

Guide to AWS NDE Radiographic Interpretation Inspector Certification



American Welding Society

ISO9001 *Registered Organization*

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INTRODUCTION

This *Guide* describes a program for the qualification, training, and testing of individuals seeking certification as AWS NDE Inspectors for radiographic interpretation of welds. The AWS program will provide for a portable, individual certification, independent of employer. The use of standardized examinations will contribute to the assurance of a uniform level of NDE Inspector competence that will benefit all facets of this industry. An independent program will provide value to certificate holders and to industry through the reduction of qualification procedures for NDE personnel by employers. Typically, applicants who are employed in companies that utilize SNT-TC-1A and have successfully completed the training as recommended in ASNT *Recommended Practice* SNT-TC-1A and who have passed the AWS NDE Certification examinations may also be eligible for employer certification subject to the provisions in that employer's written practice.

The AWS NDE Inspector certification program uses an established program provided by CSWIP (Certification Scheme for Welding and Inspection Personnel). The CSWIP program has been in use for over 25 years and has certified 20,000 individuals worldwide.

Relevant training can contribute to the success of any qualification process. AWS recognizes that training can come from several sources. Basic training in each method can be accomplished by training in accordance with SNT-TC-1A or a company approved specific program. The total required approved training is complete after supplemental training at an authorized training center approved by AWS/CSWIP. Currently the approved center is in Houston, Texas.

This *Guide* will tell you about the AWS program, describe the body of knowledge covered, recommend a training program, state what the examinations will cover, provide a description of the certification requirements, and give you the necessary application forms.

It is important that the reader study this *Guide* carefully to realize the extent of NDE knowledge that will be necessary to satisfactorily complete the examinations and receive the AWS certification. The training recommendations or requirements should be viewed as minimum recommendations and the applicant should be sensitive that previous training, although it may conform to recognized standards, may not be sufficient to pass these examinations.

Employer Acceptance

Individuals who are employed in companies that adhere to SNT-TC-1A who have successfully completed the training as recommended in ASNT *Recommended Practice* SNT-TC-1A, and who have passed the AWS NDE Certification examinations, may also be eligible for further employer certification subject to the provisions in that employer's written practice.

Note to Employers

To easily incorporate AWS NDE Inspector certification into your SNT-TC-1A program, insert this suggested language into your written practice:

A valid certificate issued by AWS/CSWIP NDE Inspector program shall be considered as evidence that the individual has met the requirements for certification in accordance with this Written Practice. The employer shall include appropriate documentation of the individual's certification record.

OUTLINE OF PROGRAM

The AWS NDE Inspector certification program covers radiographic interpretation. There is one certification available, and covers ferritic steels, austenitic stainless steels and high nickel alloys.

DEFINITIONS

AWS NDE Inspector in Radiographic Interpretation: An individual who is qualified to observe and interpret radiographic images of weldments to determine whether quality requirements have been met. This individual will be knowledgeable of the fundamental aspects of radiographic and photographic procedures, the evaluation of sensitivity and exposure characteristics, and the application of radiography to welds and the sources of welding discontinuities. The radiographic interpreter is not authorized to perform radiographic testing by virtue of this certification alone.

Activity Log: A log that records the NDE activity of the certificate holder. Such a log will indicate the NDE method used, identify the job where performed, and the relevant dates of activity. Maintenance of the log is the sole responsibility of the certificate holder and must be presented, at the time of renewal, to demonstrate continued activity.

Initial Training: Training that occurs outside of the AWS NDE Inspector program. The training meets the minimum requirements of SNT-TC-1A in course outline/content and hours. It may be obtained through an independent provider or be employer based.

Certification: The act of documenting the successful completion of specified qualification requirements.

Committee: AWS Certification Committee.

Conditional Applicant: An applicant who has reviewed the body of knowledge covered by the AWS NDE Inspector certification program and acknowledges that he/she has not completed formal training or cannot provide the syllabus of completed training. A Conditional Applicant who fails to successfully complete an examination will be required to provide proof of further supervised training before being allowed to retest.

