



QUALIFICATION PROCEDURE NO. QN-1 Nuclear Coating Supplement

**Supplemental Procedure for Evaluating the Qualifications of Contractors (Field or Shop)
for Coating Application of Surfaces in Level I and III Service Areas of Nuclear Power
Plants or Coating Application on Parts and Fabricated Components Installed in Level I
and III Service Areas of Nuclear Power Plants**

Application Form, Instructions, and Program Rules

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Introduction

SSPC-QN 1 supplements the requirements of SSPC-QP 1 (field application of steel surfaces) and SSPC-QP 8 (field application of concrete surfaces) or SSPC-QP 3 (shop painting in a fixed facility). Contractors seeking qualification to SSPC-QN 1 (Nuclear Coatings Supplement) must first be qualified in good standing to the appropriate core qualification (e.g., QP 1, QP 3 or QP 8), according to the type of coating work performed. A copy of SSPC Qualification Procedure No. QN-1 is available from the SSPC Certification Manager upon request or can be downloaded from the SSPC Web site.

General Procedures for Contractors Applying for QN-1 Certification

1. Complete the Application Form.
2. Gather and prepare the required submittal information.
3. Submit the information identified by an asterisk in a binder or e-folder in chronological order(*).
4. SSPC Staff will review the application and submittals within 5 working days of receipt. Upon review of your application and submittals, SSPC will notify you whether any additional requirements, or additional information is required to complete the application process.
5. If everything is in order, an on-site audit will be scheduled and conducted at a Nuclear Power Plant or Shop in conjunction with your regular QP Certification Audit when this is feasible. All non-public information submitted is treated as confidential. The original submittal is filed at SSPC and the copy is given to the Auditor assigned to conduct the audit.
6. The on-site evaluation will be conducted by an SSPC Auditor at your primary place(s) of business, or a division office and a job site at a Nuclear Power Plant or Shop where fabricated components for Level I or III service areas are being coated in conformity with the SSPC-QN-1 Procedure and contract requirements.
7. At the conclusion of the audit, the auditor will schedule an Exit Interview with an authorized member of management to discuss any audit findings. If there are findings, a member of management is required to sign a Deficiency / Corrective Action / Verification Schedule, acknowledging notification of the findings, in order to complete the audit.
8. If you achieve a qualifying score, your firm will be certified for one year, renewable each year thereafter. If your firm does not qualify, you will have up to 45 calendar days after notification of audit findings to develop a written Corrective Action Plan (CAP), acceptable to SSPC, and request re-evaluation.
9. If a CAP is not submitted to SSPC for acceptance within the 45-day period, your company will be required to re-apply for Initial QN-1 Certification. QN-1 provides appeal procedures should you contest audit findings.

Note: Be aware that since there is some overlap between QN-1 and QP-1 and other QP requirements, QN-1 audit findings could have an impact on your QP 1 or other QP program status.

QN-1 Application Form (Nuclear Coatings Supplement)

This application form is used to provide information that will aid in evaluating and rating your quality management system. To avoid delays, all responses must be complete and accurate. Information may be typed or clearly printed, in ink. Please send **the original and one copy** of this application form as hard copy or PDF via email to the SSPC Certification Manager with the appropriate fee and audit deposit.

Company Name _____

Name of Quality Assurance Manager for Nuclear Coatings _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Telephone _____ Fax _____

Email _____

Certification fee/audit deposit submitted with this application: \$ _____

What other types of non-SSPC company certifications do you hold:

Is the address listed above the main business office where the Nuclear Coating QMS is managed?

Yes No If no, please explain below:

Failure to report accurate and complete information will delay certification evaluation. Deliberate omissions or falsification of information will result in withholding of certification for a minimum of 6 months.

By my signature below, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the QN-1, Nuclear Coatings Supplement Certification Program Application Form and Instructions, the procedures set forth therein, and any Disciplinary Action Criteria in effect. As a principal officer, I agree to abide and be bound by the rules, regulations, and procedures set forth herein.

