



**THERMAL SPRAY (METALIZING) CONTRACTOR  
CERTIFICATION PROGRAM**

**SSPC QP6  
APPLICATION, INSTRUCTIONS, AND  
PROGRAM RULES**

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## Application Form, Instructions, and Program Rules / SSPC QP6

### I. Introduction

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

SSPC QP6 is one of several contractor qualification programs available under the PCCP umbrella.

SSPC QP6 Certification is designed to evaluate the qualifications of industrial thermal spray (metalizing) contractors by defining what capabilities are necessary for a contractor to either perform or evaluate and accept surface preparation of the surface to be metalized or thermal sprayed and perform the metalizing.

Please note that the SSPC QP6 Certification program does not involve inspection of the contractor's thermal spray work or training of its personnel. It does cover thermal spray capability conducted in the field or in the shop. 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 the primary capabilities of potential bidders. While SSPC certification confirms a company's capability to meet the requirements of SSPC QP6, owners, specifiers and general contractors are encouraged to also assess the contractor's financial ability to perform a job as well as the contractor's previous 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 during the project. This is in addition to ensuring that the contractor is capable of performing the work.

This package contains information and materials needed to apply for SSPC QP6 Certification. It also lays out program rules and procedures that you must follow once your company becomes certified. 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 "Certification" and follow the appropriate

links. Contact the SSPC QP Certification Program Manager's Office at 877-281-7772 at extension 2235 or extension 2209 if you have any questions or need assistance.

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 program itself.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** *Contractors applying for SSPC QP6 Certification must demonstrate a history of compliance with QP6 quality and safety requirements. QP6 applicants must be able to document that necessary components of its quality program have been in place company-wide for at least six production months prior to the initial evaluation. For instance, where an evaluation item requires specific procedures to be in force, such as the preparation and maintenance of Quality Control reports, the procedures must have been in force at least six production months prior to the time when the contractor undergoes the initial audit. Once certified, the contractor is expected to consistently apply applicable certification procedures year-round for all industrial thermal spray application projects.*

## II. General Program Procedure

The SSPC QP6 Certification process contains this sequence of procedures that you must follow:

- a. Complete the application form found in **Section III: Application Form**.
- b. Gather and prepare the required information outlined in **Section III: Application Form** following the application.
- c. Send SSPC the application, submittal items and appropriate non-refundable certification administrative fee and required audit deposit.
- d. SSPC staff will review your submittals within 10 working days after receipt. An on-site audit will be performed if everything is in order. If not, SSPC will indicate what must be done or what additional information is required to complete the submittal.

**NOTE:** *The initial job site or shop visit will most likely be announced and may be performed at a job site selected by SSPC if it is a field project.*

- e. An SSPC program auditor will conduct the evaluation at one or more active complex structure job sites that are representative of work that your company performs and where you can demonstrate conformance with QP6 requirements. It usually takes two to three days to complete and always includes a visit to your offices as well as one or more active complex structure job sites (selected by SSPC) or your shop.

**NOTE:** *The auditor may review randomly selected project files on thermal spray projects listed in your submittal. These files as well as management and*

*production personnel familiar with those projects must be available during the audit for an audit to be completed.*

- f. It is important to know what information must be available at the job site or shop to show the auditor during the audit for an audit to be completed. This information can be found on the SSPC website at <http://www.sspc.org/qp-programs/qp-programs-home/>. Although these guidelines are for QP1, they are also applicable for QP6. SSPC also encourages you to do an internal audit prior to SSPC's independent audit. Internal audit checklists can be found on the Certification section of SSPC's website.
- g. At the end of the audit, the auditor will schedule an exit interview to advise your key management of any deficiencies cited during the audit.
- h. If your company has a qualifying score, it will be certified for a three-year period. Your company's ability to maintain certification standards during the three-year certification term is confirmed through passing annual announced or unannounced audits that your company must undergo at least once in each of the three years of the certification term, and through your company's ability to adhere to the program's administrative rules, and avoidance of disciplinary actions as described in the **Disciplinary Action Criteria (DAC)**. Certification lapses after three years.
- i. If your company does not qualify, you have up to 45 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. If you don't submit acceptable corrective actions within 45 days, you must reapply for initial certification.
- j. Should you choose to contest the audit findings, the program provides for an appeals procedure.

### III. Application Form

**Instructions:** The application form is used to provide information that will aid in evaluating and rating your company. 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 hardcopies of your completed application, along with two hardcopies of submittals and the correct non-refundable fee. SSPC will accept electronic submissions in lieu of hardcopies.**

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

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

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Website (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (w/ area code): \_\_\_\_\_

Fax Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Federal ID: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Type of Business:     Sole Proprietorship         Partnership  
                                  Corporation                                 Other

3. Years your company has operated under name listed in **Question #1**: \_\_\_\_\_

If less than three years, list previous names below:

Previous Name: \_\_\_\_\_ From: \_\_\_\_\_ To: \_\_\_\_\_

Previous Name: \_\_\_\_\_ From: \_\_\_\_\_ To: \_\_\_\_\_

Is the location listed in **Question #1** the main place of business?

- Yes                     No

*If not, list branch offices and locations below:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Has your company undergone (within the last 18 months) or is it planning to undergo any significant changes (name change; change in ownership; Chapter 7, 11 or 13; purchase or takeover of another contracting company; 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 **Section IX: Definitions and Explanations, Part A: Major Changes in a Company's Organization**.

5. Audit at an active job site or shop operation. The certification program requires that auditors conduct a field visit to an active complex structure job site or shop where metalizing is taking place. List location of jobs in progress or shop projects where an audit can be conducted. Please include any restrictions below such as special safety requirements, facial hair, security clearances, etc.

a. Job site or shop: \_\_\_\_\_

Restrictions: \_\_\_\_\_

Name, title and phone number of your contact person on this job site:

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b. Job site or shop: \_\_\_\_\_

Restrictions: \_\_\_\_\_

Name, title and phone number of your contact person on this job site:

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c. Job site or shop: \_\_\_\_\_

Restrictions: \_\_\_\_\_

Name, title and phone number of your contact person on this job site:

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6. Current **Experience Modification Rate (EMR)** for state/province of domicile and principal states/provinces of operation. Provide documentation of EMRs on your insurance company and state/provincial workmen's compensation bureau (board) letterhead per evaluation item described in **Section IV: Evaluation Checklist, Part D: Safety Procedures and Record Keeping**. Submit a detailed explanation for any EMR above 1.25.
7. Attach copies of any serious or willful federal, state/provincial or local regulatory agency worker safety and health or environmental non-compliance or other regulatory violations (e.g., wage and hourly violation) and citations issued to any of your company's industrial painting operations during the previous 36 months. 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. Submit required copy of OSHA Form 170 or equivalent regarding fatalities that have occurred on your job sites in the last 36 months.
8. Has your company or any of its personnel been involved in any of the following practices in the past 36 months? Fraud; alteration of test results or reports; criminal conviction; misrepresentation of information; or illegal business practices. Refer to the **Disciplinary Action Criteria (DAC)**.  
 Yes       No

