



SSPC QP9 APPLICATION, INSTRUCTIONS, AND PROGRAM RULES

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Application Form, Instructions and Program Rules / SSPC QP9

I. Introduction

SSPC developed the **Commercial Painting Contractor Certification Program (QP9)** to verify the capabilities of contractors performing surface preparation and architectural coating application on commercial and institutional buildings and their interiors. The program's objective is to determine if a commercial painting contractor has the personnel, organization, qualifications, procedures, knowledge and capability to produce quality surface preparation and coating application of architectural paints in the commercial market.

Commercial and institutional buildings encompass a wide range of building types and interior and exterior configurations. Architectural coatings and paints are normally applied for aesthetics, protection or signage. Examples of commercial buildings include but are not limited to retail stores, shopping centers and malls, office buildings and office areas in industrial structures, schools, libraries, buildings on a military base, apartment or condominium buildings, public housing, warehouses, distribution facilities, medical and dental offices, hospitals, sports facilities and recreation areas, airport terminals and hangars, bus and rail stations and so forth.

Please note that the SSPC QP9 certification process does not involve inspection of the contractor's painting work or training of its personnel. Nor does it cover industrial painting. Field and shop painting of steel and concrete industrial structures is covered under SSPC QP 1, QP 3 and QP8. 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 building owners, general contractors, developers and architects in their evaluation of the primary technical capabilities of commercial painting contractors. While SSPC certification confirms a company's capability to meet the requirements of SSPC QP9, owners, specifiers and general contractors should also choose to assess the painting contractor's financial and operational capability to meet project-specific requirements as well as obtain references directly from the contractor's previous clients regarding past performance on similar jobs.

This package contains information and materials needed to apply for SSPC QP9 Certification. 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>. Contractors who desire program information but who do not have access to the internet can also contact SSPC staff directly for copies of any program-related documents. Contact the SSPC Certification Specialist at 1-877-281-7772 at extension 2209, or the Certification Program Manager at extension 2235, or by e-mail at certification@sspc.org.

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.

Initial Application Instructions

Filling Out the Application

Fill out the application form in the beginning of this document and be sure the application is signed with proper signatures and include the completed application form with the submittal items described in Section IV.

Compiling the Required Items as Listed in the Application

The submittal items are listed in detail and have been numbered and itemized for clarity. If you are submitting a hardcopy submittal, compiling the information in a three-ring binder is required to keep all material in order. Provide each item (documents) as listed in the application and “tab” and “label” each item as it is referenced in the application. The practice of organizing your application and submittals for easier review will save time during the initial review process. Digital electronic submissions are encouraged in lieu of submitting a hardcopy in binders.

After the initial review, if any of the items (documents) are missing, SSPC will notify you and put the review on hold until the missing items are provided, which is why it is important to reference the submittal items so that both you and SSPC can confirm that all the necessary information is included.

Submitting the Application

If you submit a hardcopy, you must provide SSPC with two copies for review. One copy is kept at the SSPC headquarters office and the other is provided to the auditor assigned to your audit. SSPC suggests that you keep a third copy to reference during your audit.

If you submit electronic digital files, only one copy is necessary.

Audit Fees

Must be provided to SSPC when submitting the application for review. SSPC accepts checks and credit cards. Credit card payments can be taken over the phone. SSPC does not accept cash. Applications cannot be processed until appropriate fees are paid.

After the Application and Submittal Package is Reviewed by SSPC

Once the initial application and submittal review is complete and your application has been accepted, it is assigned to an SSPC auditor. The auditor will contact you to schedule an office audit and an audit at one or more active job sites where architectural painting work under contract to your company can be observed.