Signature (President, CEO, COO, RE)

Print Name

Date

QN-1 Evaluation Checklist

This section lists the audit evaluation items that the auditor will review and rate during your SSPC - QN-1 initial and annual maintenance audits. Information listed **in bold type** and preceded by an asterisk (*) must be submitted with the application and accepted by SSPC prior to audit scheduling. All non-submittal items listed below must be demonstrated to the Auditor during the audit. Records or files related to coating work for Nuclear Power Industry Level I and Level III service areas to be made available to the Auditor include but are not limited to: (1) evidence of quality system implementation; (2) descriptions of the organization and management structure; company personnel; (3) equipment used and equipment reference materials; (4) measurement of traceability and calibration and calibration verification; (5) QS personnel duties; (6) QMS methods and practices; (7) traceability of records, reports, and certificates; (8) sub-contracting practices; (9) outside support and services used; and (10) complaint-handling procedure. The Auditor may choose to interview selected QMS and management personnel who handle nuclear coating work.

***Initial applicants must submit a complete list of current and recently completed nuclear coating projects (from the previous 24 months) for Level I or Level III service areas and evidence of your company's capability to perform nuclear coating work in Level I or Level III service areas.**

Required information for each job includes:

- Nuclear power facility name, address with zip code, and owner's email and telephone,
- Scope of Work (in or for Level I or Level III service areas)
- Materials applied and approximate quantities
- Equipment used for surface preparation and coating application
- Types (e.g., painters; blasters; helpers) and number of personnel employed
- Special safety/health and physical requirements for the duration of project (start date; finish date). **Note:** List should include all nuclear coating jobs for Service Level I or Level III areas under contract to your firm regardless of whether all or any portion of the job was subcontracted. Also include work in which you are a subcontractor. Job records for projects reported here are subject to review by the auditor.
- Evidence of successful completion of projects reported

Functions to be Evaluated:

- **Organization and Personnel**
- **Quality Assurance Program**
- Procurement Procedures
- Control of Purchased Materials, Items, and Services
- Document Control
- Technical Procedures
- **Technical Capabilities**
- Inspection Procedures
- Measuring and Test Equipment
- Handling, Storage, Shipping and Preservation
- Non-conformances and Corrective Actions
- Quality Assurance Records
- Job Quality Monitoring
- Training of Personnel Performing Safety-related Tasks
- Internal Audits

NOTE: Safety, health, and general environmental compliance requirements for fieldwork are evaluated in Qualification Procedure 1 or Qualification Procedure 8 rather than separately in this supplement. These items not evaluated as part of Qualification Procedure 3 for fabrication or paint shops will be evaluated here for facilities coating components or structures for installation in safety-related areas.

Nuclear Supplement Qualification Requirements

*** 1. Organization and Personnel:**

The contractor shall identify general requirements and responsibilities for implementing the company's Quality Assurance Program.

- a. Persons and organizations performing quality assurance functions shall have the authority to identify quality problems; to initiate, recommend or provide solutions; to verify the implementation of solutions; and to stop work based on quality problems.
- b. The contractor's Quality Assurance Manager shall be responsible for defining the overall effectiveness of the Nuclear Coating QA Program, including:
 - Periodic review, assessment and evaluation of the program
 - Training and certification of inspection personnel
 - Qualifying personnel to perform safety-related surface preparation and coating activities
 - Maintaining a Measurement & Test Equipment calibration program

The contractor is responsible to ensure that only those personnel within their organization that are certified in accordance with ASTM D4537 or other standards are permitted to perform coating work inspection activities.

Personnel performing coating work in Service Level I and III areas shall be qualified in accordance with applicable ASTM or other standards, as applicable for the work being performed.

2. Quality Assurance Program:

The contractor shall establish and implement a Quality Assurance Program to assure that activities meet the requirements of ASME NQA-1 (or other standard as required by plant licensing commitments) and are in compliance with the customer's specification and quality assurance requirements.

The Quality Assurance Program shall provide for controls to assure that activities affecting quality of structures, systems and components are completed in accordance with approved procedures.

The implementation and verification of compliance with the specified procedures shall be properly documented, detailing the work requirements, applicable specifications, in-process inspections and final QA approval.

The Quality Assurance Program shall provide for regular audits to assess the effectiveness of the Quality Assurance Program to assure that the program complies with applicable codes, standards and procurement document requirements.