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

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9. List the names and headquarters locations of any industrial coating contractors your company is affiliated with. An affiliated company is, "A company, corporation, partnership, joint venture or other business entity operating under a different name than the certified company, which performs surface preparation or coating application or administrative and other support functions for the certified company; and in which an officer, director, owner, partner or stockholder of the certified company – a previously certified company disciplined by SSPC – or certified company itself, exercises directly or indirectly (such as through family members) any significant degree of ownership, management or control."
10. Is your company now or has it in the past been associated in any way with a contracting company operating under another name, which has been disciplined by the SSPC under the DAC?  
 Yes       No

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

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11. 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 company that has been disciplined by the SSPC under the DAC?  
 Yes       No

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

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If your company has not had such association with a company previously disciplined under the DAC, please check this box:

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

12. Has your company been disqualified or disbarred from any bidder's list in the past 24 months?  
 Yes       No

If yes, please provide the reason for the suspension and the name of the entity: \_\_\_\_\_



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13. Attach copy of most recent (12 months) OSHA accident and illness forms (OSHA Forms 300 and 300A) if applicable.
  14. Please attach copy of your current written Safety & Health Compliance Program.
  15. Total production hours logged in previous calendar year: \_\_\_\_\_
  16. Source of Information: \_\_\_\_\_
  17. Average number of workers you've employed over preceding three years: \_\_\_\_\_
  18. QP6 Qualification category sought (check which apply). See definitions in **Section X: Definitions and Explanations** for more details.
    - Steel Category (Thermal Spray of Structural Steel)
    - Concrete Category (Thermal Spray for Cathodic Protection of Steel Reinforced Concrete)

**NOTE:** *By my initialing and signature below, I acknowledge that I have read and understand:*

Initial: \_\_\_\_\_ The QP6 Certification Program Application Form and Instructions

Initial: \_\_\_\_\_ The QP6 Standard and Audit Checklist

Initial: \_\_\_\_\_ **The Disciplinary Action Criteria (DAC)**

As a principal officer of the thermal spray contractor, we agree to abide by and be bound by rules, regulations and procedures set forth therein. *Must be initialed above and signed by the president, chief operations officer or chief executive officer.*

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

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

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

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

**NOTE:** *Failure to report accurate, complete information will delay your certification evaluation. Omission or falsification of information may result in withholding or denial of certification status.*

*Your company will be checked against the provisions of the **Disciplinary Action Criteria (DAC)**. If your company has critical faults under DAC and falls under one of its categories of suspension or revocation, your application will be held at SSPC for the length of time that is equivalent to the appropriate penalty. If your company has critical faults and subsequently falls under warning or probation, you are under those categories and are subject to further disciplinary action if future problems arise, provided your company is certified after successfully completing the initial audit.*

### **Required Information**

In order to rate and evaluate your company, the program uses specific criteria organized into four business areas outlined below:

1. Management Procedures
  - a. Measures utilized by your company to organize, coordinate and otherwise manage the various activities required to prepare or accept surfaces and apply protective coatings using a thermal spray process.
2. Technical Capabilities
  - a. Resources maintained by your company to properly interpret and execute job specifications and requirements.
3. Quality Control
  - a. Procedures implemented and maintained by your company to verify that all stages of work are performed in accordance with contract documents and specifications.
4. Safety and Health Program, Procedures and Recordkeeping
  - a. Practices and procedures used by your company to see that safe operations are maintained.

Each of these four areas contains several subcategories focusing on your company's policies, personnel, procedures and resources. All items must be submitted in writing with the application. 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. Again, electronic submittals will be accepted in lieu of hardcopies.

The auditor will verify and evaluate the items during the on-site or shop visit. The necessary records or files that you must present at that time include, but are not limited to, job files for reported projects, inspection logs, equipment and maintenance records, and so on. Some information will be presented verbally. The auditor may also evaluate DAC-related items as directed by the program administrator.

**Section VI: Submittal Procedure** lists and describes submittal procedures.

**NOTE:** *Contractors applying for SSPC QP6 Certification must demonstrate a history of compliance with QP6's quality and safety requirements. QP6 applicants must be able to document that necessary components of its quality program have been in place company-wide for at least six months prior to the initial evaluation. For instance, where an evaluation item requires specific procedures to be in force, such as the preparation and maintenance of inspection reports, the procedures must have been in force at least six production months prior to the time when the contractor*

*undergoes the initial audit. Once certified, the contractor is expected to consistently apply applicable certification procedures year-round for all industrial thermal spray applications.*

## IV. Evaluation Checklist

This is a list and description of all items of required information for QP6 certification. Following each item is a statement telling you whether it is a critical or non-critical item. Documentation explaining each item must be submitted with your application. A score of “2” is required on all critical items.

### A. Management Procedures

#### 1. Company Policy

##### a. Mission Statement

- i. It must contain specific statements (declarations) regarding quality, safety, health and environmental protection practices. Must be on company letterhead signed by the president or CEO, updated or reaffirmed annually and posted at the office, shop and job site.

##### b. Implementation of Procedures for Disseminating Company Policies within the Organization

- i. Show that management has implemented procedures to routinely disseminate all policies to all workers (e.g., employee manual or handbook, new employee orientation, workforce conferences) under its direction.

#### 2. Organization and Personnel

##### a. Organization Chart

- i. Provide a diagram that shows lines of authority and responsibility for major activities of the company. The organization chart must be updated or reaffirmed annually by the CEO and clearly show key positions such as Health & Safety Officer, QC Supervisor, Thermal Spray Supervisor (TSS), Production Manager.

##### b. Job Descriptions

- i. Provide job descriptions for key personnel such as management, quality control supervisor and safety officer that clearly state their responsibilities and duties. Include their work experience, required licenses (which must be current), certifications and availability of training programs. Training programs must be in place at least six months and correlate with industry jobs, positions and professions. Documentation must confirm that actual duties match the job descriptions. Officers and management staff must be full-time paid employees of your company.

### 3. Administrative and Management Procedures

#### a. Financial Record Keeping/Insurance

- i. Documentation must show that a recognized accounting system is in place and that tax returns have been submitted in a timely manner. This means providing a copy of your most recent tax return. Show evidence that liability, workers compensation and other insurances are paid and current. Be prepared to show documentation that the company pays workers and management staff.

#### b. Procedures for Estimating, Scheduling and Tracking Costs

- i. Demonstrate that estimates for work are recorded and that they take into account labor, materials, equipment, training, worker protection, overhead, etc. Written job schedules must be available that clearly outline all major activities (mobilization, surface preparation, application of primer, topcoat, demobilization, etc.). Job costs are tracked and compared with bid estimates.

#### ii. **NOTE: Concerning Reporting of Financial Information to SSPC:**

*Contractors are encouraged to redact or white out sensitive financial information. SSPC's interest in reviewing financial documents is limited to verifying such things as legal identifiability, insurance coverage, proper payment of staff and workers, and the fact that the applicant follows accepted accounting practices and 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.*

#### c. Procedures for Reviewing Specifications and Other Bidding Documentation

- i. 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).

#### d. Procedures for Learning About and Complying with Regulations (Critical Item)

- i. Identify a key person(s) in your company who is/are designated – in writing – to secure and study regulations. This key person has been designated to perform this duty for at least six months prior to the initial audit. Demonstrate that current versions of regulations applicable to specific projects are available at the job site or to personnel on the shop floor and are complied with.