CSWIP: Certification Scheme for Welding and Inspection Personnel is a certification program operated by TWI Certification Ltd., which is a wholly owned subsidiary of The Welding Institute, UK.

General Examination: An examination that tests the theory and practical applications that are common to a particular method of NDE.

Instruction: A detailed sequence of steps to be followed to apply an NDE method of inspection.

Period of Inactivity: A significant period of time in which the certificate holder has not practiced the duties corresponding to the NDE method or category certified. A continuous period equaling one year during the five year (5) period of certification, as determined from the Activity Log, will cause the Inspector to be considered as a new applicant at the time of renewal.

Qualification: The experience, education, skills, and knowledge required for an individual to perform a particular task, as defined in a particular code or specification.

Renewal: The process of maintaining a certification after the initial period of certification. Renewal involves the documentation of continuing qualifications, including experience, visual acuity, and retesting, if applicable.

Significant Interruption: A continuous period of inactivity in a particular NDE method equaling one year. See *period of inactivity*.

Specific Examination: An examination that tests the theory and practical applications that are specific to a particular product form, material group, or joint configuration.

Supplemental Training: Training that is offered through the AWS NDE Inspector program. The course content is considered beyond the scope of SNT-TC-1A and prepares the student for specific work with weldments.

Test Supervisor: An individual who will attend the examination sessions and monitor the progress of the applicants through the examination process. The Test Supervisor may also perform aspects of scoring if so authorized.

RADIOGRAPHIC INTERPRETATION

There is one certification available, and covers ferritic steels, austenitic stainless steels, and high nickel alloys.

Body of Knowledge

This section states the subjects covered in the examinations.

Specific Written Examination

1. **Characteristics of X and Gamma Radiation**
Penetration, absorption, scatter, diffraction, transmission. Speed, interactions with materials. Photographic effects.
2. **Photographic Aspects**
 - A) Dark room procedures: layout, wet and dry benches, film-pass hatches, processing units, safe-lights and ancillary equipment. Storage, handling and processing of films, temperature control. Manual and automatic processing.
 - B) Sensitometry: types of film used in industrial radiography. Characteristic curves, speed, contrast, definition, density, fog, graininess, inherent unsharpness, latitude. Commercial films and their properties.
 - C) The use of intensifying screens.

D) Spurious indications: light (and safe-light) fogging, chemical fog, strains, air bubbles, reticulation, pressure marks, static marks, drying marks, finger marks, defective screens, incomplete fixing, film manufacturing faults.

3. **Fundamental aspects of radiographic quality**

A) Quality of radiation.

B) Acceptable working densities.

C) Radiographic contrast. Objective and subjective contrast. Methods of controlling radiographic contrast. Effects of scattered radiation. Use of filters, screens, masking and blocking media. Influence of processing conditions and viewing conditions on contrast.

D) Radiographic definition: objective and subjective, unsharpness, geometric unsharpness, inter-relationship of dimensions of focal spot or source, focus (source) - object and focus (source) - film distances. Inherent unsharpness. Movement. Film/screen contact. The summation of factors controlling definition.

E) Control of radiographic sensitivity and its assessment by the use of Image Quality Indicators (IQIs).

4. **X-ray and Gamma ray equipment**

A knowledge of the effects on radiographic quality in the event of equipment change.

5. **Geometry of Image Formation**

Control of focus (source) - object distance, object - film distance, focus (source) - film distance. Selection of beam angle. Unsharpness calculations.

6. **Exposure Calculations**

Effect of distance on exposure. Use of exposure charts and calculators for X and gamma radiography.

7. **Application to Welds**

A) Interpretation of radiographs of welds in different materials and joint geometries.

B) Welds in tubing and pipe.

C) The determination of the depth of a discontinuity from one surface in a specimen by the practical use of the tube or source shift method.

8. **Viewing of Radiographs**

Optimum viewing conditions. Checking for acceptable density, contrast and freedom from spurious indications. Analyze the loss of sensitivity in order to rectify faulty techniques.

9. **Welding Technology**

A) Terminology for welds, welded joints, welding procedures, weld discontinuities, base metal discontinuities.