3. Procurement Procedures:

Procedures shall exist to control the procurement of materials and services for use in safety-related applications.

The contractor shall define the responsibilities for establishing measures by which safety-related purchase orders are prepared, reviewed and approved.

The contractor is responsible for implementing measures to select, assess **and monitor** vendors including suppliers and calibration/test labs.

4. Document Control:

Procedures shall exist to control the issuance and retrieval of the quality assurance manual, quality related instructions, procedures, documents, drawings and revisions.

The contractor shall establish the responsibility for implementing and maintaining document control activities.

The contractor shall identify the person responsible for document review, approval and distribution.

5. Control of Purchased Material, Items and Services:

The contractor shall provide for the establishment of procedures to assure that purchased material, items and services that are quality related conform to the procurement documents.

The contractor shall establish and implement procedures for the receiving of safety-related materials used in Service Levels I and III coating work, including receipt inspection, identification/tagging, and storage requirements.

6. Technical Procedures:

Procedures shall exist for converting awarded contracts into field work orders, job work plans, instructions to craft workers, etc.

The contractor is responsible for establishing measures for communicating specification requirements to field crews and their supervisors.

The contractor's quality control program shall contain work and inspection procedures that are written in accordance with applicable ANSI/ASTM standards and plant specifications.

Material storage procedures, where applicable, shall be included in the contractor's quality control program.

The contractor shall establish measures for the control of work activities using a work order or traveler.

The contractor shall establish measures for the control of shipping activities.

The contractor shall establish and implement procedures for the control, verification and calibration of measurement and test equipment.

7. Technical Capabilities:

The contractor must employ qualified personnel (in accordance with applicable industry standards); have adequate technical resources; have suitable job conversion procedures; and have appropriate equipment, facilities and experience to perform nuclear coating work. To demonstrate technical capability, the contractor shall provide the following:

Applicator Qualification:

The contractor shall have a written program for training, qualifying, and evaluating the proficiency of applicators.

a. Field and shop applicators performing painting of steel surfaces in or for safety-related areas in a nuclear facility, unless otherwise specified by the plant owner, shall qualify in accordance with ASTM D4228, 'Standard Practice for Qualification of Coating Applicators for Application of Coatings to Steel Surfaces.'

b. Qualification of applicators performing work on concrete surfaces shall be in accordance with ASTM D4227, 'Standard Practice for Qualification of Coating Applicators for Application of Coatings to Concrete Surfaces.'

Technical Resources:

The contractor shall maintain a library of current technical standards (e.g. ASTM, ANSI/ASME, NACE, SSPC, plant specifications, technical bulletins, product data sheets, MSDS, and other references), as required.

NOTE: Older revisions of certain standards may be required to meet the requirements of a licensee's plant-specific quality assurance program and licensing commitments.

Inspection:

The contractor shall establish and implement inspection procedures to meet specification requirements.

Criteria shall be established for determining when inspections are required and how and when inspections are to be performed.

Inspections shall be performed by personnel other than those responsible for the activity being inspected. These personnel shall be qualified and certified in accordance with the requirements of the contractor's Quality Assurance Program and applicable implementing procedures.

9. Measuring and Test Equipment (M&TE):

M&TE controls shall be established and implemented for:

- a. Labeling and identification of M&TE, including who performed the calibration.
- b. M&TE and standards are calibrated at periodic intervals.
- c. Standards are adequate to assure accuracy, stability, range and resolution required for their intended use.
- d. Primary and secondary standards used are traceable to the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) or other recognized standards.
- e. As found and as left information is documented.
- f. Calibration history is documented.
- g. Control and documentation of M&TE found to be out-of-calibration, out-of-tolerance or past due for calibration.
- h. Calibration is performed in an environment that is controlled to the extent necessary to assure required accuracy.

10. Handling, Storage, Shipping and Preservation:

The contractor shall establish and implement procedures to control handling, storage, shipping and preservation of materials and components.

The identity of quality related materials shall be maintained by labeling, tagging or other means to maintain control and traceability of items.

Storage areas shall comply with specified requirements.

Authority shall be established for the application and removal of identification markings / status controls.

Shelf life requirements for materials shall be defined and implemented.