II. General Program Procedures

The SSPC QP 9 Certification process contains this sequence of procedures that you must follow:

- A. The complete 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 administrative fee and the required audit deposit.
- D. SSPC staff will review your application and submittals within 10 working days after receipt. If everything is in order, SSPC will work with you to schedule the on-site audit. If not, SSPC will indicate what must be done or what additional information is required to complete the submittal.
 - a. The initial job site visit(s) will most likely be announced and may be performed at job sites selected by SSPC.
- E. An SSPC program auditor will conduct the evaluation at one or more active commercial painting job sites to verify conformance with QP9 requirements. The initial audit usually takes two to three days to complete and always includes a visit to your offices and one or more active job sites that are representative of work that your company performs and where you can demonstrate your company's capability.
 - a. The auditor will review randomly selected project files on projects listed in your submittal or other projects in your files. These files as well as management and production personnel familiar with those projects must be available during the audit for it to be completed.
 - b. At the end of the audit, the auditor will schedule an exit interview for the purpose of advising you of any deficiencies, corrective actions or concerns that will be cited as a result of the audit. If you have additional information to counter a finding before the audit is concluded, this is the time to present it to the auditor for reconsideration.
- F. If your company has a qualifying score, SSPC will certify it for a three-year period subject to its ability to maintain program standards. Your company's ability to maintain certification standards during the three-year certification term is confirmed through:
 - a. Annual announced and unannounced audits that your company must undergo at least once in each of the three years of the certification term;
 - b. Your company's ability to adhere to the program's administrative rules; and
 - c. Avoidance of disciplinary actions as described in the **Disciplinary Action Criteria (DAC)**.

The certification lapses after three years.

- G. 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 (CAP)** to correct deficiencies, change system procedures and request a follow-up audit for verification of the corrective action. You risk loss of certification if you do not submit acceptable corrective actions within 45 days.
- H. The program provides for an appeal procedure should you contest audit findings after the audit is concluded or contest SSPC’s decision to not award QP9 certification. File all appeals in writing with the SSPC certification program manager within 10 business days of formal notification of audit results at the exit interview. File other appeals within 10 business days of notice.

III. Application Form

QP9 Application Form for the SSPC Architectural Painting Contractor Certification Program

INSTRUCTIONS: *The application form below is used to provide information that will aid in evaluating and rating your company. To avoid delays in the evaluation process, you must answer all questions accurately and truthfully. Information must be either typed or clearly printed. Please send SSPC a printed hardcopy or digital copy of your completed application and all submittals with the correct non-refundable fees.*

1. Contact Information

Company Name: _____

Principal Officer/Title: _____

Company Headquarters Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Website (if applicable): _____

Telephone Number: _____ Fax Number: _____

Federal ID Number / EIN: _____

(Enclose a copy of federal ID/EIN notification from the IRS or equivalent form for non-USA-based contractors)

2. Branch / Division Office Address

If more than one, please submit a list of branch / division offices with the information requested in 1A below or in a separate attachment.

Company Division Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Website (if applicable): _____

Telephone Number: _____ Fax Number: _____

Federal ID Number / EIN: _____

(Enclose a copy of federal ID/EIN notification from the IRS or equivalent form for non-USA-based contractors)

3. List of Company's Current Owners (If Not Publicly Traded):

4. Ownership:

Private Ownership Sole Proprietorship Partnership
 Corporation Publicly Traded Stock Ownership Other

5. Years Company Has Performed Commercial Painting Under Name Listed in Question #1:

If less than three years, list previous names below and reasons for name change. Also attach supporting documentation.

Previous Name: _____

From: _____ To: _____

Previous Name: _____

From: _____ To: _____

6. Within the past 18 months, has your company undergone – or is it planning to undergo – any significant changes such as 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: Special Provisions, Part A: Major Changes in a Company's Organization.***

7. Field Audit of an Active Job Site:

The certification program requires that the auditor conduct a field visit to one or more active commercial painting job sites. List location of jobs in progress where job site audits can be conducted, and please note any restrictions such as special safety requirements, access requirements, facial hair, security clearances, etc.

Job Site (A): _____

Restrictions: _____

Name, title, phone number (include cell phone) of key contact person:

Days and time of day crews are on-site: _____

Job Site (B): _____

Restrictions: _____

Name, title, phone number (include cell phone) of key contact person:

Days and time of day crews are on-site: _____

Job Site (C): _____

Restrictions: _____

Name, title, phone number (include cell phone) of key contact person:

Days and time of day crews are on-site: _____

8. Current Experience Modification Rate (EMR) interstate and intrastate for state/province of domicile and principal state/provinces of operation.

Provide documentation of EMR on your insurance company and state/provincial workmen's compensation bureau (board) letterhead. Submit a detailed explanation for any EMR above 1.00. If self-insured, provide a listing of losses suffered in the previous full calendar year.

