duties match the job descriptions.

- Administrative and Management Procedures

1. Financial Record Keeping (Submit with application.)

Documentation must show a recognized accounting system in place and that tax returns have been submitted in a timely manner. Applicant must have evidence that liability, workers compensation, and other insurance policies are paid and current.

2. Procedures for Estimating and Scheduling (Do not submit with application.)

Demonstrate that estimates for work are recorded and that estimates take into account labor, materials, equipment, training, worker protection, overhead, etc. Written job schedules must be available that clearly outline all major activities (e.g., mobilization, surface preparation, application of primer, topcoat; demobilization, etc.)

Note: Concerning Reporting of Financial Information to SSPC: Contractors are encouraged to “**white out**” **sensitive financial information**. SSPC’s interest in reviewing financial documents is limited to verifying such things as legal identifiability, insurance coverage, and the fact that the applicant follows accepted accounting practices and reasonable estimating procedures. The specific financial information contained on such documents is of no interest to SSPC and has no bearing on the outcome of the audit.

3. Procedures for Complying with Regulations (A critical item that is not submitted with application.)

Identify (in writing) specific person(s) in your company who is/are designated to obtain and study regulations.

4. Procedures for Reviewing Specifications and Other Bidding Documentation.

(Do not submit with application.) Demonstrate that there’s a procedure in place, either a checklist or other documentation, that shows that management reviews specifications and inquiry documents, (e.g. project documentation log)

## B. Technical Knowledge

1. Technical Resources

Industry Group Affiliations (Submit with application)

Demonstrate that you have affiliation with groups that provide up-to-date information on protective coatings technology.

2. Technical Standards Library (A critical item that is not submitted with application.)

Demonstrate that current technical standards and references applicable to jobs you bid or plan to bid are on hand and will be made available to field personnel.

3. Procedures (description of procedures used to convert job specifications into a field work order, job plan, etc.) including:

- a. Job Specifications and Revisions (A critical item that is not submitted with application.)

Demonstrate that you have procedures to log specifications and revisions, and distribute them to appropriate persons; records are kept of who is given a copy.

- b. Procedures for Clarifying Ambiguous Specifications (A critical item that is not submitted with application.)

Show how your company clarifies ambiguous specifications, and how clarifications are communicated and documented.

- c. Communicating Contract and Technical Requirements (A critical item that is not submitted with application.)

Demonstrate how your company makes certain that current contract and technical requirements are available to supervisory personnel at the job site.

- 3 a. List Owned or Leased Equipment

- b. Maintenance and Repair of Equipment (A critical item that must be submitted With application.)

Demonstrate that you have a Preventive Maintenance Program (PM) that shows that you will perform maintenance and repairs on equipment used in surface preparation and coating application operations according to the equipment manufacturer’s recommendations. You must also document completion of maintenance according to your PM Plan. If you lease equipment, you must show that the lessor maintains the equipment properly.

## C. Quality Control (QC)

1. Personnel Qualification: Demonstrate that Personnel Supervising and Performing Quality Control-Related Functions Are Qualified (The two items below are critical items that must be submitted with application)
  - a. Send resume(s) of quality control supervisor and designated coatings inspector(s). Include documentation of formal training courses successfully completed, and each person's full-time experience in the industry. (QC Supervisor must have at least 3-5 years experience) (Formal training in use and calibration of inspection equipment and quality control is a requirement for the QC Supervisor under this program.)
  - b. Define requirements for a quality control inspector. Describe your company's program for training and qualifying coatings inspectors/QC personnel in the field, and how this program is used. (QC Inspectors must have at least 2 years experience)
2. Inspection Procedures and Recording Systems
  - a. Authority of Quality Control Personnel (A critical item that is not submitted with the application).

Show that your designated quality control inspectors have written authority to stop work when they find it to be nonconforming during the course of surface preparation and coating application operations. They must document how they report nonconforming work to management
  - b. Identifying Nonconforming Work (A critical item that is not submitted with application.)

Provide written documentation of your procedures to check for nonconforming work and to stop work, if non-conformances are found.
  - c. Documentation of Coating Inspection and Filing of Results (A critical item that is not submitted with application.)