For shop facilities, measures shall be established and implemented for the control of shipping activities, including packaging, marking, storing, status and shipment of items and components.

11. Nonconformances and Corrective Actions:

The contractor shall establish requirements, methods and responsibilities for identifying, documenting, dispositioning and correcting nonconforming items.

The contractor shall establish and implement a corrective action procedure that shall be initiated following the detection of deficiencies to program or specification requirements.

12. Quality Assurance Records:

The contractor shall establish the requirements and responsibilities for the generation, collection, storage and maintenance of those records determined to be quality assurance records.

Procedures shall be established to assure that sufficient records are maintained to furnish evidence of the quality of items and of activities affecting quality.

The retention period and disposition of records shall be identified.

13. *Job Quality Monitoring:

The contractor must demonstrate that it uses qualified personnel and proper inspection and recording procedures for job quality control.

Personnel Certification/Qualification:

The contractor shall demonstrate that personnel performing quality control and related functions are trained and qualified in accordance with ANSI/ASME N45.2.6 or ASTM D4537 (as required by individual plant licensing commitments) for safety-related coating inspection activities, including a certified Level III Inspector. The contractor must also employ a Quality Assurance Manager that meets the requirements of ANSI/ASME NQA-1.

Inspection Procedures and Recording Systems:

The contractor shall demonstrate that:

- a. Applicable standards and plant specifications for coating inspection are available and used by inspection personnel.
- b. An implemented system for maintaining and filing complete and accurate daily in-process inspection reports, in accordance with ANSI/ASME NQA-1, is in place.
- c. Measurement and test equipment and calibration verification standards and procedures are in place and available and utilized by QC inspectors.
- d. Non-conforming conditions are documented.
- e. Non-conforming condition log is maintained to ensure work is identified and repaired or otherwise addressed by the owner.
- f. Company or contract specific procedures are in place for verifying that coating and related operations are performed in accordance with contract requirements.
- g. Procedures, inspection plans or travelers are used to ensure that each major operation is properly performed and documented in accordance with contract requirements and are available to site personnel.
- h. A procedure is used to document deviations from contract requirements and that deviation requests are processed through appropriate channels for review and approval.
- i. The contractor is responsible for implementing procedures for record retention of in-process and final inspection records retained in accordance with regulatory and plant specific requirements.

Training:

The contractor shall demonstrate that they have established and implemented a method for the indoctrination and training of management and applicator personnel performing safety-related tasks as outlined in their quality assurance program, plant requirements and project specifications.

The contractor shall identify the responsibilities for establishing and implementing the training program.

The training program shall identify the scope of the training, including procedures, codes, standards, regulations and specification requirements for each job function.

The training program shall provide examinations for each training requirement.

Audits: The contractor shall establish and implement audit procedures to meet the following requirements:

A system of planned and documented audits in accordance with established procedures and checklists.

Development of audit plans to include areas to be audited, assignment of qualified personnel to perform the audit and the method of reporting deficiencies and recommendations.

Persons performing audits shall have no direct responsibility in the areas being audited.

Establishment of an audit schedule based on the length of the project.

Subcontracting

Subcontracted coatings and linings QSM work is performed, without exception, by firms qualified to QN-1.

Outside Support and Services

The company must show evidence of using outside services and supplies that are of adequate quality to sustain the client's confidence for work that is performed. The company must maintain records of all suppliers of products and services that it uses to perform nuclear coating Service Levels I and III contract work adequately.

Complaints

There must be a documented policy and specific procedures for the resolution of client or third-party complaints about work. Complaints are kept on file, tracked until resolved, and the resolution is documented along with complainant's response(s). **Note:** A definitive policy is required as well as evidence that the policy is followed. It must outline for all employees the process that is to be followed upon receipt of a complaint. A policy that refers the complaint to the "Responsible Executive" for investigation and resolution is satisfactory.

Audits triggered by Significant Complaints

Complaints that raise concern about the company's compliance with policies and procedures, conformance to this standard, or the quality of work trigger a prompt Audit in accordance with Section B, Item 6 of SSPC-QN-1.

