CERTIFICATION QUALITY PROGRAMS

take the guess work out of selecting industrial coating contractors & inspection firms
SSPC CERTIFICATION QUALITY PROGRAMS FOR INDUSTRIAL COATING CONTRACTORS AND INSPECTION FIRMS

SSPC's certification quality programs offer a proven way for facility owners to find the most qualified contractors for their coating and lining projects. An SSPC certified contractor will have the experience, knowledge, and equipment to produce high quality work in accordance with the local, state, and federal guidelines for safety, health, and environmental compliance.

SSPC has certification quality programs for contractors that perform coating and lining work and for companies that provide inspection services. These nationally recognized certification quality programs are based on consensus standards developed by a diverse committee of industry professionals. The certifications function as independent evaluations of contractors, which in turn can be used as qualification tools for facility owners seeking contractors for projects.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE YOU SPECIFY YOUR NEXT COATING PROJECT

As a facility owner, you recognize the importance of protective coatings when it comes to safeguarding valuable facilities and other corporate or government assets. Coatings do much more than just improve appearance. To preserve and maintain structures, nothing can match the long-term value and protection offered by coatings and linings.

But the selection of suitable materials is just one aspect of a successful coating project. It is critical that work is done according to sound specifications, with correct surface preparation and proper application techniques. Facility owners need to find top quality people to provide these services—trained people who know the current standards and practices and have a proven track record of success.

WHY DO I NEED A CERTIFIED CONTRACTOR?

Today’s marketplace and advanced coating systems require owners to be more selective when awarding projects. Including SSPC certification in your selection process can provide you with a valuable tool for identifying contractors with industry-standard capabilities and a commitment to exceptional quality. There are numerous advantages to requiring certification for your projects:

Competent contractors—
There is often a big difference between the lowest bidder and the lowest responsible bidder for a project. SSPC certifications take away the guess work in evaluating bidders. You can know from the start that certified contractors have demonstrated abilities and knowledge in their areas of expertise.

Clear and concise project specifications—
Project specifications that include certified contractors as a requirement allow owners the comfort of knowing that the chosen contractor will have the knowledge, equipment, and capabilities to perform the project to the specified standard.

Confidence in specifying new technology—
When you hire an SSPC certified contractor, you can be assured that the contractor has the capabilities you need in emerging technologies.
About SSPC

SSPC is the only non-profit association concentrating on the protection and preservation of concrete, steel, and other industrial and marine structures and surfaces through the use of high-performance industrial coatings. SSPC was founded in 1950 as the Steel Structures Painting Council, a non-profit professional society focusing on the use of coatings to protect industrial steel structures. In 1997, the name of the association was changed to The Society for Protective Coatings to better reflect the changing nature of coating technology and the expanding types of construction materials.

SSPC developed the standards by which nearly all industrial surface preparation and coating work is performed in North America today. These include the widely-used Surface Preparation (SP) and Paint Application (PA) specifications. The association is the leading source of information on surface preparation, coating selection, coating application, environmental regulations, and health and safety issues that affect the protective coatings industry.

Consistent Inspection—
Inspection is the link between what the owner wants and what the owner gets. Without high quality inspection, the project suffers. An SSPC certified inspection company provides consistent coating and lining inspection by competent, well-trained inspectors. Owners, certified inspectors, and other certified contractors will all work to the same agreed-upon standards.

Safe and Reliable Project Work—
SSPC certified contractors have demonstrated the abilities to protect workers and the environment and adequately document project work.

ISO 9000 Compliance—
SSPC certification is an asset to ISO 9000 facility owners. SSPC contractor certification quality programs provide an industry-specific adaptation of ISO Quality System Concepts and include many of the fundamental topics found in ISO 9001-2000.

Both the U.S. Navy and U.S. Coast Guard require SSPC certification for their coating projects. Many state and city Departments of Transportation use only certified contractors for bridge maintenance and other jobs. Numerous county governments require certification for the maintenance painting of bridges, water tanks, and waste and water treatment facilities. SSPC certification is also being specified by an increasing number of private facility owners who want to maximize the service life spans of their structures.