Demonstrate that your company maintains a system for completing and filing written inspection reports and results of tests performed by QC personnel for each project on a daily basis during surface preparation and coating application operations.

Reports shall contain (at a minimum) the following:

    - compressed air cleanliness
    - dry film thickness
    - air temperature
    - humidity
    - dew point
    - surface temperature
    - abrasive cleanliness
    - degree of cleanliness achieved
    - surface profile
    - batch numbers of paint used
    - batch numbers of thinner used

You must demonstrate that instruments used to conduct inspections and tests reported on your inspection forms have been properly calibrated (DFT gages must have calibration verified and documented with each day used). Please also see the next item.
  - d. Demonstrate that Inspection Equipment and Calibration Standards are Available (A critical item that must be submitted with application)

Demonstrate that inspection equipment and calibration standards are available to quality control personnel. You must also maintain records of required factory and laboratory calibration and maintenance of inspection equipment as required by contract or manufacturer's recommendations.
  - e. Procedures for Verifying Proper Surface Preparation and Coating Application (A critical item that must be submitted with application). You must have written procedures that define how the company ensures that proper preparation and coating procedures are disseminated and used by field crews.
  - f. Hold Point Inspections (Do not submit with application)

You must have procedures to ensure that each major operation (e.g., surface preparation, primer, intermediate, topcoat application) is checked by Q.C. before work crews proceed to next operation.
  - g. Craft-workers: The contractor shall provide evidence of: (A critical item that must be submitted with application).
    - A program to ensure that persons hired to perform surface preparation and coating application are qualified. Training, if necessary, must be available to and utilized by qualified workers, including training required to meet regulatory requirements.
    - A method for monitoring proficiency of workers performing surface preparation and coating application, and relevant documentation of performance monitoring exists.

#### D. Safety Procedures and Record Keeping Systems

##### 1. Safety Program and Documentation of Safety Education, Meetings, and Other Safety-Related Activity (A critical item that must be submitted with application.)

You must have a written Safety & Health compliance program based on OSHA or equivalent standards applicable to your operation.

At a minimum, the program must address the following general topics and applicable sub topics:

- Hazardous Materials
- Personal Protective Equipment
- General Safety and Health Provisions
- Occupational Health and Environmental Controls, as applicable to the coating industry
- Personal Protective and Life Saving Equipment
- Fire Protection and Prevention
- Signs, Signals, and Barricades
- Materials Handling, Storage, Use, and Disposal
- Hand and Power Tools
- Welding and Cutting
- Electrical
- Scaffolds
- Fall Protection
- Cranes, Derricks, Hoists, Elevators, and Conveyors
- Ladders
- Toxic and Hazardous Substances
- Airless Injection
- Abrasive Blast Cleaning
- High Pressure Water Jetting (HPWJ)

- Show that your plan requires field managers to conduct safety activities (e.g., employee safety education/training sessions; routine job site safety & health inspections; tool box safety meetings, along with distribution of safety materials & literature) routinely and document them.
- Show evidence that safety performance is part of each field manager's written job description.
- Show that ownership(s) or management reviews the safety and health program at least annually to evaluate whether the goal of protecting workers at all work sites is being achieved.

If applying for Category 2 Qualification – Hazardous Paint Removal, submit the following additional information on competent persons, safety coordinator, and your Environmental Compliance Program.

- Competent Persons – Evidence or documentation shall be furnished that the competent person shall have had at least 32 hours training (SSPC C3 course or equivalent). (A critical item that must be submitted with application).
- Safety Coordinator – At a minimum, the safety coordinator must have a minimum of 40 hours of training by an approved training provider in industrial hygiene and safety. This person may be on the contractor's staff, or the contractor may utilize the services of an industrial hygiene or safety professional with knowledge of hazardous coating removal operations. The safety coordinator is to be available for consultation on compliance issues as they arise. Since the competent person is required to be on site to implement all compliance activities, it is not necessary for the safety coordinator to be on site at all times. However, the safety coordinator should be available for consultation as needed. (A critical item that must be submitted with application).
- Environmental Compliance Plan – The contractor shall have a written plan to protect the environment from hazardous coating debris generated at the job site. This plan, shall include, at a minimum: (A critical item that must be submitted with application).
  - a. An environmental protection plan detailing how the contractor will control discharges to air, soil, and water.
  - b. A hazardous waste materials management and disposal plan. (See SSPC-Guide 7 and 40 CFR, subchapter 1, Solid Wastes, Parts 260-263 and 268).