Application Submittal Procedure

To avoid any delays in application processing, follow these submission instructions:

- Type or legibly print all entries on the application form or compile in digital format in chronological order.
- Be certain all items on the form are answered completely and accurately and that the form is signed by executive management.
- Send original and one copy of the application package to SSPC. We suggest you keep a copy on hand for use during the Audit.
- Clearly identify items noted on the evaluation checklist as being required submittals to accompany the application.

Submittal items include:

- Name of Nuclear Coatings QA Manager
- QA Manager designated backups or assistants
- Approved QA Program
- Summary of Inspector Qualification Program
- Summary of Applicator Qualification Program, including Health/Physics Training & Qualification Requirements

Secure all pages to minimize chance of loss or separation.

Determine non-refundable certification fee/audit deposit using the schedule below.

Make check payable to: **SSPC: The Society for Protective Coatings**

Send the application package and fees to:

SSPC (Society for Protective Coatings)

Attn: Certification Manager

40 24th Street

6th Floor

Pittsburgh, PA 15222-4656

Alternatively, application and submittals may be submitted electronically on CD-ROM, or by email with electronic signatures required on the application form. SSPC must be able to open, read, and print the document. Email documents to: certification@sspc.org.

QN-1 Fee Schedule

Submit in advance your non-refundable fees (the annual administrative fee plus a deposit for audit expenses) with your QN-1 Initial Application. SSPC will withhold your QN-1 Certification until receiving total payment. The fees cover the cost of staff time to review and process your application package, the cost of the on-site audit, and the overhead expenses required to operate the program.

Use the following table to determine your fee:

Administrative Fee	Sustaining Member	Patron Member	Non Member
Initial and Maintenance	\$1,350	\$1,600	\$2,150
Audit Deposits (Fees regardless of membership level)			
Initial and Maintenance	\$2,500		
*Outside U.S./Canada/Mexico: Add	\$1,000		

SSPC Policy

SSPC Audit Fee Policy - If the audit cost is less than the submitted audit deposit, SSPC will refund the difference. If the audit cost is more than the audit deposit, SSPC will bill your company for the additional expenses. Program fees are non-refundable, regardless of the results of the evaluation and audit. Fees have to be paid in advance in order to cover the cost of the performing the audit. If your company withdraws its application prior to scheduling the field evaluation, SSPC will retain the administrative fee (as part of the QN-1 Audit process) for application processing expenses incurred. After six (6) months SSPC will return "non-responsive" and "inactive" applications to the company. QN-1 applicants must pay all applicable fees for QN-1 corrective action verification audits or additional audit expenses when they are due. Failure to pay in a timely manner will result in a six-month suspension from the program and public notification of the suspension. If fees are not paid after the suspension period, company will be de-certified. In order to regain QN-1 status, the company is required to reapply as an initial applicant. When re-applying, all applicable fees *and* all overdue fees must be paid prior to QN-1 certification being approved.

SSPC Audit Cancellation Policy - If, after an audit date has been selected and mutually agreed upon by you and SSPC, confirmed either in writing or verbally, and you cancel the audit or request a change of date, you will be responsible for any unrecoverable expenses incurred by SSPC as a result of the cancellation or rescheduling.

Evaluation Process

Evaluation of your firm is performed in conformance with the current version of SSPC QN-1: Standard Procedure for Evaluating the Contractor's Advanced Quality Management System. After the application package (i.e. application form, written submittal, and certification fee/audit deposit) is received, reviewed, and "accepted" by SSPC, the audit is assigned to an Auditor. When a mutually agreed upon date or time-frame has been selected for the Initial Audit, confirmed in writing, or verbally by the applicant and the SSPC Certification Manager or Auditor, SSPC will authorize an Auditor to visit your headquarters business office (and job site if appropriate) to:

- Confirm data submitted in the application package
- Interview key personnel
- Observe and rate company organization and operation, utilizing standard QN-1 program guidelines and rating procedures
- Conduct the Exit Interview

At the conclusion of the audit, the Auditor will schedule an exit interview with appropriate management and other QS personnel to point out audit findings (i.e. any major corrective actions [CAs] that were scored less than a "2" and items scored "2" which require a minor corrective action report.)