B) Influence on techniques of geometry, size, surface condition, base metal composition, weld metal structure. Influence of surface cladding, heat treatments and weld repairs.

C) Basic principles of fusion welding processes.

D) Types of discontinuities associated with particular base metal/welding process combinations. Types of discontinuities in welds and base metals detectable by radiography. Discontinuity characteristics which influence detectability, e.g. size, geometry, distance from surface, orientation, reflectivity and opacity.

Specific Practical Examination

1. In the first part of the practical examination, the applicant is required to carry out a number of sensitivity calculations using shim and wire IQIs and to establish the accuracy of a densitometer using a density strip.
2. In the second part of the practical examination, the applicant is required to interpret a number of radiographs of welds depending on the certification Group sought (see Examination Requirements). For each radiograph the applicant is required to locate and identify discontinuities and to evaluate the effectiveness of the radiographic procedure used.

Training Recommendations

The Supplemental training for radiographic interpretation consists of 40 hours of training.

Note: Radiographic interpretation is considered a portion of the method of radiographic testing in ISO 9712 and, as such, is not considered to be a separate method. Therefore, radiographic interpretation is not covered under ISO 9712. Supplemental training, beyond the recommended training within SNT-TC-1A, is highly recommended and individuals who take the supplemental training and pass the examinations will have certificates that indicate an endorsement from CSWIP. Reference to compliance to ISO 9712 will not be made on any radiographic interpretation certificates.

References and Recommended Reading

- Bryant, Lawrence A., and Paul McIntire, eds. *Nondestructive Testing Handbook*, Volume 3: 2nd edition, *Radiography and Radiation Testing*. Columbus, OH: The American Society for Nondestructive Testing, Inc. 1985.
- Halmshaw, R., *Industrial Radiography: Theory and Practice*. Englewood NJ: Applied Science Publishers. 1982.
- *Nondestructive Inspection and Quality Control: Metals Handbook*, Volume 17, 9th edition. Metals Park, OH: ASM International, 1989.

- *Radiographs of Welds*, International Institute of Welding.
- *Welding Inspection*, Miami, FL: American Welding Society, 2000.

Experience Requirements

Applicants for certification in radiographic interpretation must have four (4) months of experience being knowledgeable about performing interpretation of radiographs.

Experience is defined as the time an individual has spent being knowledgeable about performing the method. The experience may not be continuous and devoted to one method, but should indicate an amount of time that the individual has been familiar with, and capable of performing, the method.

Work experience in months is based on a nominal 40 hrs/week (175 hrs/month). When an individual is working more than 40 hrs/week, he/she may be credited with experience based on the total hours, but he/she shall be required to produce evidence of this experience.

Applicants must provide evidence of experience by providing relevant information authenticated by a senior responsible person in the applicant's employing organization or by a major client.

Examination Requirements for Radiographic Interpretation

ISO 9712 covers radiographic interpretation only in the context of being part of the qualification for radiographic testing (RT). Certifications for the RI will be not be compliant with the requirements of *ISO 9712 Nondestructive testing, Qualification and certification of personnel*. The certification will instead be in accordance with AWS and CSWIP requirements and there will be a specific examination only for radiographic interpreter.

Specific Examination (Theory {written} and Practical)

Theory	The theory examination consists of 20 multiple-choice questions specific to radiographic interpretation and is of 30 minutes duration.	70% Min score required	
Practical part I	In the first part of the practical examination, the applicant is required to carry out a number of sensitivity calculations using DIN, ASME and BS IQIs and to establish the accuracy of a densitometer using a density strip. The duration of this part is 1 hour.	70% Min score required	Worth 40% of the total score
Practical part II	In the second part of the practical examination, the applicant is required to interpret a number of radiographs of welds. For each radiograph the applicant is required to locate and identify discontinuities and to evaluate the correct radiographic procedure. For the second part of the practical examination, the applicant must interpret six (6) radiographs concerning ferritic steels. Three additional radiographs must be interpreted concerning austenitic stainless steels and high nickel alloys to complete the practical examination. The duration of the second part of the practical examination will be two hours.	70% Min score required	Worth 60% of the total score

