

# QP CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS





**1986**

The concept of contractor certification is hatched by JPCL by John Hauck and Eric Kline.



**1989**

QP 1 Standard completed and QP certification is introduced as the Painting Contractor Certification Program.



**1992**

PCCP Advisory Committee is established.

**OSHA®**

**1993**

QP 2 Standard is completed and the certification is introduced in the wake of the OSHA Lead in Construction Standard.

**QP 3**

**1995**

QP 3 is issued.



**1998**

DAC is established.

# ABOUT THE QP PROGRAM

## BENEFITS TO FACILITY OWNER

SSPC has certification programs for contractors that perform coating and lining work, as well as companies that provide inspection services on coating and lining projects. These internationally recognized certification programs are based on consensus standards developed by contractors, facility owners, and other industry professionals. The certifications function as independent evaluations of contractors, and can be used as qualification tools for facility owners seeking competent contractors for projects.

It is critical that work is done according to competent specifications. Facility owners need to find qualified contractors to provide these services – trained personnel who have a proven track record of successful completion of industrial/marine coating projects.

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## SSPC'S QP CERTIFICATIONS OFFER A PROVEN WAY FOR FACILITY OWNERS TO FIND THE MOST QUALIFIED CONTRACTORS FOR THEIR COATING AND LINING PROJECTS.

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Since its inception in 1989, the programs have proven successful to facility owners and contractors across a wide variety of industries and assets. SSPC certified contractors have demonstrated the capability to deliver a quality product. Use of an unqualified contractor puts asset owners at a higher risk of experiencing coating failures and other project issues that not only can damage your reputation but can also endanger the public. These risks can lead to costly rework, asset downtime, and sometimes legal expenses that makes the project cost much higher in the long run.

## BENEFITS TO THE INDUSTRY

SSPC QP certification elevates the industry. By setting standards, SSPC helps to improve the quality of projects worldwide. When QP is specified in a project, not only will the quality of the work increase, but so will the safety of the workers, the public, and the environment.

## HOW TO SPECIFY QP

SSPC offers free consultations to facility owners to help them implement certification requirements into their coatings program. SSPC also provides contract and bid notice language that owners can use or modify to specify SSPC certification, and supplies lists of certified contractors for consideration.

In addition, SSPC can provide training on certification requirements and standards for contractors and agency officials at facilities where certification is being implemented.

Contact SSPC to learn how you can benefit from including SSPC's certification quality programs in your next coating or lining project.

 [www.sspc.org](http://www.sspc.org)

 [certification@sspc.org](mailto:certification@sspc.org)

 412.281.2331

## DID YOU KNOW?

- QP is an acronym for "Qualification Procedure," an official category of standards developed by SSPC committees.
- There are over 420 SSPC certified contractors worldwide. According to Engineering News Record (ENR) 15 of the top 20 painting contractors hold SSPC QP Certifications.
- The U.S. Navy, U.S. Coast Guard, and hundreds of individual, public and private facility owners require SSPC certification in their coating projects. Some organizations, such as state and city Departments of Transportations and county governments, use only certified contractors for maintenance on bridges, water tanks, and waste and water treatment facilities. SSPC certification is also being specified by an increasing number of oil and natural gas, petro chemical, power generation and transmission, and private facility owners who want to maximize the service lifespans of their structures.



# BECOMING SSPC QP CERTIFIED

SSPC has a number of certification programs tailored to specific painting, coating, and lining projects. To become SSPC QP certified, contractors need to demonstrate that they comply and operate under challenging criteria to set the standard of performance for the industry. When a facility owner is hiring an SSPC certified contractor, they are trusting that company to have the experience, knowledge, and equipment to meet their specification requirements and perform the work in accordance with the local, state, and federal guidelines for safety, health, and environmental compliance.

To become certified, the contractor or shop must:

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

## HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO GET CERTIFICATION?

It usually takes one to two months from the time the contractor submits its application to the time that the SSPC certification process is completed. SSPC requires the observation of bona fide work in progress as part of each on-site audit it performs.

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

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

For contractors that currently do not have the experience required to apply for QP certification, QP 7 - Painting Contractor Introductory Program was designed for those wanting to get started.

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## SSPC CERTIFIED CONTRACTORS NEED TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THEY STRIVE TO BE THE BEST IN THE INDUSTRY.

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### ABOUT THE AUDIT AND DAC

SSPC ensures compliance of the QP programs through a comprehensive audit checklist with criteria audited in both the office and field by SSPC Technical Auditors. Annual audits are conducted to maintain compliance to the QP standards to help insure quality performance of complex coating and lining projects.

SSPC has a strict set of Disciplinary Action Criteria (DAC) standards of accountability for deficiency findings that impact safety, health and environmental protection, quality, service, and ethical practices. These criteria are the basis for issuing warnings, or placing contractors on probation, or even issuing suspensions or revocations of a contractor's QP certification.

The DAC helps assure facility owners that the highest quality contractor is performing this work, and it helps contractors maintain a high level of performance and increased productivity, all while establishing a marketing advantage within the industry.