## B. Technical Capabilities

### 1. Personnel Qualifications

#### a. Worker Training, Qualification and Experience (Critical Item) (TSSs & TSOs)

Provide evidence (e.g., training records, certificates, relevant correspondence) that thermal spray supervisors and thermal spray operators have the requisite experience and have been trained and qualified to perform job functions. See **Section XI: Appendix A** for specific requirements.

**b. Worker Performance Evaluation (Critical Item)**

Demonstrate that the performance of TSSs, TSOs and abrasive blasters, if applicable, is systematically reviewed and documented by management and immediate supervisors. Demonstrate there is evidence that corrective actions to improve subpar performance are taken as needed and documented.

**2. Technical Resources**

**a. Industry Group Affiliations**

Demonstrate that you have affiliation with groups that provide current information on thermal spray technology.

**b. Technical Standards Library (Critical Item)**

Demonstrate that current technical standards and references applicable to each thermal spray project are available in hardcopy or electronically, at a minimum, to management in the office and to personnel at each job site, and there is evidence of their use by site/shop 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 (Critical Item)**

Demonstrate that specifications and revisions are logged in and distributed to appropriate persons; records are kept of who is given a copy. Show that a Verification of Documentation Acknowledgement form is signed.

**b. Procedures for Clarifying Ambiguous Specifications (Critical Item)**

Show that your company clarifies ambiguous specifications (items such as omissions, incorrect technical information or unclear requirements) and how clarifications are communicated and documented.

**c. Communicating Contract and Technical Requirements (Critical Item)**

Demonstrate that your company makes certain that current contract and technical requirements are available to supervisory personnel at the job site. Show that a Verification of Documentation Form is signed.

**d. Submit a Complete List of Current and Recently Completed Thermal Spray Projects (previous 12 months) and Work Experience Showing Your Company's Capability to Perform Work at the Level of Certification Sought.**

A complete list can be defined using the following guidelines:

- All prime contracts for public work that involves TSA and related work;
- All public contracts for TSA and related work in which you are the painting subcontractor regardless of contract amount;
- All coating and related work where QP6 is specified as a requirement or where having QP6 designation is part of the contractor qualification/evaluation process.

Required information for each job includes:

- Facility name, address (including zip code), telephone and fax numbers, owner's and prime contractor's representative in charge of your field operations;
- Scope of work performed or to be performed;
- Materials applied and approximate quantities;
- Equipment used for surface preparation and metalizing;
- Types (e.g., thermal spray operators, abrasive blasters, helpers) and number of personnel employed in the field or shop;
- Special safety (e.g., protection from lead, working at heights, working over water) or environmental (e.g., containment) requirements;
- Duration of project (start date, finish date).

**NOTE:** *List should include all jobs under contract to your company regardless of whether all or any portion of the job was subcontracted. Also include work in which you are a subcontractor.*

**4. Maintenance and Repair of Equipment**

Demonstrate that you have a **Preventive Maintenance Program (PM)**, which shows that you perform maintenance and repairs on equipment used for surface preparation and thermal spray application operations according to the equipment manufacturer's recommendations. You must show that you have documentation of the completion of maintenance according to your PM plan.

**C. Quality Control**

**1. Quality Control Program (Critical Item)**

Show that you have a written QC program that complies with the requirements specified in SSPC CS-23.00, AWS C2.23M/C2.23 for steel and AWS C2.20/C2.20M if you are qualifying for the concrete category. You must show during the audit that your company uses qualified personnel and proper inspection and recording procedures.

**2. Company QC Supervisor (Critical Item)**

- a. There is a history of a key employee in the position.
- b. The QC Supervisor shall have at least two years' full-time varied thermal spray experience appropriate for the QC tasks at hand (e.g., inspection, calibration, corrections, corrective re-work).
- c. The QC Supervisor must pass (75%) the SSPC Quiz for the category of certification:
  - i. Steel
  - ii. Concrete as well as the SSPC QCS training program
- d. **NOTE:** *Both QC Manager and TSS Supervisor are requalified every two years by passing the quiz with a minimum score of 75%. The SSPC auditor proctors the TSS exam during the audit.*

**3. Thermal Spray Inspector (Critical Item)**

Inspectors have completed SSPC Thermal Spray Inspector Training or an alternate training approved by the SSPC Program Manager that covers all aspects of inspecting TS applications.

**4. Identifying Nonconforming Work (Critical Item)**

- a. There are procedures for checking for nonconforming work and stopping work if necessary. There is evidence that these procedures are properly utilized.
- b. There is evidence (e.g., NCRs, hold tags) that TS inspectors notify operations supervisors of nonconforming work and identify rework requirements.
- c. QC inspectors routinely record nonconformances and required corrective actions.
- d. There is evidence that rework inspections are performed and/or NCRs or hold tags are removed when QC accepts work.
- e. Deviations from above procedures for specified circumstances (e.g., client request) are clearly controlled and documented. The customer's authorized representative approves contract requirement deviations in writing. Deviations recommended by suppliers are technically justified in writing.

**5. Documentation of Coating Inspection and Filling of Results (Critical Item)**

Demonstrate that company maintains written inspection reports and results of tests performed by QC personnel (Thermal Spray Inspector – TSI) for each

project on a daily basis during surface preparation and TSA operations. Include sample copies of inspection reports completed and signed by your TSIs on projects you have done in the recent past.

Reports shall contain the following at a minimum:

- Pre-Clean
  - Compressed air cleanliness for abrasive blast cleaning;
  - Abrasive cleanliness, type and size;
  - Air temperature;
  - Humidity;
  - Dew point;
  - Surface temperature;
  - Flame cut edges inspection.
- Start-Up (Job Ref. Std.)
  - Degree of cleanliness achieved;
  - Surface profile (depth and type);
  - Time between blast and thermal spray primer application;
  - Wire or powder size and batch numbers;
  - Bed test (5)/Applicator/Shift, when specified.
- Finish
  - Dry film thickness;
  - Adhesion testing;
  - Cut test, when specified;
  - Visual defects;
  - Time between thermal spray primer and sealer and topcoat application.

You must demonstrate that instruments used to conduct inspections and tests reported on your inspection forms have been properly calibrated (see the next item).

**6. Demonstrate that Inspection Equipment and Calibration Standards are Available (Critical Item)**

Demonstrate that inspection equipment (e.g., DFT gauges, profile gauge, ambient conditions measuring equipment and adhesion testers) and calibration standards are available to and used by TSIs on the job site. You must also maintain records of required factory and laboratory calibration and maintenance of inspection equipment as required by contract or manufacturer's recommendations. Show that inspection equipment used is checked for accuracy before use and records are kept of any and all equipment checks.

**7. Hold Point Inspections**



You must have procedures to ensure that each major operation (e.g., pre-cleaning, treatment of flame cut edges, surface preparation, bend test, TSA (primer) application, adhesion test, cut test, seal coat, top coat, cure) is inspected when the facility owner does not require a site-specific inspection plan.

#### D. Safety Procedures and Record Keeping

##### 1. Safety Program and Documentation of Safety Education, Meetings and Other Safety-Related Activity (Critical Item)

You must have a written Safety & Health compliance program and site-specific compliance programs in place that are based on OSHA (or equivalent standards if outside the USA) that are applicable to your operation.