Note: The company's QA Manager must be present during the entire audit. If corrective actions are required, the Auditor will complete a deficiency/corrective action schedule, which must be signed by the company representative at the conclusion of the audit. Your company representative signature does not connote agreement with audit results but rather acknowledges receipt of audit findings. Refusal to sign the deficiency schedule will result in denial of certification.

Determination of Status

At the conclusion of the evaluation process, the Auditor will forward a report to the SSPC Certification Manager, who will make the final decision regarding audit results. The Certification Manager will, in turn, give recommendations to the Program Administrator regarding certification. The recommendations are defined as:

Confer Interim or Full Certification: Company has achieved scores of "3" on all evaluation items.

Deny Qualification: Company achieved scores of "2" or less on items that require written corrective actions within 90 days of notification of audit results. Certification can be issued once a corrective action plan is submitted and accepted for each item rated "2" or less. If the applying company achieved 4 or more ratings of "2" or less, a follow-up Audit may be required. Companies achieving scores of "1" on one or more items must submit a written corrective action plan and request a follow-up Audit at company expense. The follow-up Audit will confirm that acceptable corrective actions are implemented and root causes investigated.

Appeal Procedures

During the Exit Interview, the Auditor will explain findings cited during the evaluation. If you dispute Audit findings, you can appeal upon being notified of the audit results.

Steps for filing an appeal:

1. You must notify SSPC in writing within 10 working days after notification of audit results, specifically identifying those items in contention and why the results of the audit are being disputed.
2. The applicant may then arrange with SSPC to have a second audit **at the your expense** to evaluate items contested.
3. In the event the foregoing step fails to resolve the dispute, a mutually agreed-upon arbitration panel consisting of 3 persons, one chosen by you, one chosen by SSPC and one agreed upon by both parties. (i.e. a person or persons familiar with QN-1 operations in the coating industry [or Quality Management Systems]) will hear evidence and make a final decision.
4. If the arbitration panel finds in your favor, all fees and expenses to convene the panel will be shared equally by the applicant and SSPC.
5. If the arbitration panel supports the findings of the SSPC Audit, the applicant will be responsible for payment of all fees and expenses associated with the appeal.

IMPORTANT: Failure to cooperate with the Program Auditor, or failure to provide access to data, personnel, or on-site premises shall be sufficient cause for denial, suspension, or revocation of QN-1 certification.

Renewal Applications

SSPC-QN-1 Certification is for one year expiring on March 31. To renew certification, you must submit an annual application form, a list of QN-1 projects in progress and completed since the last evaluation, changes in key personnel, changes in company organization, and the appropriate maintenance fee. All must be submitted to SSPC by January 15 of the requested certification year.

SSPC will send a renewal notice to the QN-1 certified company 60 to 90 days before the January 15 anniversary date as a reminder to reapply. You are responsible for ensuring that SSPC has your current business address and other contact information, to ensure notification is received at the correct location.

If you fail to reapply by the January 15 deadline, certification will expire.

SSPC will send a letter to any company that has failed to reapply when due as a reminder that certification has expired.

Definitions and Explanations

Contractor: a firm whose business is providing surface preparation and coating application and related services for corrosion control and decontaminability of surfaces or installed components or structures in safety-related Service Level I and III areas of nuclear power plant.

Paint Shop Facility: a fixed facility where parts, components or structures to be installed in Service Level I and III areas of nuclear power plants are subjected to surface preparation, coating application and related services for corrosion control and decontaminability.

Auditor: (NQA-1 definition)

Safety-Related Coating System: coating system used inside or outside of the reactor-containment, the detachment of which could adversely affect the safety function of a safety-related structure, system or component.

Coating Service Level I: term used to describe areas inside the reactor containment where coating failure could adversely affect the operation of post-accident fluid systems and, thereby, impair safe shutdown.

Coating Service Level II: term used to describe areas outside containment where coating failure could impair, but not prevent, normal operating performance; the function of Service Level II coatings is to provide corrosion protection and decontaminability in those areas outside the reactor containment subject to radiation exposure and radionuclide contamination. Service Level II coatings are not safety-related.

Coating Service Level III: term used to describe areas outside the reactor containment where coating failure could adversely affect the safety function of a safety-related structure, system or component.