##### 2. Pre-job Safety & Health Hazard Analysis (Submit with application.)

Demonstrate that the corporation's safety officer or designated qualified person conducts a pre-job hazard analysis for each job.

##### 3. Accident Report Procedure (Submit with application.)

Contractor has a written accident and near miss reporting procedure. The procedure will have plans and actions taken to prevent recurrence. Accident reports address what happened, to whom, where it happened, how it happened and the root cause.

4. Safety & Loss Control Procedures for determining proficiency of safety and loss control measures that the firm uses (Submit with application.) Show how your company will monitor results annually.
5. Safety Procedures for Specialized Equipment (Do not submit with application)
  - a. Show that safe operation of equipment will be ongoing in your company. include written safe operating procedures (SOPs) for major equipment, and demonstrate that they will be available at the job site. Provide evidence that you will train employees to operate the equipment safely.
  - b. Show that owners and/or managers have approved these procedures, and that the contractor's safety director or designated safety professional has reviewed these procedures
  - c. Show evidence that these procedures incorporate equipment manufacturers' recommendations for safe operation (SOPs).
6. Provision and Maintenance of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) (A critical item that must be submitted with application.)
  - a. How is (PPE) equipment issued and maintained? Demonstrate that the PPE issued is appropriate and adequate for hazards encountered on the jobs undertaken.
  - b. As part of your comprehensive Health and Safety Program, you have a written respiratory protection program based on OSHA regulation, 29 CFR 1910.134, or equivalent regulation or standard.
  - c. Show written procedures for issuing and use of other PPE, such as protective clothing for skin protection, devices for eye protection, devices for hearing protection, foot protection, head protection, life jackets, life saving equipment, (as applicable).
  - d. Show that required respirators and protective equipment are available to personnel at the job site.
  - e. Provide evidence that workers use respirators and PPE, and are trained in their use and maintenance.
  - f. Demonstrate that you have a formal system to check the effectiveness of PPE used on site and to maintain PPE used on site in good working condition.
7. Availability of First Aid Trained Employees (Do not submit with application).
8.
  - a. Identify individuals, their training, and that they are on the job. Post emergency numbers on the job site where 911 is unavailable. Demonstrate that an approved first-aid kit is accessible to all workers.
  - b. At least one person, who has first aid (and CPR) training certificates issued by the Red Cross or an equivalent organization must be available on each job site. This requirement is applicable to projects that last 2 or more days and involve a crew of 6 or more.
9. Compliance with Regulations (A critical item that must be submitted with the a application)
 

Records are kept of your company's non-compliance with regulations, (e.g., Worker Safety & Health, Environmental Compliance, Worker Compensation rules, Wage and Hourly rules) and there are formal procedures to ensure that corrective action is taken to avoid repeat violations.
10. Sources of Safety Information (Do not submit with application.)
 

Contractor operates a formal program to acquire information on safety and safety equipment from such recognized sources as OSHA and NIOSH bulletins, BNA Occupational Safety and Health Reports, ASA Safety Handbook, PDCA Safety Manual, SSPC web site, trade publications/clipping services, and AIHA publications and journals. Demonstrate that relevant safety information and materials are available to on-site personnel.

## V. Introductory Program Fee Payment Schedule (In U.S. Funds)

Effective July 1, 2003

Audit Type	Sustaining Member	Patron Member	Non-Member
Administrative Fee	\$1,350	\$1,600	\$2,150
Follow-up (Audit Fee)	\$300	\$550	\$800

Firms applying for Introductory Program Qualification must submit with their application the administrative fee plus deposit for audit expenses. Estimate your audit expense deposit from the following:

### Audit Deposit

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Audit Deposit	\$2,200
Deposit for Follow-up Audit (if required)	\$1,500

Example: If you are applying for Introductory Program Qualification and your company is an SSPC patron member, submit \$3,800 (\$1,600 Administrative Fee + \$2,200 Audit Deposit).