9. Attach copies of any federal or 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 commercial 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.

10. Has your company or any of its current or former personnel been accused/charged/alleged by a local, state or federal court to be involved in any of the following practices in the past 36 months?

1. Fraud;
2. Alteration of test results or reports;
3. Criminal conviction;
4. Misrepresentation of information;
5. Illegal business practices; or
6. Illegal activities related to any of your company's operations

Refer to the **Disciplinary Action Criteria (DAC)** at <http://www.sspc.org/qp-dac-violations/>.

Yes No
If yes, please attach explanation.

11. 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 attach explanation.

12. 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 attach explanation.

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.*

13. 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/disbarment and the name of the entity disqualifying your company.

- 14. Attach a copy of the most recent (12 months) OSHA accident and illness forms (OSHA Forms 300 and 300A if applicable).**
- 15. Please submit two hardcopies or one digital copy of your corporate Health and Safety Plan.**
- 16. If your company is ISO 9001 Certified or has another third-party Quality Management System accreditation, please describe below or in a separate attachment and attach relevant qualification certificates.**

- 17. By my initialing and signature below, I acknowledge that I have read and understand:**

Initial: _____ The QP9 Certification Program Application Form, Instructions and Program Rules

Initial: _____ The QP9 procedure set forth therein and QP9 Standard

Initial: _____ The Disciplinary Action Criteria

NOTE: Forms can be found at SSPC's website at www.sspc.org

As a principal officer of the painting contractor, I attest that the company agrees to abide by and be bound by rules, regulations and procedures set forth therein. The above must be initialed 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 or failure to answer all questions truthfully will 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 affirmed critical faults as defined in the DAC, SSPC reserves the right to hold your application for the length of time that is equivalent to the appropriate penalty. If your company has critical faults as defined in the DAC that would fall under “warning or probation,” you are placed on warning or probation 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 has established specific criteria organized into four business areas outlined below:

1. Management Procedures

Measures utilized by your company to organize, coordinate and otherwise manage the various activities required to prepare surfaces and apply architectural paint and coatings in accordance with the owner and the manufacturer’s requirements.

2. Technical Capabilities

Resources maintained by your company to properly interpret and execute job specifications and requirements.

3. Job Quality Control

Procedures implemented and maintained by your company to verify that all stages of work are performed in accordance with contract documents and specifications and internal quality procedures.

4. Safety, Health and Environmental Compliance

Practices and procedures used by your company to see that safe operations and environmental compliance are maintained.

Each of these four areas contains several subcategories focusing on your company’s policies, personnel, procedures and resources. **All items must be described in writing with the initial application.** They must be typed on separate sheets of paper and clearly identified in the submittal. Documents such as charts or file documents, which already exist, must be submitted and identified in the same manner. They should be organized in the order of the evaluation items listed in **Section IV: Evaluation Checklist** to avoid delays processing your application.

The auditor will verify and evaluate 34 evaluation items during the on-site 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, foreman logs, equipment and

maintenance records. Some information will be presented verbally. The auditor may also evaluate DAC-related items as directed by the program administrator or certification program manager.

Section IV: Evaluation Checklist lists and describes the 34 required items of information. To confer certification, a score of “3” is required on all 19 critical items.

NOTE: *Contractors applying for SSPC QP9 certification must demonstrate a successful history of commercial painting. Once certified, the contractor is expected to consistently apply applicable certification procedures and practices year-round for all commercial painting jobs, with exceptions noted in writing by a customer.*

IV. Evaluation Checklist

This is a list of all items of required information for QP9 certification. Following each item is a statement telling you whether it is a critical item. Documentation explaining each item – **including critical items** – must be submitted with your initial application. To find out what your company must do to meet the requirements for each QP9 evaluation item, carefully review the AP9 audit checklist before you prepare your submittal package. You can find the current QP9 audit checklist on the SSPC website at <http://www.sspc.org/qp-audit-checklists>.

All non-public information submitted is treated as confidential.