You must show that safety activities (i.e., annual employee safety education/training sessions, monthly (or as required by customer) job site safety and health inspections, weekly toolbox safety meetings along with distribution of safety materials and literature) are routinely performed and documented. You must show evidence that safety performance is part of each field manager's written job description. Ownership or management reviews the Safety & Health program at least annually to evaluate whether the goal of protecting workers at all work sites is being achieved. Your program must be formally reviewed by a safety professional at least once every three years who can attest that all applicable safety and health standards and hazards are addressed in the program. You must show that workers have been made aware of the program. You must show that safety rules are enforced.

##### 2. Pre-Job Safety & Health Hazard Analysis

Demonstrate that your safety officer or designated safety provider conducts a pre-job hazard analysis for each job that results in a hazard control plan for the phases of the job. You must submit documented evidence of such an analysis on your three most recent jobs.

##### 3. Accident Report Procedure

Contractor has a written accident and near miss reporting procedure, which includes actual reports showing how accidents and near misses are investigated. 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. Procedure for Determining Proficiency of Safety and Loss Control Measures Company Uses

Show how your company management monitors results annually. Submit a copy of your three most recent worker compensation Experience

**Modification Ratings (EMRs)** for states/provinces your company works in. Submit evidence of EMR on worker compensation insurance carrier letterhead. Also calculate your company's most recent incidence rates for total cases and lost workday cases as defined by US BLS. Also include copies of your most recent safety audits conducted by your safety officer or outside agencies such as your insurance or bonding company or safety consultant.

**5. Safety Procedures for Specialized Equipment (Critical Item)**

- a. Show that safe operation of equipment is ongoing in your company. Include written **Safe/Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)** for major equipment and demonstrate that they are available at the job site. Provide evidence that employees operating the equipment have been trained to operate it correctly and 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 at least annually.
- c. Show evidence that these procedures incorporate equipment manufacturers' recommendations for safe operation.

**6. Provision and Maintenance of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) (Critical Item)**

- a. How is (PPE) equipment issued and maintained? Demonstrate that PPE issued is appropriate and adequate for hazards encountered on the jobs you've undertaken.
- b. As part of your comprehensive Health & Safety Program, you have a written respiratory protection program based on OSHA regulation 29 CFR 1910.134 or equivalent regulation or standard if outside the USA.
- 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, lifesaving 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 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**

- a. Identify individuals and their training and confirm 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. A first aid and CPR training person issued by the Red Cross or an equivalent organization must be available on each job site. This

requirement is applicable to projects that last two or more days and involve a crew of six or more.

**8. Compliance with Regulations (Critical Item)**

Show that key people in your company, including company owners and executive management, keep records of your company’s noncompliance with federal, state/provincial and local regulations (e.g., Worker Safety & Health, Environmental Compliance, Worker Compensation rules, Wage and Hourly rule) and there is documented evidence that violations/citations are discussed at the upper management level and corrective action is taken to avoid repeat violations.

**9. Sources of Safety Information**

Show that you operate 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, trade publications/clipping services, and AIHA publications and journals. Demonstrate that relevant safety information and materials are available to on-site personnel.

**V. Fee Payment Schedule**

Companies applying for certification must submit the applicable **Administrative Fee** plus **Audit Deposit** to cover anticipated audit expenses with their application. SSPC will withhold your certification until receiving total payment.

**NOTE:** *The fees cover the cost of staff time to review and process your application package, the cost of the on-site evaluation and audit, and the overhead expenses required to operate the Contractor Certification Program.*

*Annual administrative fees are not refundable if a contractor’s certification(s) are suspended or revoked.*

Determine your audit expense from the following:

QP6 <u>Only</u> Fee Schedule				QP6 + Other QP <u>Combined</u> Fee Schedule		
	Sustaining Member	Patron Member	Non Member	Sustaining Member	Patron Member	Non Member
<i>Administrative Fee</i>	\$2,100	\$2,400	\$2,700	\$975	\$1,100	\$1,225
<i>Audit Deposit</i>	\$2,600	\$2,600	\$2,600	\$1,800	\$1,800	\$1,800
<i>Certification Total with no Corrective Action</i>	<b>\$4,700</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>	<b>\$5,300</b>	<b>\$2,775</b>	<b>\$2,900</b>	<b>\$3,025</b>

QP6 <u>Only</u> Additional Fees (As Applicable)				QP6 + Other QP <u>Combined</u> Additional Fees (As Applicable)		
	Sustaining Member	Patron Member	Non Member	Sustaining Member	Patron Member	Non Member
<i>With Corrective Action Verification:</i>	+\$300	+\$550	+\$800	+\$300	+\$550	+\$800
<i>If Outside US/Mex/Canada</i>	+\$1,500	+\$1,500	+\$1,500	+\$1,500	+\$1,500	+\$1,500

**EXAMPLE #1:** *If your company is an SSPC Patron Member applying for initial QP6 Certification only, submit \$4,900 (\$2,400 Administrative Fee + \$2,500 Audit Deposit).*

**EXAMPLE #2:** *If your company is an SSPC Patron Member applying for initial QP6 + QP1 Certification together, submit \$6,800 (\$2,700 Administrative Fee + \$4,100 Audit Deposit).*

SSPC will return non-responsive and inactive applications submittals and fees to the applicant after six months of inactivity when no audit is conducted. SSPC will assess a \$750 USD administrative processing fee that will be deducted from the Administrative Fee and Audit Deposit initially submitted with the application.

For program members who withdraw from the QP program during a certification term, SSPC will retain the entire Administrative Fee submitted at the beginning of the certification period and return any unused Audit Deposit.

You must pay post-audit fees for QP6 deficiency 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 your suspension. If you do not pay the fees after the suspension period, you will be decertified and have to reapply for QP6 Certification. When reapplying, you will have to pay all applicable fees and all past due fees.

## VI. Submittal Procedure

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

1. Type or clearly print all entries on the application form or submit electronically.
2. Be certain all items on the form are answered completely and accurately.
3. Send the original and one copy of the application package to SSPC if you are sending a hardcopy. We suggest you keep a copy on hand for your use at the on-site audit. The auditor will return the submittal to you at the end of the audit. All other materials will be kept by SSPC.
4. Clearly identify the submittal items included with the application. Secure all pages to minimize chances of loss or separation.
5. Determine and send the non-refundable certification fee/deposit using the fee schedule described in **Section VI: Submittal Procedure**. Make check payable to SSPC Painting Contractor Certification Program. Mail the entire application package to:
  - SSPC: The Society for Protective Coatings
  - Attn.: Certification Program Manager – QP6 Program
  - 800 Trumbull Drive
  - Pittsburgh, PA 15205

## VII. Evaluation Process

Evaluation of your company is performed in conformity with *SSPC QP6: Standard Procedure for Evaluating Qualifications of Contractors Who Apply Thermal Spray (Metalizing) for Corrosion Control of Steel and Concrete Structures*.

The application package (e.g., application form, written submittals, certification 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 timeframe has been selected for the office visit, mutually agreed upon and confirmed in writing or verbally by you and the SSPC auditor, a program auditor will visit your office and job site(s) or shop to perform the following.

- Confirm data submitted in the application package.
- Interview key personnel at your headquarters office and job site.
  - NOTE:** *At least one active job site must be observed for the audit to be complete.*
- Observe and rate company organization and operation – including field or shop operations – using the standard program guidelines and rating procedures.
- Examine and rate equipment and facilities.
- Schedule exit interview.