- If your audit cost is less than the deposit you submit, SSPC will refund the difference. If the audit cost is higher, SSPC will bill you for actual expenses.
- Fees must be paid in advance of the audit. Qualification will be withheld until all fees are paid. Post-audit fees for deficiency audits or additional audit expenses are payable when due. Failure to pay these fees in a timely manner can result in a six-month suspension from the program and public notification of the suspension. If fees are still not paid after the suspension, the contractor will lose qualification and become ineligible to reapply for the introductory program qualification and to apply for any SSPC contractor qualification category.
- Note: The fees cover the cost of staff time to review and process your application package and submittals, and fees and expenses for the on site evaluation, and associated overhead costs required to operate this program. Program fees are non-refundable regardless of the results of the evaluation. SSPC will withhold \$500 for application processing expenses if a firm decides to withdraw its application prior to scheduling of the on site audit.
- "Non-responsive" and "inactive" applications will be returned to the applicant, less a \$500 non-refundable administrative processing fee after six months.

## VI. Submittal Procedure

To avoid delay and/or confusion, gather and submit application package materials as follows:

- Type or clearly print all entries on the application form. Email attachments and CD's will be accepted provided SSPC can open and read electronic files submitted.
- Be certain all items on the form are answered completely and accurately.
- Send the original and one copy of the application package to SSPC. We suggest you keep a copy on hand for your use at the audit. The auditor will return the submittal to you at the end of the audit. All other materials will be kept by SSPC.
- Clearly identify the seventeen (17) submittal items included with the application (twenty [20] if applying for Category 2). Secure all pages to minimize chances of loss or separation.
- Determine and send the non-refundable Introductory Program fee/deposit using the fee schedule described in Section V. Make check payable to: SSPC Painting Contractor Introductory Program.
- Mail/Ship the entire application package to:

SSPC: The Society for Protective Coatings  
ATTN: Introductory Program Coordinator  
40 24<sup>th</sup> Street – 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

## VII. Evaluation Process

Evaluation of your firm is performed in conformity with SSPC-QP 7: Procedure for Evaluating Painting Contractors with Limited Industrial Work Experience.

The application package (e.g. application form, written submittals, fee) is received by SSPC. Upon acceptance of the application and submittals by SSPC, the application package is forwarded to the SSPC auditor.

When a date or approximate time has been selected for the audit, mutually agreed upon, and confirmed in writing or verbally by you and the SSPC auditor, a program auditor will visit your office to perform the following:

- Confirm completeness of data submitted in the application package.
- Interview key supervisory personnel and selected shop and field employees including the Chief Executive, President or Chief Operating Officer.
- Observe and rate company organization, using the standard program guidelines and rating procedures.
- Examine and rate equipment and facilities.
- Observe successful preparation and spray painting of a test painting sample, minimum area 5 x 10 ft. Test specimens should be blast cleaned by company employees to a minimum SP-6 and coated per coating manufacturer's requirements of the material being sprayed.
- Schedule Exit Interview

At the conclusion of the audit, the auditor will schedule an exit interview with your supervisory or management personnel to review the audit and address items (i.e. Deficiencies) that scored less than 2. If there are any deficiencies, the auditor will issue a deficiency schedule for the management representative to sign at the conclusion of the audit. Your signature indicates that you've been presented the results. It only confirms that you have been made aware of the results. Refusal to sign the deficiency schedule results in denial of qualification.

### A. Cancellation of Audit

After the on-site office audit date has been selected, mutually agreed upon by both you and SSPC, and confirmed in writing or verbally, if you cancel the audit, request a change in that date, or fail to make management staff available for auditing, you will be responsible for any expenses incurred by SSPC as a result of the cancellation.

### B. Critical Item Provision

The Introductory critical item provision identifies 17 (20 if applying for Category 2) of the 32 total evaluation items (listed on page 25) that program auditors use to evaluate contractors for qualification. SSPC has deemed these 17 items (20 if applying for Category 2) critical to the qualification of a contractor. The provision requires the contractor to score a minimum of two (2) on a scale of 0 to 3, for all 17 critical evaluation items or qualification will be withheld.

The program provides a 90 day-period for applicants who have not attained an adequate score to: Submit a corrective action plan; make corrections in the deficient areas; and ask for a reevaluation.