SSPC Certification Identifies Contractors with Industry-Standard Capabilities and a Commitment to Exceptional Quality
WHY SHOULD I SPEND MONEY ON A COATING PROJECT AT ALL?

Using protective coatings and linings is a proven way to cut losses from corrosion and deterioration while extending the service life of your assets. Money spent on well-timed coating operations should be best viewed as a long-term investment, rather than as an immediate cost.

It hurts your business when you delay or eliminate a needed coating project in the interest of short-term savings. But it can be worse to hire an unqualified contractor for a project based solely on the lowest bid. To maximize the return on your coating investment dollars, it makes sense to choose only highly qualified, certified contractors with demonstrated abilities.

PROTECTIVE COATINGS AND LININGS PREVENT LOSSES TO YOUR BUSINESS FROM CORROSION.

WILL USING A CERTIFIED CONTRACTOR COST ME MORE?

You may wonder if your bid prices will go up if you hire only certified contractors. Remember that bid prices reflect the requirements of your specifications and the level of quality that you, as the facility owner, intend to achieve.

When you hire an SSPC certified contractor, you are hiring an experienced contractor who has demonstrated competence in key project areas. This increases the likelihood that your maintenance investment is sound and that your protective coating project will be completed within specifications. As a result, your asset can be protected and achieve its expected service life without premature failure.

In addition, using certified contractors lowers the risk of safety and environmental compliance violations that may tarnish your company’s image, endanger your company and your clients, and result in legal expenses.

The costs of the certification quality programs are funded through fees paid by contractors. As a facility owner, you will not be charged fees by SSPC for recruiting or hiring certified contractors.

CERTIFICATION QUALITY PROGRAMS ARE FUNDED THROUGH FEES PAID BY CONTRACTORS, NOT OWNERS.
QS 1 is the standard procedure in the SSPC PCCP program that requires participating contractors to implement and document more stringent (ISO 9001 Compliant) quality control and record-keeping procedures than those included SSPC-QP 1, SSPC-QP 3, etc. Owners and specifiers who require a higher level of quality control for their projects may request that contractors already qualified to standards such as SSPC-QP 1, QP 3, QP 6, QP 8 or others also present evidence that their quality systems meet the requirements of QS 1.

SSPC CERTIFICATION QUALITY PROGRAMS

SSPC has a number of certification quality programs tailored to specific painting, coating, and lining projects. The following certification programs apply to coating contracting companies or inspection firms.

**QP 1, Field Application to Complex Industrial and Marine Structures**—evaluates contractors who perform surface preparation and industrial coating application on steel structures in the field.

**QP 2, Field Removal of Hazardous Coatings**—is a supplement to QP 1 that evaluates a contractor's ability to perform industrial hazardous paint removal in a field operation. Two categories of certification are available based on the type of equipment and containment:
- Category A - Negative air containment
- Category B - No negative air containment

*NOTE:* A contractor must be QP 1 certified prior to becoming QP 2 certified.

**QP 3, Shop Painting**—evaluates a contractor's ability to perform surface preparation and protective coating application in a fixed shop facility. SSPC issues three categories of shop certification:
- Enclosed shop
- Covered shop
- Open shop

**QP 5, Certification for Coating and Lining Inspection Companies**—applies to inspection companies whose focus is the industrial coating and lining industry. QP 5 evaluates an inspection company's ability to provide consistent, high-quality coating and lining inspection services for its clients.

**QP 6, Contractor Metallizing**—evaluates the qualifications of industrial thermal spray (metallizing) contractors. This certification evaluates the contractor's capability to assess and accept the preparation of the surface to be metallized and to thermally spray the following:
- Coatings of aluminum, zinc, and their alloys for corrosion protection of steel
- Zinc anodes on steel-reinforced concrete

**QP 8, Installation of Polymer Coatings and Surfacing on Concrete and Other Cementitious Surfaces**—evaluates the qualifications of contractors hired to install polymer coatings or surfaces on concrete surfaces in commercial, institutional, and industrial facilities.