**NOTE:** *As state earlier, the job site visit may take place before or after the office visit and may be unannounced or done on short notice.*

At the conclusion of the audit, the auditor will schedule an exit interview with your supervisory or key management personnel to review the audit and point out items (e.g., deficiencies) that were scored “Less than 2.” If there are any deficiencies, the auditor will fill out a deficiency schedule for your representative to sign at the conclusion of the audit. Your signature does not connote agreement with the results. It only confirms that you have been made aware of the results. Refusal to sign the deficiency schedules results in denial of certification.

**A. Cancellation of Audit Policy**

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 either cancel the audit, request a change in that date or fail to make the job site selected by SSPC or key personnel available for auditing, you will be responsible for any expenses incurred by SSPC as a result of the cancellation.

**B. Critical Item Provision**

The QP6 critical item provision identifies 17 evaluation items that program auditors use to evaluate contractors for certification. SSPC has deemed these 17 critical to the initial and annual certification renewal of a contractor. The provision requires the contractor to score a minimum of “2” (on a scale of 0 to 3) on all 17 critical evaluation items or certification will be withheld.

The PCCP provides a maximum 45-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. That same 45-day period is available to program members unable to achieve the required minimum score on all critical evaluation items during annual on-site maintenance or follow-up evaluations. Contractors who have to submit Corrective Action Plans should consider submitting them sooner than the allotted 45 days in order to speed up the process.

For initial applicants, SSPC will withhold certification until corrections are made, required procedures are put in place a minimum of six production months prior to the follow-up evaluation, and the passing score is achieved during a follow-up on-site evaluation.

For program members unable to achieve the required score during an annual on-site maintenance evaluation, which consists of an evaluation of all 17 critical items, SSPC will provide the member a maximum of 45 days to submit a Corrective Action Plan and request a follow-up evaluation.

If a program member is deficient in no more than two critical items upon completion of the annual maintenance evaluation, SSPC may extend certification

status until the follow-up evaluation is completed, pending acceptance by SSPC of a written Corrective Action Plan. If the program member is deficient in more than two critical items, SSPC will suspend certification status for up to six months pending receipt and acceptance of written corrective actions and required verification through a follow-up audit.

**NOTE:** Refer to **Section IX: Special Provisions** for information regarding joint ventures and auditing.

### C. Critical Evaluation Items

- Procedures for Securing, Evaluating and Complying with Applicable Regulations (**Item A.3.d**)
- Qualifications, Training & Experience of TSSs and TSOs and Blasters, if Applicable (**Item B.1.a**) (**Appendix A**)
- Performance Evaluation of Craft-Workers (**Item B.1.b**)
- Availability of Technical Standards (**Item B.2.b**)
- 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**)
- Quality Control Program (**Item C.1**)
- Quality Control Supervisor (**Items C.2 & C.7**)
- Thermal Spray Inspector (**Item C.3**)
- Identification of Nonconforming Work (**Item C.4**)
- Documentation of Inspection Results (**Item C.5**)
- Availability of Inspection Equipment and Calibration Standards (**Item C.6**)
- Written Corporate Worker Safety and Health and Site-Specific Programs (**Item D.1**)
- Standard Operating Procedures for Major Equipment (**Item D.5**)
- Availability of Personal Protective Equipment (**Item D.6**)
- Maintaining Records of Noncompliance with Regulations and Follow-Up Actions (**Item D.8**)

### D. Determination of Status

At the conclusion of the evaluation process described in **Parts III, VI, and IX**, the SSPC Technical Auditor will report audit findings to the SSPC Certification Program Manager. The SSPC QP Program Administrator (Department Director) will make the final decision regarding your status. Those decisions are either:

1. **Confer Certification:** Your company achieved required scores and has no unresolved disciplinary actions.

2. **Deny Qualification:** Your company has not attained a score adequate to achieve QP1 Certification or has unresolved disciplinary actions. You then have 45 days after written notification of audit results to submit an acceptable Corrective Action Plan to address deficiencies, and any unresolved disciplinary actions and request that SSPC re-evaluate and conduct a follow-up audit(s) as necessary to verify implementation of your Correction Action Plan(s).

#### E. Appeal Procedure

During the audit exit interview, the auditor will document and explain all deficiencies cited during the audit. If you dispute any of the audit results, you may appeal, using the steps of recourse listed below:

1. You must notify the SSPC Corporate Certification Program Manager in writing within 10 working days of the exit interview, specifically identifying the deficiencies you are appealing and substantively explaining why you dispute them – including providing supporting documentation for each deficiency being contested.
2. SSPC will evaluate your written appeal and notify you in writing of the evaluation results within 30 calendar days of the appeal submission receipt by SSPC. SSPC appeal evaluations will result in either acceptance of your written appeal (vacating or reducing an audit deficiency) or denial of the appeal (sustaining the deficiency). For a denial of any appeal, the contractor has the option to accept the SSPC appeal resolution and submit a **Corrective Action Plan (CAP)**, which may or may not require a follow-up audit to verify CAP implementation. Finally, an appeal denial by SSPC could also result in a QP suspension up to one year.
3. The contractor can continue the appeal process by requesting an informal conference in writing and within 10 business days of an appeal denial by SSPC. The informal conference will be held at SSPC headquarters in Pittsburgh for contractor to further explain its position and request a settlement.
4. The final option for the contractor wishing to continue with the appeal is to utilize the existing **Disciplinary Action Criteria (DAC)** Arbitration Panel Procedure.

**NOTE:** *Contractors who do not appeal audit findings can still appeal disciplinary action taken by SSPC as a result of failing an audit. Use procedures 1-4 above to appeal a suspension resulting from a failed audit.*



An annual internal audit will be required at the end of the first and second year of your certification. SSPC will supply an internal audit form that you must complete and forward to SSPC along with the annual maintenance application.

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

Failure to pass the aforementioned annual or unannounced follow-up audits will result in suspension or revocation of your company's certification status. See **Item H: Maintenance Applications** for specific rules governing maintenance of QP6 Certification status in the second and third years.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** *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 your company's certification status at the Program Administrator's discretion.*

## VIII. Maintenance Applications

The SSPC QP6 Certification term is three years. To verify that your operations remain in compliance with certification standards during that period, the program requires that SSPC evaluate your company at least once in each of the second and third years of the term. The evaluation may be announced or unannounced. Additional audits may be performed at SSPC's discretion.

To maintain uninterrupted certification status, you must reapply for certification annually by December 15. You must submit a maintenance application, a signed internal audit report completion statement, list of applicable (e.g., complex industrial/marine structure) work in progress and completed since the last evaluation and evidence of successful completion of your projects, current safety information and maintenance fee by the December 15 due date. The necessary forms and applications can be found on SSPC's website at <http://www.sspc.org/qp-for-contractors>. Follow the appropriate links to the QP6 maintenance application. SSPC will assess a \$500 late application fee for any maintenance applications submitted after December 15. SSPC also reserves the right to reject any maintenance applications submitted after March 31 and require the contractor submitting the late application to reapply as an initial applicant.

SSPC will make every effort to send you a reminder letter approximately 45 days before the December 15 submittal due date as a reminder to reapply. If you fail to reapply when your submittal is due, your company's certification will expire and your company will be decertified. SSPC will send a letter to any contractor who has failed to reapply as a reminder that certification has expired.