Total composite score part I and II

80% minimum required (see pg 12)

Sample Questions

Specific Questions:

1. Where should wire penetrameters normally be placed?
 - a. Within 1" of the area of radiographic interest
 - b. Within ½ of the area of radiographic interest
 - c. On the area of radiographic interest
 - d. Next to the area of radiographic interest

2. What do 0.010" lead screens provide when radiographing a 2" thick full penetration butt weld?
 - a. Refraction of scattered x-rays
 - b. Rigidity for the film

- c. Latitude for the radiograph
- d. Radiographic intensification

3. In order to decrease geometric dulling:

- a. Radiation should proceed from as small a source as other considerations will allow
- b. Radiation should proceed from a sources made of the highest atomic number material as other considerations will allow
- c. The film should be as far as possible from the object being radio graphed
- d. The distance from the source to the material examined should be as small as is practical

4. A light image of a lead letter “B” on a radiograph, is normally caused by:

- a. Improper mixing of the chemicals
- b. Back scatter radiation
- c. Pressure marks
- d. Location markers

CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS-GENERAL INFORMATION

The applicant shall be required to show that, for each of the testing methods for which he/she seeks certification, he/she has at least half of the time required for each method as shown above.

VISION REQUIREMENTS

The applicant shall provide documented evidence of visual acuity in accordance with the following requirements:

- A) Distant vision shall equal Snellen fraction 20/40 or better in at least one eye, either uncorrected or corrected;
- B) Near vision shall permit reading a minimum of Jaeger number 2, or equivalent type and size letters, at not less than 30 cm on a standard Jaeger test chart for near vision, in at least one eye, corrected or uncorrected;
- C) Color vision shall be sufficient that the applicant can distinguish and differentiate contrast.

Evidence must be in the form of a Visual Acuity Form (see Forms) completed by a medically recognized person covering all the above points. The eye examination must be performed not more than seven (7) months before the date of the examinations.

No certificates will be issued until the Visual Acuity Form is received by the AWS Certification Department.

CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS-GENERAL

The examination requirements for the AWS NDE Inspector certification tests can be of three types: Initial examinations (new and conditional applicants), retests (repeat of failed parts of examinations) and five years (5) renewal examinations.

Applicants must show photographic identification at the time that they present themselves for the examination(s). Failure to do so will result in the disqualification of the individual and that person will not be allowed to take the examination(s).

Equipment and Tools:

Applicants are encouraged to bring a scientific calculator to the test facility. Applicants will be provided with all necessary tools and equipment to take the practical examinations. However, applicants may not have access to models or brands of equipment that they prefer. Applicants with specific preferences for equipment may bring such equipment to the test facility. The Test Supervisor is authorized to reject any equipment brought that may be unreasonable or inappropriate to the method or category being tested. The Test Supervisor will also be authorized to reject any equipment that has sufficiently advanced features that may automatically calculate problems that the applicant may be required to manually solve.

Certification:

A certificate will be issued by the AWS Certification Department to applicants who have successfully completed the examination requirements and have submitted all of the necessary paperwork and fees.. The wall certificate shall state the name of the individual and attest to the fact that the individual is an AWS NDE Inspector. Certificate holders shall also be issued a wallet card that bears an expiration date and a photograph of the certificate holder. Clients and employers using the services of AWS NDE Inspectors can contact the AWS Certification Department to verify the certification status.

Confidentiality:

The AWS Certification Department will release the examination scores only to the applicant or to a person designated in writing by that applicant. The only exception to this rule will be to AWS staff members, members of the AWS Certification Committee or staff of CSWIP and only where such release is necessary to fulfill responsibilities related to the administration of the program.

Grandfathering:

There will be no retroactive award of AWS NDE Inspector for any individual, regardless of prior status, experience, or education.