A. Management Procedures

1. Mission Statement
2. Procedures for Disseminating Company Policies within the Organization
3. Organization Chart
4. Job Descriptions of Key Personnel

B. Administrative

5. Financial Record Keeping
6. Legal Viability Documentation
7. Procedures for Reviewing Specifications and Other Bidding Documentation
8. Procedures for Complying with Regulations (**CRITICAL ITEM**)
9. Selection of Subcontractors
10. Regulatory Citations and Disposition (**CRITICAL ITEM**)

C. Technical Capabilities

11. Craft-Worker Assessments (**CRITICAL ITEM**)
12. Industry Group Affiliations
13. Technical Standards Library (**CRITICAL ITEM**)
14. Document Control Procedures (**CRITICAL ITEM**)
15. Procedures for Clarifying Ambiguous Specifications (**CRITICAL ITEM**)

- 16. Communicating Contract and Technical Requirements (**CRITICAL ITEM**)
- 17. Company's Work Experience
- 18. Maintenance and Repair of Equipment
- 19. Storage Facilities (**CRITICAL ITEM**)

D. Job Quality Procedures

- 20. Process Control Procedures (**CRITICAL ITEM**)
- 21. Personnel Qualifications / QC Supervisor (**CRITICAL ITEM**)
- 22. Paint Inspectors (**CRITICAL ITEM**)
- 23. Safety Managers
- 24. Authority of QC Personnel (**CRITICAL ITEM**)
- 25. Corrective Action Program: Identifying Nonconforming Work – Performing Rework and Verifying that Rework is Conforming (**CRITICAL ITEM**)
- 26. Documentation of Paint Inspection (**CRITICAL ITEM**)
- 27. Calibration Standards – Checking Accuracy of Inspection Instruments (**CRITICAL ITEM**)

28. Preventive Action Program (PA)

E. Environmental Health and Safety

- 29. Safety Program and Documentation of Safety Education, Meetings and Other Safety-Related Activity (**CRITICAL ITEM**)
- 30. Accident Reporting and First Aid Training
- 31. Monitoring Safety and Loss Control
- 32. SOPs for Major Equipment (**CRITICAL ITEM**)
- 33. Personal Protective Equipment and Respiratory Protection (**CRITICAL ITEM**)
- 34. Environmental Compliance (**CRITICAL ITEM**)

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:

QP9 Fee Schedule

	Sustaining Member	Patron Member	Non Member
<i>Administrative Fee</i>	\$2,100	\$2,400	\$2,700
<i>Audit Deposit</i>	\$2,600	\$2,600	\$2,600
<i>Certification Total with no Corrective Action</i>	\$4,700	\$5,000	\$5,300

QP9 Additional Fees, As Applicable			
	Sustaining Member	Patron Member	Non Member
<i>With Corrective Action Verification:</i>	+\$300	+\$550	+\$800
<i>If Outside US/Mexico:</i>	+\$1,500	+\$1,500	+\$1,500

EXAMPLE: *If your company is an SSPC Patron Member applying for initial QP9 Certification, submit \$5,000 (\$2,400 Administrative Fee + \$2,600 Audit Deposit).*

SSPC will return non-responsive and inactive applications submittals and fees to the applicant after six months of inactivity when no audit was 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 QP9 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 QP9 Certification. When reapplying, you will have to pay all applicable fees and all past due fees.

NOTE: *Maintenance applications are due December 15. SSPC will assess a \$500 late fee for maintenance applications received by SSPC between December 16 and March 31.*

VI. Submittal Procedure

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

1. Type or clearly print all entries on the application form.
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. Keep a copy on hand for your use at the on-site audit. Only send one copy if submitting in digital format.
4. Clearly identify the submittal items included with the application. Secure all pages to minimize chances of loss or separation. Organize submittal items in the order listed in **Section IV: Evaluation Checklist**.
5. Determine and send the non-refundable administrative fee and audit deposit using the fee schedule described in **Section V: Fee Payment Schedule**. Make check payable to SSPC Painting Contractor Certification Program.
6. Mail the entire application package to:
SSPC: The Society for Protective Coatings
Attn.: Certification Program Manager
800 Trumbull Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15205

If submitting electronically, e-mail application and submittals to certification@sspc.org. Address the cover e-mail to the SSPC certification program manager.