**NOTE:** *You are responsible for ensuring that SSPC has your current mailing address, phone and fax numbers, etc. Failure to receive a reminder letter from SSPC does not relieve you of the responsibility to submit your renewal application when due.*

Once you have reapplied, the annual evaluation (complex industrial/marine structure job site(s) and possibly office visit) must take place within the calendar year barring any mitigating circumstances or else your certification will expire.

**NOTE:** *Job records for projects reported in the annual submittal and those for which a job notification is on file are subject to review during a maintenance audit and should be available if the auditor asks for them. It is mandatory to show the auditor an active job site during the annual audit.*

SSPC reserves the right to audit any project being performed by an SSPC QP Certified contractor that involves surface preparation or coating application and cure on an industrial/marine structure. Such projects are eligible for an SSPC audit regardless of whether:

1. The job is “reportable”; or
2. Whether the project requires QP certification; or
3. Whether there’s a formal coating specification for the work.

If you are unsure whether a project you are performing is eligible for an audit, please contact the Program Manager for clarification. If you have active work and have not been audited prior to September 1, you are obligated to inform the Program Manager so the audit can be conducted to avoid a situation where you have no work to show for the annual audit.

Contractors who have no active work face loss of certification, in the absence of mitigating circumstances. Note, too, that a visit to a second job site within a 100-mile radius of the first site visited on the same audit trip is considered one audit for sampling purposes.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** *SSPC reserves the right to suspend contractors who fail two consecutive certification maintenance/annual audits for up to 12 months following failure of the second audit. Corrective action verification audits following a failed audit are not considered maintenance/annual audits. Probable cause audits are considered the equivalent of an annual maintenance audit if the contractor has not yet had its annual audit.*

Contractors who fail the annual maintenance evaluation will be given up to 45 days after notification of audit results to submit a **Corrective Action Plan (CAP)** and request that SSPC re-evaluate and also conduct a follow-up audit. SSPC reserves the right to withhold certification from companies who fail a maintenance or follow-up evaluation until a CAP is submitted and accepted by SSPC.

**NOTE:** *SSPC may opt, in certain cases, to extend the company’s certification status following acceptance of a CAP for a limited period subject to specified conditions.*

Contractors placed on suspension for failing a maintenance audit during their certification term will be formally notified in writing (e.g., certified letter, e-mail) of the suspension.

1. The contractor is given up to 45 days from notification to make corrections and submit an acceptable CAP and be re-audited, if determined by the Program Administrator;
2. The contractor is asked to immediately return original certificates; and
3. The contractor is not to represent itself as a QP6 Certified contractor during the suspension period.

During a suspension period the contractor's name will be removed from SSPC's online searchable database of QP Certified contractors. Contractors will be formally notified in writing when a suspension is lifted. When SSPC reinstates certification status, it will reissue valid certificates and add the contractor's name back to the online searchable database of QP6 Certified contractors.

**NOTE:** *Contractors in the **Random Audit Program (RAP)** are normally exempt from undergoing the mandatory annual audit. However, a contractor in the RAP is subject to selection for an audit at random by SSPC at the Program Manager's or Administrator's discretion.*

## IX. Special Provisions

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

SSPC certified contracting companies 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:

- Change in ownership
- Partnership/joint venture
- Change in executive management (e.g., president, CEO, general manager)
- Declaration of bankruptcy
- Relocation of main or branch business offices or opening of new branch offices

The notification shall include the following:

- Specific details about changes
- Revised organization and responsibility chart
- Effective dates of change
- Names of officers of company
- Any change in tax ID number, federal or state

**NOTE:** *If a company changes federal or state tax ID 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 (e.g., "John R. Doe Co., Inc." to "J.R. Doe, Inc." incorporated in the same state with the same tax ID numbers), a simple transfer of certification may be authorized.*

SSPC will subsequently schedule a special audit at the contracting company's expense within 60 days of notification. SSPC will also schedule another audit at

the contracting company's expense within 6 months after the special (first) audit to verify that the company is in fact maintaining the standards of the program. If the company does not pass the six-month audit, certification will be rescinded.

No transfer of certification status to a new company will be approved until the company provides SSPC with the information and passes the special (first) audit.

Failure to notify the program administrator of any major changes within the required time period may result in an automatic six-month suspension of the certification.

A company that has changed its name must certify in writing that it will assume responsibility for any disciplinary actions or violations of federal, state and local regulations. In addition, any violations of the SSPC PCCP program (e.g., written complaints from owners or critical faults) by the company under its original name will be considered as part of the record of the company under its new name.

A company may request that SSPC waive the requirement for a special (first) audit before approving the transfer. SSPC will evaluate each request and may waive the requirement at its own discretion.

#### **B. Suspension of Certification for Non-Payment**

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 suspend the contractor's QP6 if it fails to pay all outstanding balances within three business days of the final (second) invoice. SSPC will also withhold issuing certification for initial and annual applicants who pass the evaluation until all fees are paid. Finally, if the contractor chooses to contest or appeal any outstanding balance, the appeal must be in writing and submitted to the Certification Manager within five business days of the final (second) invoice date. Failure to submit a timely written appeal of an outstanding invoice will also result in a six-month suspension mentioned.

#### **C. Formal Complaint Procedure**

Any authorized representative of an owner who hires a QP6 Certified painting contractor could file a formal complaint against the company if the representative has information that the contracting company does not practice QP6 Certification procedures. The contractor may respond to the complaint by submitting information supporting its position to SSPC.

SSPC is committed to a fair and transparent Complaints and Appeals process regarding our certifications. If you would like to learn more about this process, or

to communicate an issue to our Certification Body please contact [certification@sspc.org](mailto:certification@sspc.org) and describe your issue and/or request a phone call back. We will respond within two business days to your email communication. You may also call us at 877-281-7772 to speak to someone about your issue.

#### D. Subcontracting Work

SSPC certified contracts are responsible for the actions of subcontractors to ensure they perform in accordance with PCCP requirements. Contracted tasks include, but are not limited to, environmental monitoring and testing; personnel monitoring; medical surveillance; cleaning, surface preparation and painting; erecting and moving containment and scaffolding; and equipment maintenance.

The contractor will control its subcontracting process to ensure that its subcontractors conform to PCCP requirements. The contractor shall evaluate and select subcontractors based on their ability to provide products/service in accordance with the contract and PCCP requirements.

Purchasing documents sent to the subcontractor shall specify information describing the product or service being purchased. The contractor shall ensure that specified requirements are adequately defined in the purchasing documents prior to their release to subcontractors. Subcontractors must also be notified by you, the certified contractor, that SSPC holds the right to audit their surface preparation and coating application operations.

In all circumstances, SSPC certified contractors should hire only SSPC certified subcontractors for surface preparation and coating application work. SSPC certified contractors must hire SSPC certified contractors as required by the facility owner.

SSPC realizes that there are circumstances when you are hired because of your credentials as an SSPC certified contractor and yet are required to hire painting subcontractors – as part of your contract – that may not be certified (e.g., minority or set aside contracts). In cases when you do hire non-certified subcontractors to fulfill a contract obligation that cannot practically or reasonably be met by the contractor or other PCCP certified subcontractor, you will need a written waiver of the QP requirement for the subcontractor from the facility owner or contract administrator. Regardless of the subcontractor's certification status, you are still responsible for the actions of those subcontractors to ensure they perform in accordance with your QP quality programs.