SSPC will withhold qualification until: corrections are made; required procedures are put in place; and a passing score is achieved during a follow up on site evaluation.

#### C. Critical Evaluation Items (17 total)

- Procedures for securing and evaluating applicable regulations (Item A.3)
- Availability of technical standards (Item B.2)
- Recording of job specifications and revisions (Item B.3.a)
- Procedures for clarifying ambiguous specifications (Item B.3.b)
- Procedures to communicate contract and technical requirements (Item B.3.c)
- Maintenance and repair of equipment (Item B.4.b)
- Qualifications of quality control supervisor (Item C.1.a)
- Qualifications of quality control inspectors (Item C.1.b)
- Written authority of quality control personnel (Item C.2.a)
- Identification of non conforming work (Item C.2.b)
- Documentation of inspection results (Item C.2.c)
- Availability of inspection equipment and calibration standards (Item C.2.d)
- Procedures for verifying proper surface preparation and coating application (Item C.2.e)
- Training for qualified craft workers (Item C.2.g)
- Written corporate worker safety and health program (Item D.1)
- Availability of personal protective equipment (Item D.6)
- Maintaining records of noncompliance with regulations and follow up actions (Item D.8)

#### Category 2 Critical items (3 total)

- Competent Person Information (Item D.1)
- Safety Coordination Information (Item D.1)
- Environmental Compliance Program Information (Item D.1)

#### D. Determination of Status:

At the conclusion of the evaluation process described in Part IV, the SSPC designated Program Auditor will make a recommendation to the SSPC Program Administrator. SSPC will make the final decision regarding your status. Those decisions are either:

1. Confer Qualification (Category 1 or Category 1 and 2): Your company achieved required scores in the four function areas and scored 2 or better on all Seventeen Critical Items. (Twenty if applying for Category 2). SSPC will issue a letter identifying the contractor by name and by location of the contractor's home office stating that the contractor has met the requirements of this procedure and has completed "step 1" in the process of becoming certified by SSPC.
2. Deny Qualification: Your firm has not attained the scores adequate to achieve Introductory Program qualification. You then have 90 days after written notification of audit results to submit an acceptable corrective action plan to address deficiencies and request that SSPC re-evaluate your firm to verify implementation of your corrective action plan.

#### E. Qualification Period

This qualification is limited to a one-time 18 consecutive calendar month period following initial qualification or first eligible job site audit opportunity, whichever comes first. Extensions beyond the 18 months may be granted by SSPC for exceptional circumstances. No extensions will be granted for more than 12 months after the 18-month eligibility period expires.

#### F. Appeals Procedure

During the exit interview, the auditor will explain the deficiencies cited during the evaluation.

If you dispute the results of the audit you may appeal, using the following steps of recourse.

1. Notify SSPC in writing within 10 working days after the exit interview, specifically identifying those items and why you dispute the results of the audit.
2. Arrange with SSPC to have a second audit at your expense (using a different SSPC auditor) to inspect and evaluate items in contention. The second evaluation may be announced or unannounced, at SSPC's discretion.

In the event the foregoing step fails to resolve the dispute, an arbitration panel, organized in accordance with SSPC DAC arbitration procedures, will hear evidence and make a final decision. If the arbitration panel finds for you, the contractor, the cost of all fees and expenses of the arbitration will be shared equally by your company and SSPC. If the arbitration panel finds against you, your company is responsible for payment of all arbitration fees and expenses.

Customers will be given an opportunity to comment directly to SSPC (at any time) regarding your company's performance. All replies / comments will be treated as confidential and may be used only as a component in determining qualification reconfirmation or verification of critical faults under the DAC.

#### G. Obtaining A Painting Contract

Firms qualified to this procedure who have bid and are awarded a painting contract must notify SSPC within 10 working days of receiving the contract award. SSPC will subsequently attempt to conduct a mandatory audit of that job site, at the firm's expense, to confirm implementation of the contractor's quality program in the field and thus the contractor's possible eligibility for SSPC certification. Failure to notify SSPC in a timely manner, or coordinate with SSPC a visit to the job site in a timely manner (i.e. while coating operations are in progress), or pass the audit, will result in revocation of qualification to this procedure.