VII. Evaluation Process

SSPC performs the evaluation of your company based on the current version of *SSPC QP9: Standard Procedure for Evaluating the Qualifications of Commercial Painting and Coating Contractors* and the QP9 audit evaluation checklist already mentioned in **Section IV: Evaluation Checklist**.

Upon acceptance of the application and submittals by SSPC, the application package is forwarded to the SSPC auditor to schedule and conduct the initial audit.

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, the auditor will visit your office and job site(s) to perform the following:

- Confirm data submitted in the application package;
- Interview key supervisory personnel;
- **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 operations, using the standard program guidelines and rating procedures;
- Examine and rate equipment and facilities; and
- Schedule an exit interview.

As stated 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 site visit, the auditor will schedule an exit interview with your supervisory or management personnel to review the audit and point out items (i.e., major deficiencies) that were scored “less than 2” and items scored “2” (minor deficiencies). If there are any deficiencies or corrective actions, the auditor will fill out a deficiency schedule for your representative to sign at the conclusion of the audit. Your representative’s signature does not connote agreement with the results. It only confirms that you have been made aware of the results at the exit interview. Refusal to sign the deficiency schedule results in denial of certification.

If you choose to contest the audit findings, you must notify the SSPC corporate certification specialist in writing within 10 working days after the exit interview. It is your responsibility to confirm with the SSPC corporate certification specialist that SSPC has received your notice contesting any audit findings.

A. Cancellation of Audit Policy

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

B. Critical Item Provision

The QP9 critical item provision identifies 19 of the 34 total evaluation items that program auditors use to evaluate contractors for certification. SSPC has deemed these 19 critical to the annual certification maintenance of a contractor. The provision requires the contractor to score a minimum of “2” (on a scale of 1-3) on all 18 critical evaluation items or certification can be withheld.

The PCCP provides a 45-day period for applicants who have not attained an adequate score to make corrections in the deficient areas, submit a written Corrective Action Plan to change system procedures and ask for a reevaluation. That same 45-day period is available to program members unable to achieve the required minimum score on all 19 critical evaluation items during annual on-site maintenance or follow-up audits.

For initial applicants, SSPC can withhold certification until corrections are made, required procedures are put in place and the passing score of “3” is achieved during any follow-up on-site audit.

For program members unable to achieve the required score during an annual on-site maintenance evaluation (which consists – at a minimum – of an evaluation of all 19 critical items), SSPC will provide the member 45 days to submit Corrective Action Plans and request any required follow-up audit.

If a program member is deficient in no more than two critical items upon completion of the annual maintenance audit, SSPC will extend certification status until the follow-up evaluation is completed, pending acceptance by SSPC of written corrective actions for each finding. If the program member is deficient in more than two critical items, SSPC can suspend certification status for up to six months, pending receipt and acceptance of written correction actions and any required verification through a follow-up audit. If submission of a required **Corrective Action Plan (CAP)** is not received or post-marked by the established deadline, QP9 certification can be revoked. If a stay is granted and a required corrective action is requested a second time and still not provided by this second established deadline (verified by any required follow-up audit deadline), SSPC will decertify your company.

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

C. Critical Evaluation Items

- Procedures for Complying with Regulations (Number 8)
- Regulatory Citations and Disposition (Number 10)
- Craft-Worker Assessments (Number 11)
- Technical Standards Library (Number 13)
- Document Control Procedures (Number 14)
- Procedures for Clarifying Ambiguous Specifications (Number 15)
- Communicating Contract and Technical Requirements (Number 16)
- Storage Facilities (Number 19)
- Process Control Procedures (Number 20)
- Paint Inspectors (Number 22)
- Authority of QC Personnel (Number 24)
- Corrective Action Program: Identifying Nonconforming Work – Performing Rework and Verifying that Rework is Conforming (Number 26)
- Calibration Standards – Checking Accuracy of Inspection Instruments (Number 27)

- Safety Program and Documentation of Safety Education, Meetings and Other Safety-Related Activity (Number 29)
- SOPs for Major Equipment (Number 32)
- Personal Protective Equipment and Respiratory Protection (Number 33)
- Environmental Compliance (Number 34)

D. Determination of Status

At the conclusion of the evaluation process described in **Section VII: Evaluation Process**, the designated SSPC auditor will report audit findings to the SSPC certification program manager, who will make the final recommendation to the program administrator regarding your status. Those decisions are either Confer Certification or Deny Qualification.