All subcontractors hired by SSPC certified contractors must be formally approved in writing by the facility owner or its official representative. Failure to comply will result in issuance of a severe critical fault under the DAC.

If a certified contractor's job site is audited and one or more of the painting subcontractors performing surface preparation and coating application work at that job site are not in compliance with QP requirements, SSPC will issue the certified contractor a warning for violations of the PCCP Subcontracting Special Provision. A second incident will result in an automatic 12-month suspension from the certification program.

SSPC certified contractors who hire non-certified contractors even though the facility owner, general contractor or specifying engineer specifically call out in their contract or general notice to contractors that all cleaning and painting subcontractors must be SSPC certified will be subject to disciplinary action (e.g., deliberate violation of specification requirements – a severe violation resulting in suspension) under the **Disciplinary Action Criteria (DAC)**.

If a certified contractor utilizes another contractor's workers (applicators, blasters, helpers, tenders, quality control inspectors, competent persons, etc.) and these workers are paid by another entity (regardless of whether they are under your direct supervision), the workers are considered to be subcontracted from the other entity. If the contract calls for a QP contractor, the other entity must also be certified or it is considered a violation of the DAC.

If a certified contractor is borrowing, leasing, renting, etc. workers, and those workers are on the certified contractor's payroll and under the certified contractor's direct supervision, the workers are considered employees of the certified company.

Complaints concerning SSPC certified contractors allegedly violating subcontracting practices described above will be investigated by SSPC and may result in an unscheduled audit of job records and/or job site.

#### E. **Joint Ventures**

When SSPC audits a project being done by one or more QP certified companies as a **Joint Venture (JV)**, the audit counts as an audit for all the QP certified companies involved in the JV. That is, if the audit is successful, all the JV QP companies audited share in the success. If the audit is not successful, the audit is unsuccessful for all QP companies involved. In addition, SSPC reserves the right to audit a non-JV project being done by one or more of the joint venture contractors.

#### F. **Reporting Work and Citation History**

Contractors are responsible for the accuracy and completeness of reporting of regulatory citation history information submitted to SSPC when completing a

certification application. Failure to accurately report this information on the application will delay the application or result in a disciplinary action or if the company's already certified, will result in suspension of the company's certification.

#### G. **Administrative Suspension & Change of Name**

Change of company name, ownership or structure does not void a suspension issued by SSPC. Any company that is suspended for failing to meet QP audit standards, SSPC administrative policy or any other policy related to QP certification is restricted from reapplying for certification as a newly formed, merged or renamed company. Recertification in any form is prohibited for the stated duration of the suspension. Once the suspension period has lapsed, any suspension history and records will be transferred to the new business.

Any representative of the management, including but not limited to an officer, director, superintendent, quality control supervisor, safety director, general manager or stockholder, or any person who exercises directly or indirectly – including through an intermediary person – any degree of ownership, management or control of the suspended contracting company, who forms or purchases a new company or who exercises any management or control of a new, existing or purchased company, or who exercises any degree of ownership of a new, existing or purchased company renders the new, existing or purchased company ineligible for certification while any suspension of the company the person was associated with while said suspension is in effect. The intent is to prevent management or other key individuals associated with the suspended company from forming or purchasing a new company or exercising any control over an existing affiliated company – such as through an intermediary person – to avoid the consequences of a PCCP suspension.

A suspended contractor may reenter the program when the suspension period has lapsed and the conditions for reinstatement have been met. A newly formed, merged or renamed company must submit applications and follow all procedures for QP certification.

**NOTE:** *For purposes of this document, affiliated company is defined as, "A company, corporation, partnership, joint venture or other business entity operating under a different name than the certified company, which performs surface preparation or coating application or administrative and other support functions for the certified company; and in which an officer, director, owner, partner or stockholder of the certified company, a previously certified company disciplined by SSPC or the certified company itself exercises directly or indirectly – such as through an intermediary person – any significant degree of ownership, management or control."*

## H. Review of Personnel Records During SSPC Certification Audits

It is important that you make available to the SSPC auditor any personnel information that is needed to confirm compliance with applicable SSPC certification requirements. Such information includes but may not be limited to:

- a. Medical surveillance records (e.g., blood lead test results, zpp test results) of blasters, painters, helpers, foreman, QC personnel and others who work on your job sites and who may be exposed to hazardous metals or materials;
- b. Clearances to wear respirators;
- c. Respirator fit tests;
- d. Hearing test results;
- e. Training records, including exam results and course curriculums; and
- f. Hazard communication (right to know) training records.

Many companies maintain spreadsheets of such information. It is important on an audit to have the back-up information (e.g., certification cards, course exams, medical exam summaries) available so the auditor can verify the information recorded on spreadsheets or other types of summaries.

Due to increased privacy concerns under **HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996)**, it may be necessary to obtain release forms from those persons who do coatings-related work for your company just to make sure you're covered. HIPAA provides federal protection against the misuse of individually identifiable healthcare information.

However, HIPAA should not be used as a shield when a legitimate requester such as an SSPC auditor requests data. This interpretation is based on a recent letter issued by OSHA (Standard Interpretation Letter dated August 18, 2004) that explains to contractors that they do not have to remove names from their OSHA 300 Injury and Illnesses Log in order to comply with HIPAA.

SSPC assures each contractor who is audited by SSPC that the SSPC auditor or Program Administrator will only ask to review personnel information that is required to confirm compliance with the QP1, QP2, QP3, QP6 and other QP standard audit requirements. The SSPC auditor will not ask to see any personal medical exam results. The SSPC auditor will treat any personnel information reviewed as confidential and will ask to see it only for the purpose of confirming compliance with QP standards.

Failure to make available personnel information to SSPC so SSPC can determine compliance with contractor certification requirements will result in issuance of deficiencies, which could lead to suspension or loss of certification status.



## X. Definitions and Explanations

### A. Definitions

**Auditor:** The SSPC-designated program auditor who has completed a PCCP-approved training program and who is responsible for reviewing applicant submittals, conducting the on-site evaluation and reporting results to SSPC.

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

**Certification Categories:** Three divisions in which commonly recognized classes of structures are grouped. These are Simple Structures, Complex Structures, Linings and Critical Underwater Service.

**Complex Structures:** Complex structures are those constructed of steel or concrete such as metal producing and rolling mills, bridges and processing facilities, including chemical and petrochemical processing plants, pulp and paper mills, powerplants and substations, and food and beverage plants and terminals.

**Concrete Qualification Category:** The QP6 concrete category is for qualification of a thermal spray contractor determining acceptability of surface preparation of existing concrete followed by thermal spray application in order to provide cathodic protection of existing steel reinforced concrete in accordance with AWS C2.20/C2.20M.

**Critical Items:** Selected evaluation items used by auditors in assessing an applicant that are considered critical to the certification 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 critical items in the program to pass the evaluation.

**Evaluation Items:** Specific facts or evidence an evaluator looks for 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, Safety.

**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 shows the auditor what the

contractor must provide or do in order to achieve a score of “2” (on a rating scale of 0 to 3).

**Owner:** The person, company or organization that owns the item or structure to be metalized.

**Procedure:** The sequence of steps taken to carry out a particular course of action.

**Qualification:** The procedure by which written assurance is given that an applicant conforms to the prescribed set of conditions or requirements of this standard procedure.