It is important that owners still maintain Quality Assurance practices to monitor contractor performance. The overall success of the certification programs depends on open communication between SSPC and facility owners, coating contractors, and inspection companies. SSPC works with all of these groups to maintain the highest quality and integrity for their certifications.





# QP CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

## QP 1 – FIELD APPLICATION TO COMPLEX INDUSTRIAL AND MARINE STRUCTURES

Evaluates contractors who perform surface preparation and industrial coating application on steel structures in the field.

## QP 2 – FIELD REMOVAL OF HAZARDOUS COATINGS

A supplement to QP 1 that evaluates a contractor's ability to perform industrial hazardous paint removal in a field operation.

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

## QP 3 – SHOP PAINTING

Evaluates a contractor's ability to perform surface preparation and protective coating application in a fixed shop facility.

## QP 5 – CERTIFICATION FOR COATING AND LINING INSPECTION COMPANIES

Applies to inspection companies whose focus is the industrial coating and lining industry. QP 5 evaluates an inspection company's ability to provide consistent, high-quality coating and lining inspection services for its clients.

## QP 6 – CONTRACTOR METALLIZING

Evaluates the qualifications of industrial thermal spray (metallizing) contractors.

## QP 8 – INSTALLATION OF POLYMER COATINGS AND SURFACINGS ON CONCRETE AND OTHER CEMENTITIOUS SURFACES

Evaluates the qualifications of contractors hired to install polymer coatings or surfaces on concrete surfaces in commercial, institutional, and industrial facilities.



## MANY CONTRACTORS POSSESS MULTIPLE CERTIFICATIONS.

## QP 9 – FIELD APPLICATION OF ARCHITECTURAL COATINGS

Evaluates the qualifications of painting contractors who apply architectural coatings on commercial or institutional structures in the field.

## QS 1 – QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

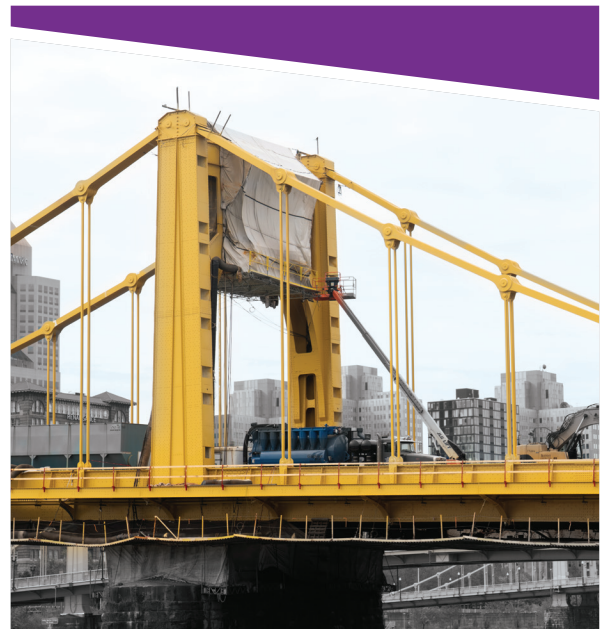
Requires participating contractors to implement and document ISO 9001-compliant quality control and record-keeping procedures.

Owners and specifiers requiring higher levels of quality control and quality assurance for their projects than that indicated by SSPC-QP 1, QP 3, QP 6, or QP 8 may request that contractors also present evidence that their quality systems meet the requirements of QS 1.

## QN 1 – NUCLEAR COATING SUPPLEMENT

Evaluates the qualifications of contractors (field or shop) for coating application of surfaces in level I and III service areas of nuclear power plants or coating application on parts and fabricated components installed in level I and III service areas of nuclear power plants.

*Note: A contractor must be QP 1, QP 3 or QP 8 certified prior to becoming QN 1 certified.*



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## WHY SHOULD I SPEND MONEY ON A COATING PROJECT AT ALL?

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

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

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

## WHAT IS THE COST OF USING AN SSPC CERTIFIED CONTRACTOR?

There is no additional cost to facility owners to use an SSPC certified contractor. The simple fact is that SSPC-certified contractors have demonstrated the capability to deliver a quality product. Use of an unqualified contractor puts asset owners at a higher risk of experiencing coating failures and other project issues that not only can damage your reputation but can also endanger the public. These risks can lead to costly rework, asset downtime, and sometimes legal expenses that makes the project cost much higher than getting it done right the first time.



Visit SSPC's online Learning Center to find free corrosion protection resources

Download the Corrosion Control Basics Whitepaper at [www.sspc.org](http://www.sspc.org)

**QP 5**

**1999**

QP 5 is issued.



**2003**

QP 8 is issued.

**QP 6  
QP 7  
QS 1**

**2004**

QP 6 and QP 7 are issued, QS 1 is added to the QP Program.



**2005**

SSPC QP goes international.

**QP 9**

**2008**

QP 9 is issued.



**2012**

CAS Individual Application Specialist Certification added to QP 1.



**2015**

SSPC QP achieves ISO 17020 accreditation.



800 Trumbull Dr.  
Pittsburgh, PA 15205  
412.281.2331