Confer Certification means that your company achieved the required scores and scored “2” or better on all 18 critical items.

Deny Qualification means that your company has not attained the scores adequate to achieve SSPC QP9 certification. You then have 45 days after receiving written notification of the audit results to submit acceptable Corrective Action Plans to address deficiencies and request that SSPC reevaluate to verify implementation of your Corrective Action Plan.

E. Appeals Procedure

During the exit interview, the auditor will explain the deficiencies cited during the evaluation. This is an opportunity for you to provide any additional information before the auditor writes the audit findings. If you dispute the results of the audit after the audit is completed and the auditor has left, you may appeal using the steps of recourse listed here:

1. You must notify the SSPC certification program manager in writing within 10 working days after the exit interview, specifically identifying the deficiencies you are appealing – and substantively explaining why you dispute them. This includes 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)** that may or may not require a

follow-up audit to verify CAP implementation. Finally, an appeal denial by SSPC could also result in QP suspension for up to one year.

3. The contractor can continue the appeal process by requesting an informal conference in writing within 10 business days of an appeal denial by SSPC. The informal conference will be held at SSPC headquarters in Pittsburgh, PA for the contractor to further explain its position and offer resolution.
4. The final option for the contractor wishing to continue with the appeal if denied after the informal conference is to utilize the existing **Disciplinary Action Criteria (DAC)** arbitration panel procedure.

An annual internal audit will be required in each year of certification after initial certification. You can use the SSPC QP9 audit checklist to conduct and document your internal audits.

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 of your company's certification status. See **Section VIII: Maintenance Applications** for specific rules governing maintenance of QP9 certification status after initial certification.

IMPORTANT: *Failure to cooperate with the program auditor or the SSPC certification program manager or program administrator, 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 QP9 certification term is three years. To determine whether 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 audit may be announced or unannounced. Additional audits may be performed at SSPC's discretion at no cost to the program member.

You must reapply for certification annually to maintain uninterrupted certification status. You must submit a maintenance application, a signed internal audit report completion statement, list of applicable (commercial painting work) work in progress and completed since the last evaluation, current safety information and maintenance

fee and audit deposit by the December 15 due date. The necessary forms and applications can be found on SSPC Online at www.sspc.org. Click QP for Contractors and follow the appropriate links.

SSPC will make every effort to send you a letter approximately 60 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 your responsibility to submit your renewal application when due.*

Once you have reapplied, the annual evaluation (commercial painting job site and possibly office visit) must take place within the calendar year or your certification will expire.

NOTE: *Job records for projects reported in the annual submittal and those for which SSPC is aware of 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. If you have active work and have not been audited prior to September 1, you are obligated to inform SSPC 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.

IMPORTANT NOTE: *SSPC reserves the right to suspend contractors who fail two consecutive certification maintenance or annual audits at any time while certified 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.*

Contractors who fail the annual maintenance evaluation will be given 45 days after notification of audit results to submit **Corrective Action Plans (CAP)** for each deficiency and request that SSPC reevaluate. SSPC reserves the right to withhold certification from firms who fail a maintenance or follow-up evaluation until CAPs are submitted and accepted by SSPC. SSPC may opt – in certain cases – to extend the company's certification status following acceptance of CAPs for a limited period subject to stated conditions.

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

1. The contractor is given 45 days from notification to make corrections and submit an acceptable Corrective Action Plan and be re-audited;
2. The contractor is asked to return original certificates; and

3. The contractor is not to present itself as a QP certified contractor during the suspension period.

During a suspension period the contractor's name will be removed from SSPC's website search list of QP-certified contractors at <http://www.sspc.org>.

Contractors will be formally notified in writing when a suspension is lifted, valid certificates will be reissued and the contractor's name will be added back to the website search list of QP-certified contractors.

IX. Special Provisions

A. Major Changes in Company's Organization

SSPC-certified contracting companies are required to notify the SSPC certification specialist or program administrator in writing within 30 days of any major organizational or name change. Examples of a major change include but are not limited to the following:

- Change in ownership;
- Partnership/joint venture arrangement – or change in existing partnership status;
- Change in executive management (e.g., president, CEO, general manager);
- Declaration of bankruptcy;
- Incorporation or change in corporate status;
- Name change;
- Becoming a subsidiary;
- Change to sole proprietorship;
- Relocation of main or branch business offices or opening of new branch offices.