**Rating:** The method of measuring a contractor’s performance during the certification 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 overall rating.

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

**Steel Qualification Category:** The QP6 steel category is for qualification of a thermal spray contractor (shop or field) performing acceptance of surface preparation of new and existing steel structures followed by thermal spray application in accordance with SSPC CS23.00/AWS C2.23M/C2:23/NACE No. 12.

**Thermal Spray Contractor:** A company that provides thermally-sprayed coating application services (surface preparation evaluation and acceptance through thermal spray application, sealing and topcoating) in a shop facility or in the field.

**Thermal Spray Inspector (TSI):** A person who has training and experience to conduct inspections in accordance with SSPC-CS 23.00/AWS 2.23M/C2.:23/NACE No. 12 and the applicable inspections of ASTM D 3276.

**Thermal Spray Operator (TSO):** A worker who has been qualified in general accordance with AWS C2.16/C2.16M:2000 to apply thermal spray coatings. A signed and dated certificate indicating the type of equipment, type of thermal spray coating and type of thermal spray application performed documents this qualification.

**Thermal Spray Supervisor (TSS):** The applicant's employee who has responsibility and authority to ensure that thermal spray applications are applied to meet project specifications. This employee will be involved in material and equipment decisions and be on-site during all quality hold points, surface preparation acceptance and all thermal spray application.

**Thermal Spraying (Metalizing):** A process for applying metallic feedstock or metallic powder. The material is melted and sprayed onto the substrate to produce a uniform coating.

**Thermal Spray Supervisor Qualification (TSS Qualification):** A qualification required by SSPC QP6 for the TSS. The TSS Qualification shall be for the steel category, the concrete category or both steel and concrete categories.

## B. Scoring

The SSPC auditor rates your company 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 than are evaluated on maintenance, spot-check or corrective action follow-up audits.*

Below are the ratings and what they mean.

**The rating of "1"** is a major CAR or deficiency, and indicates:

- 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 time of six consecutive production months, or it has been in place sporadically (e.g., less than 2/3 implemented based on sampling).

**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.***

**The rating of “2”** is a minor CAR or deficiency, and 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 non-conformance no more than 1/3 of the time based on sampling, lack of practice or documentation due to personnel turnover, non-performance by field personnel, personal hardship and natural disaster.

**The rating of “3”** indicates that a contractor – based on audit sampling – consistently adheres to specific training and written program requirements as well as required practices and procedures that 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.”

A **Corrective Action Report (CAR)**, using the SSPC automated CAP form found on the SSPC website at <http://www.sspc.org/qp-cap> is required for each rating of “1” (major deficiency) 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 to SSPC. With the exception of initial audits and maintenance or follow-up audits where multiple CARs are written (e.g., four to five), remedial action for a minor CAR requires that the auditor confirm remediation at the next audit. Minor CARs that are not remedied by the contractor by the next audit turn into a major CAR or deficiency.

Initial Audits require Corrective Action Report submission for all deficiencies cited – both major and minor.

**Concerns:** Occasionally, the auditor will note a “Concern” on an audit report. A Concern is not a rating – it is simply a statement for the contractor to consider for its own business purposes. No response is required for a Concern.

## XI. Appendix A

### Personnel Qualifications

#### Thermal Spray Supervisor (TSS)

- a. **TSS, Steel Category:** The TSS shall demonstrate knowledge of thermal spraying of steel components and/or complex structures in accordance with SSPC 23.00, SSPC QP1 and SSPC QP6.

- b. **TSS, Concrete Category:** The TSS shall demonstrate knowledge of thermal spraying of concrete in accordance with SSPC QP8 and AWS C2.20/C2.20M for concrete.

**Experience:**

- a. The TSS steel category experience requirements shall include documented evidence of at least two years satisfactory performance in managing and supervising abrasive blast cleaning projects of steel surfaces in conformance with the requirements of SSPC SP5 and SSPC SP10. Alternately, the supervisor shall have one year of experience and successful completion of the SSPC C7 Fundamentals of Dry Abrasive Blast Cleaning training and qualifications program or alternate program approved by the SSPC Program Manager.
- b. The TSS concrete category experience requirements shall include at least one year of satisfactory performance in managing and supervising abrasive blast cleaning projects of concrete surfaces.

**Training:** The TSS shall participate in an SSPC Thermal Spray Training Course or equivalent or provide documentation of at least two years of experience in thermal spray application.

- a. **Steel Category:** The training course shall consist of 16 hours of theoretical and quality-related training in general accordance with the requirements of SSPC CS 23.00/AWS 2.23M/C2:23/NACE No. 12.
- b. **Concrete Category:** The training course shall consist of 16 hours of theoretical and quality-related training in general accordance with the requirements of AWS C2.20/C2.20M.
- c. **Both Categories:** The TSS shall provide documentation by the thermal spray equipment supplier as having participated and exhibited knowledge (theoretical and practical) in the use of specific thermal spray equipment to be used on the thermal spray contractor's project. This practical training shall be at least eight hours and include the use of quality control instruments.
  - i. Alternately, the TSS with two years of documented experience in thermal spray application shall be qualified on specific equipment through equipment manufacturer training or through a separate formally documented training procedure (at least eight hours).

**Additional Equipment:** The TSS shall be qualified for additional pieces of thermal spray application equipment through equipment manufacturer training or through a formal training procedure (at least eight hours).

Certification of satisfactory completion of training is required for each specific piece of thermal spray application equipment.

**Qualification:**

- a. The TSS shall be qualified under the contractor's program as a TSO.
- b. Steel Category: Specific testing requirements for the TSS for steel category include the following from AWS C2.16/C2.16M:
  - i. TSOQT No. JK-1: Job Knowledge
  - ii. TSOQT No. AS-1: Arc Spraying: Zn, Al, and Their Alloys for Corrosion Protection
  - iii. TSOQT No. FS-1: Flame Spraying: Zn, Al, and Their Alloys for Corrosion Protection
  - iv. Annex A: Safety Information for Thermal Spraying
  - v. The TSS shall be tested and requalified every two years per the requirements of Section 8 of AWS C2.16/C2.16M and the job requirements of SSPC CS 23.00/AWS C2.23M/C2:23/NACE No. 12. The test shall be in general accordance with the provisions of AWS C2.16/C2.16M and shall be administered by SSPC or by an independent agency approved by SSPC. The applicant shall provide evidence of TSS testing (closed book) with a minimum passing score of 75%.
- c. Specific testing requirements for the TSS for concrete category include:
  - i. TSOQT No. JK-1: Job Knowledge
  - ii. TSOQT No. A&FS-1: Arc and Flame Spraying: Zinc on Reinforced Concrete
  - iii. Annex A: Safety Information for Thermal Spraying
  - iv. The TSS shall be tested and requalified every two years per the requirements of Section 12 of AWS C2.16/C2.16M and the job requirements of AWS C2.20/C2.20M. The test shall be in general accordance with the provisions of AWS C2.16/C2.16M and shall be administered by SSPC or by an independent agency approved by SSPC. The applicant shall provide evidence of TSS testing (closed book) with a minimum passing score of 75%.

**Thermal Spray Operator (TSO):** The TS contractor shall have a program for training, qualifying and certifying individual thermal spray operators in general accordance with ASW C2.16/C2.16M or equivalent.

**Thermal Spray Inspector:** See Item C.3.