#### H. Eligibility Status

Contractors who achieve SSPC certification status while qualified to this procedure forfeit qualification to this procedure. New companies affiliated with formerly certified companies whose qualifications have been suspended or revoked as a result of disciplinary actions as defined in the PCCP Disciplinary Action Criteria (DAC) are ineligible for qualification to this procedure. Contractors having an owner, officer, partner, or key employee above the field superintendent level that has held any of these positions within another company that has applied to SSPC for any contractor qualification category within the previous 2 years are not eligible for qualification to this procedure.

**IMPORTANT:** Failure to cooperate with the program auditor or failure to provide access to data, personnel or pertinent office records, shall be sufficient cause for denial, suspension or revocation of your firm's qualification status at the Program Administrator's discretion.

### VIII. Special Provisions

#### A. Major Changes in a Company's Organization

Introductory contracting firms are required to notify the SSPC Program Administrator within 30 days of any major organizational or name change. Examples of a major change include, but are not limited to, the following:

- change in ownership
  - partnership/joint venture
  - change in executive management (e.g. President, C.E.O; General Manager)
- The notification shall include the following information:
- specific details about changes
  - revised organizational and responsibility chart
  - effective dates of change
  - names of officers of company
  - any change in tax identification number, federal or state.

Note: If a company changes federal or state tax I.D. numbers or is incorporated in a new state, it will automatically have to reapply as a new company. If it is a simple change of name (i.e., John R. Doe Co., Inc., to J.R. Doe, Inc., and remains incorporated in the same state with the same tax I.D. numbers, a simple transfer of qualification may be authorized.)

Failure to notify the program administrator of any major changes within the required time period will result in an automatic disqualification.

#### B. Suspension for Non-Payment of Fees

Failure to pay all fees in a timely manner will result in a six-month suspension from the program and public notification of the suspension. SSPC will notify a firm of its suspension if it fails to respond within (3) three business days to the final (second) notice of non-payment. SSPC will also withhold issuing qualifying letters for initial applicants who pass the evaluation until all fees are paid.

## IX. Definitions

**Auditor** – The SSPC designated Program Auditor who has completed an SSPC approved training program, and who is responsible for reviewing applicant submittals, conducting the on-site evaluation, and reporting results to SSPC, including a recommendation whether qualification should be conferred.

**Qualification** – The procedure by which written assurance is given that a product or service conforms to a standard or specification.

**Qualification Categories** – This procedure defines two qualification categories:

**Category 1** – Surface Preparation and Coating Application and **Category 2** – Hazardous Paint Removal in Conjunction with Coating Operations.

**Complex Structures** – Those structures that are constructed of steel, such as metal producing and rolling mills, bridges, and processing facilities, including chemical and petrochemical processing plants, pulp and paper mills, power plants and substations, food and beverage plants, and terminals.

**Critical Items** – Selected evaluation items used by auditors in assessing an applicant, and are considered critical to the qualification of an applicant. The critical item concept requires the applicant to achieve a rating of 2 (on a scale of 0 to 3) on all seventeen (17) (Twenty [20] if applying for Category 2) critical items in the program to pass the evaluation.

**Evaluation Items** – Specific facts or evidence an auditor reviews when assessing an applicant's required information.

**Function Area** – Four specific areas of a contractor's business operation that are evaluated in the program because they directly or indirectly affect the quality of work a contractor provides. These are: Management Procedures, Technical Capabilities, Quality Control, and Safety/Environmental Compliance.

**Minimally Acceptable Responses** – These are the criteria by which required information submitted and provided by the contractor is evaluated and rated. Each response relates to an evaluation item and indicates what the contractor must provide or do in order to achieve a score of 2 on a rating scale of 0 to 3.

**Rating** – The method of measuring a contractor's performance during the qualification process. Each evaluation item used to assess information submitted or provided by the contractor is rated on a scale of 0 to 3, and calculated by specific standards to reflect relative priority. The sum of the prioritized evaluation items is the contractor's over-all rating.

**Required Information** – Specific items of information regarding the four function areas that a contractor applying for qualification must provide either in writing with the application form, or furnish during the on-site evaluation.