Balance-of-Plant Coatings: coating systems in a nuclear facility that do not fall under the category of Coating Service Levels I, II or III.

Certification: written documentation of qualification.

Qualification: skills, training and experience required for personnel to perform properly the duties and execute the responsibilities of the appropriate certification level.

Training: program developed to ensure that personnel receive the knowledge and skills necessary for qualification.

Coating Work Inspection: phase of quality control that, by means of examination, observation or measurement, determines the conformance of coating work predetermined quality requirements.

Governing Documents: technical specifications, job-site procedures and reference documents.

Coating Applicator: organization or individual responsible for applying a protective or decorative coating.

Qualifying Agent: A designated representative of the owner or the coating organization, or both, having sufficient experience in the practical application and evaluation of coatings applied to steel surfaces of a nuclear facility.

Nonconformance: deficiency in characteristic, documentation or procedure that renders the quality of an item unacceptable or indeterminate.

Deviation: departure of a characteristic from established procedures or specified requirements.

QN-1 Scoring Criteria

The SSPC auditor rates the contractor on all applicable* evaluation items. Only findings rated 1 or 2 are reported on the deficiency schedule, which is given to the auditee at the exit interview. Lack of a finding for an evaluation item means that the auditor rated it '3', or did not rate the item.

*More items are evaluated on initial and full audits that are evaluated on maintenance, spot-check or corrective action follow-up audits.

The ratings and their meanings are listed below:

A rating of '1', (a.k.a. a major CAR or deficiency) indicates that a) the required training, written program, practice or procedure is non-existent; b) the required training or written program is inadequate; or c) the required practice or procedure has not been in place for the minimum amount of time (six consecutive production months) or it has been in place sporadically (e.g. less than 2/3 implemented).

Important Note: Typically, auditors will not issue major deficiencies for isolated breakdowns in a contractor's Quality System. However, there are exceptions. For example, auditors will issue a rating of '1' when they observe one or more safety violations or safety hazards that could result in an injury or serious incident. An obvious example would be a person working without appropriate fall protection as required by the contractor's safety and health plan and/or governing regulations. Auditors will also issue a rating of '1' if they discover one or more unauthorized deviations from contract requirements or deviations from good painting practices found in the paint shop, shipyard or field job site.

A rating of '2', (a.k.a. a minor CAR or deficiency) indicates the training or written program is adequate but requires minor revision. Examples include a practice or procedure that is in place with isolated instances of nonconformance (no more than 1/3 of the time), lack of practice or documentation due to personnel turnover, nonconformance by field personnel, personal hardship and natural disaster.

A rating of '3' indicates that a contractor, based on audit sampling, consistently adheres to specific training and written program requirements, and required practices and procedures consistently meet the letter of the standard. When there are no audit findings, it means that all items evaluated during the audit were rated '3'.

Corrective Action Report

A Corrective Action Report (CAR), using the SSPC CAP form found on the SSPC website (<http://sspc.org/certification/PCCP/CAPinfo.html>), is required for each major deficiency (rating of '1') found by the auditor. Remedial action for a Major CAR requires the submission of a corrective action report followed by an on-site audit to confirm that the contractor has corrected the deficiency and implemented the corrective action plan submitted.

Remedial action for a Minor CAR requires that the auditor confirm remediation at the next audit. Minor CARs that are not remediated by the contractor by the next audit shall turn into a Major CAR or deficiency.

NOTE: Initial audits require corrective action report submission for all deficiencies cited (major or minor).

Concerns - Occasionally, the auditor will note a 'concern' on an audit report. A concern is not a rating. It is a statement for the contractor to consider for its own business purposes. No response is required for a 'concern'.

Periodic Spot Checks

In addition to the annual SSPC QN-1 external audit conducted at your headquarters or at a division office, SSPC Auditors visiting, will at their discretion, do a periodic spot check of your QS procedures as they apply to a particular job. Please notify your QA managers and project managers so they are prepared to respond to an SSPC Auditor's questions about QN-1-related procedures. If the SSPC Auditor cites your company for a deficiency or a corrective action as a result of a spot check, the auditor will inform your QN-1 representative on site of the deficiency or corrective action.