The notification shall include the following information:

- Specific details about changes;
- Revised organizational and responsibility chart;
- Effective dates of change;
- Names of officers of reorganized company;
- Any change in tax ID/EIN number, federal or state (submit statement from IRS or Secretary of your state assigning new tax ID/EIN).

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., or a change in location) incorporated in the*

same state with the same tax ID numbers, a simple transfer of certification can be authorized after review by the certification program manager and approval by the program administrator.

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 six months after the special (first) audit to verify that the reorganized 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 any required or requested information and passes the special (first) audit.

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

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

A company submitting a change of organizational status can request that SSPC waive the requirement for a special (first) audit before approving any transfer. SSPC will evaluate each request and may waive the requirement at its own discretion. Requests to have the audit waived must be submitted at the time of notification of the organizational change.

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 notify a company of its suspension if it fails to respond within three business days to the final (second) notice of non-payment. SSPC will also withhold issuing certification for initial and annual renewal applicants who pass the evaluation but still have fees due.

C. Formal Complaint Procedure

Any authorized representative of an owner who hires a QP9 certified painting contractor can file a formal complaint against the contractor if the representative has information that the contracting company does not practice QP9 certification procedures. The contractor may respond to the complaint by submitting information supporting its position to SSPC. SSPC reserves the right to conduct a probable cause audit in such cases.

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 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 contractors 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 quality management requirements. The contractor shall evaluate and select subcontractors based on their ability to provide products/services in accordance with the contract and PCCP quality management 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 as architect 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, which is a severe violation resulting in suspension) under the **Disciplinary Action Criteria (DAC)**.

If a certified contractor utilizes another contractor's workers 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 QP9 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 JV 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 and 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, 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 firm 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 is in effect. The intent is to prevent management or other key individuals associated with the suspended firm 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 re-enter the program when the suspension period has lapsed and the conditions for reinstatement have been met. A newly formed, merged, renamed or otherwise reorganized company must submit an application 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 that 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 or family member – any significant degree of ownership, management or control."*

X. Definitions and Explanations

A. Definitions

Architectural Paints and Coatings: Paints and coatings applied on-site to new and existing commercial, institutional and industrial buildings.

Auditor: The person or persons technically qualified to perform audits of a contractor's management structure; organization structure; personnel, technical capability; quality management system; and safety, health and environmental compliance programs on behalf of the qualifying agency and report findings to the qualifying agency's audit program manager.

Customer: Entity (e.g., the building owner, developer, property manager or leasing agent, general contractor or architect/designer) having the agreement with the painting contractor for architectural coating application.

Owner: The owner (or owner's legal representative) of the building/structure/facility to be painted.

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

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

Qualifying Agency: The organization responsible for development, maintenance, sponsorship and operation of a program to ensure uniform compliance with the provisions of this procedure.

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 closing 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 correction 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.”

C. Corrective Action Report

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 major deficiency (rating of “1”) found by the auditor. Remedial action for a major CAR requires the submission of a CAR followed by an on-site audit to confirm that the contractor has corrected the deficiency and implemented the CAP submitted to SSPC. With the exception of initial audits and maintenance or follow-up audits where multiple CARs are written, remedial action for a minor CAR requires that the auditor confirm remediation at the next audit unless five or more minor findings are issued. Minor CARs that are not remediated by the contractor by the next audit turn into major CARs or deficiencies.

Initial audits require CAR 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. SSPC QP9 Appendix A: Example of General Training and Qualification Requirements for Craft-Workers

A. General Description

In order to meet the requirements of **Section 3.2.1.a**, the painting contractor shall implement a written program to:

- a. Assess the skills and general training needs of newly hired technicians/craft-workers and qualify them for their assigned tasks;
- b. Verify the qualifications of existing technicians/craft-workers;
- c. Train inexperienced technicians/craft-workers (trainees) as necessary;
- d. Evaluate the performance of technicians/craft-workers at least once per calendar year and provide additional training as necessary; and
- e. Ensure compliance with contract-specific worker training/qualification requirements.