**QP 9, Field Application of Architectural Coatings**—evaluates the qualifications of painting contractors who apply architectural coatings on commercial or institutional structures in the field.
WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BECOME SSPC CERTIFIED?

SSPC certified contractors need to demonstrate that they strive to be the best in the industry. To become certified, the contractor or shop must:

- Complete a detailed application form describing the company and its work history
- Submit documentation on quality control, safety, and environmental compliance programs and procedures
- Obtain acceptance of the submittal
- Undergo an on-site audit by an SSPC auditor of both the contractor’s primary place of business and an active job site to demonstrate the company’s capabilities
- For coating contractor certifications, comply with a rigorously enforced Disciplinary Action Code

It usually takes one to two months from the time the contractor submits its application to the time that the SSPC certification process is complete. SSPC requires the observation of bona fide work in progress as part of each on-site audit, with no exceptions.

All industrial coating contractors and shops, regardless of size, volume of work, markets served, or affiliations, are eligible for SSPC certification, provided that they can demonstrate a six-month production history of compliance with certification requirements prior to their initial evaluation.

Certified coating contractors must maintain the program’s guidelines on all of their projects. This applies even when the contract or project specifications do not name SSPC certification as a requirement.

The ranks of SSPC certified contractors include large, medium, and small businesses; those that paint bridges, storage tanks, structural steel, concrete, military facilities, Navy ships, or a variety of complex industrial structures; and those that may be minority or women owned.

SSPC CERTIFIED CONTRACTORS ARE AMONG THE BEST IN THE INDUSTRY.
SSPC UPHOLDS HIGH STANDARDS FOR CONTRACTORS

SSPC continuously works to ensure that certified contractors adhere to program standards. They regularly conduct thorough audits that focus on each contractor’s knowledge, organization, personnel, procedures, qualifications, and overall capability to provide high-quality work and service on complex coating and lining projects.

In addition, SSPC maintains Disciplinary Action Criteria (DAC) that govern coating contractors and inspection companies. The DAC is a set of safety, health, environmental protection, quality, service, and ethical practice standards. These criteria are the basis for issuing warnings, placing firms on probation, conducting special unannounced audits, and suspending or revoking certification for severe program violations.

While certification can identify contractors with demonstrated general capabilities, it is important to know that SSPC does not guarantee the capabilities or work of a certified contractor for any specific site or job.

The overall success of the certification quality programs depends on open communication between SSPC and facility owners, coating contractors, and inspection companies. SSPC works with all of these groups to maintain the highest quality and integrity for their certifications.

SSPC ENSURES THAT CERTIFIED CONTRACTORS ADHERE TO PROGRAM STANDARDS.
What You Need....

Recommended SSPC Certifications

**Specification writing and review; asset/structure coatings survey**

**Protective Coatings Specialist (PCS)** – Individuals who have in-depth knowledge of the principles and practices of industrial coatings technology

**Contractors hired to apply coatings and perform surface preparation in the field**

**QP 1 Certified** – Contractors who perform surface preparation and industrial coating application on steel structures in the field

**Contractors hired to remove hazardous paint in the field**

**QP 2 Certified** – Contractors who perform industrial hazardous paint removal in a field operation

**Inspection of protective coatings on steel surfaces**

**Protective Coatings Inspector (PCI)** – Inspectors certified for inspection of coatings on steel surfaces

**Inspection of bridge protective coatings**

**Bridge Coating Inspector (BCI)** – Inspectors certified specifically to bridge coatings inspection

**Inspection of concrete protective coatings**

**Concrete Coating Inspector (CCI)** – Inspectors certified specifically to concrete coatings inspection

Is general knowledge of the industry good enough? Take the guess work out of protective coatings projects and turn to the source for specific coatings knowledge. Requiring SSPC certifications within your specifications should be the minimum standard for maintaining a safe and cost effective maintenance program. SSPC offers free consultations to facility owners to help them implement certification requirements into their coatings program. SSPC also provides contract and bid notice language that owners can use or modify to specify SSPC certification. For more information on SSPC Certification Quality Programs, please contact our Certification Sales & Marketing Specialist at 412.281.2331 ext. 2210 or certification@sspc.org