B. Contents of the Program – General Training and Qualification Requirements

Newly Hired Experienced Technicians/Craft-Workers

The program shall contain provisions to administer written tests and/or a hands-on evaluation to assess the skills of new hires that claim to have previous experience or verify previous qualifications through a formal training or qualification program. When written tests are used, they shall include information that the painting contractor determines to be necessary to verify the

general knowledge of the trade and the qualifications of the individual tested to perform work assigned. While it is left to the painting contractor to create or use the test that works best for its business, the painting contractor shall show that the questions and answers are based on training materials using means and methods established by the qualifying agency. A sample training curriculum is provided in **Mandatory Appendix C: Sample Outline of Craft-Worker Training Curriculum for Architectural Paints**.

Trainees

General training for trainees shall be based on programs approved by the qualifying agency.

C. Qualification to Apply Specific Paint and Use New Equipment

The program shall contain procedures to qualify technicians/craft-workers to apply paint or use equipment unfamiliar to the craft-worker. The program shall also document that those workers have been qualified/trained.

D. Quality Control or Training Material

Each painting contractor shall designate a quality control or training manager to be responsible for implementation of the company's technician/craft-worker training and qualification program and monitoring its effective use in the field. The quality control or training manager shall have sufficient technical knowledge and documented training in the use of specific paints and equipment.

Annual Performance Evaluation

The painting contractor shall have implemented procedures and documentation to show that his/her production supervisor evaluates each technician's/craft-worker's performance at least annually.

XII. SSPC QP9 Appendix B: Proper Use of Subcontractors on Projects Performed by Certified Contractors

Overview

Certified painting contractors are responsible for the actions of their subcontractors to ensure they perform in accordance with certification requirements. They shall evaluate and select subcontractors based on their ability to provide products/services in accordance with the contract and certification quality management requirements. Certified subcontractors are always preferred.

Subcontractor Selection

Painting contractors certified to SSPC QP9 are to follow a procedure for selecting subcontractors. This procedure shall include a review of the subcontractor's safety plan, EMR, craft-worker training program, quality control inspectors qualifications, quality manual, insurance, licenses or any other items required by the contract documents or the procedure.

Subcontractors are required to provide a trained workforce at a minimum. If the subcontractor is missing one or more of the documents listed above, the certified painting contractor's documentation is acceptable as long as it is permitted by contract. If a subcontractor does not have a trained quality control inspector, a qualified inspector provided by the certified painting contractor is acceptable.

Contracts and Insurance

All subcontracted work on a qualified project shall have a fully executed contract agreement in place that clearly describes the scope of work to be performed. The scope of work shall be in accordance with the certified painting contractor's scope for the project. The subcontractor is required to supply proof of proper insurance to the certified painting contractor.

Subcontractor Supervision

A painting contractor certified to SSPC QP9 is required to regularly supervise the work of the subcontractor to ensure conformance to the subcontract agreement. If the subcontractor is performing the inspection duties, the painting contractor shall perform a regular review of the daily inspection reports. If the certified painting contractor is providing the quality inspector, the inspector shall report the inspection results to the certified painting contractor on a regular basis.

Improper Use of Subcontractors

If a painting contractor certified to SSPC QP9 improperly uses a subcontractor on a QP9 project, the certified painting contractor will be subject to a minor or major finding upon review during an audit. If the qualifying agency is notified of a substantial report of the improper use of a subcontractor by a certified painting contractor, it will be considered a critical fault of the DAC. Severity will be determined by the qualifying agency.

XIII. SSPC QP9 Appendix C: Sample Outline of Craft-Worker Training Curriculum for Architectural Paints

1. Overview
2. Review
 - a. Basic components of architectural paints
 - b. Surface properties of commonly encountered substrates for architectural paints

- c. Review of precautions regarding adhesion of paints to commonly encountered substrates
3. Overview of architectural paint types
4. Overview of selection of architectural paints for specific uses
5. Overview of commonly used substrate repair techniques
6. Overview of surface preparation/inspection and testing
7. Overview of application/installation and inspection
8. Overview of required safety, health and environmental compliance programs
9. Exam