Conditional Applicants:

Applicants who have been accepted as Conditional Applicants and pass all parts of the examination will be granted the same certification as all other applicants. No reference to their prior conditional status will be reflected on the certificate. Conditional Applicants who do not pass a part of the examination will be required to provide proof of the satisfactory completion of supervised training in the area of the Group/Category failed before that applicant will be allowed to retest.

Passing Scores:

The examination is evaluated by multiplying the grade achieved by the percent weight factor for each component and then adding the components together to get an overall grade. To completely pass, the applicant must score 75% in all parts. The applicant must score a minimum of 70% on each examination and the total average (composite score) of all of the examinations must be a minimum of 80%. (see pg 9)

Retests:

Applicants failing one or more parts of the examinations may retest on just those parts. For non-Conditional Applicants, partial retests must be taken within one year of the original examination. There is a limit of two retests on any one part of the examination. If the applicant fails the second retest, the applicant becomes ineligible to retest for one calendar year, whereupon an applicant shall be considered as a new applicant. For Conditional Applicants, proof must be provided of the successful completion of supervised training in the area of the Group/Category failed before retesting will be allowed. Conditional Applicants may, with training, retest in only those part(s) failed.

Activity Log Requirement:

After achieving certification, AWS NDE Inspectors will be required to complete and maintain an Activity Log of their NDE activities for methods that they are certified. A copy of this Activity Log will be provided to the AWS Certification Department at the time of renewal to demonstrate continued activity in the area certified. The responsibility for the Activity Log rests solely with the certificate holder and certification may be revoked if the Activity Log is found to be fraudulent.

Renewal Requirement:

The period of validity for the AWS NDE Inspector is five years. Prior to the end of five years, certificate holders must:

- A) Provide evidence of satisfactory vision examination,
- B) Provide a copy of his/her Activity Log to demonstrate continued activity without significant interruption, and
- C) Successfully complete a Practical Examination depending on the area of certification.

The AWS Certification Department shall attempt, as a courtesy, to notify each AWS NDE Inspector of the expiration of the certificate and requirements for certification. Notice shall be mailed to the most current address provided by the certificate holder three months before the expiration date of the certificate. However, the responsibility for maintenance of the certificate is solely with the certificate holder and failure to maintain a current address with the AWS Certification Department, and subsequent failure of notification, shall not be considered adequate justification to allow an extension of the re-certification date.

CODE OF ETHICS

Preamble. In order to safeguard the health and well being of the public and to maintain integrity and high standards of skills, practice, and conduct in the occupation of NDE welding inspection, the American Welding Society NDE Inspector shall be cognizant of the following principles and the scope to which they apply, with the understanding that any unauthorized practice is subject to the Committee's review and may result in suspension, reprimand, or revocation of certification.

Integrity: The AWS NDE Inspector shall act with complete integrity in professional matters and be forthright and candid with the Committee, or its representatives, on matters pertaining to this program.

Responsibility to the Public: The AWS NDE Inspector shall act to preserve the health and well being of the public by performing duties required of welding inspection in a conscientious and impartial manner to the full extent of the inspector(s) moral and civic responsibility and qualification. Accordingly, the AWS NDE Inspector shall:

- A) Undertake and perform assignments only when qualified by training, experience, and capability.
- B) Present credentials upon request.
- C) Neither falsely represent current status nor seek to misrepresent the certification by modification of certification documents or false verbal or written testimony of current status.
- D) Be completely objective, thorough, and factual in any written report, statement, or testimony of the work and include all relevant or pertinent testimony in such communiques or testimonials.

E) Sign only for work that the Inspector has performed, or for work over which the Inspector has personal knowledge through direct supervision.

F) Neither associate with nor knowingly participate in a fraudulent or dishonest venture.

G) The Inspector shall be honest in all representations to AWS in the matter of demonstrating continued NDE activities through the use of the Activity Log.

H) The Inspector shall bring to the attention of the employer or client any inconsistency on the part of other NDE personnel whenever clear evidence exists that such an inconsistency is the result of inappropriate behavior.

Public Statements

A) The AWS NDE Inspector shall issue no statements, criticisms or arguments on weld inspection matters connected with public policy which were inspired or paid for by an interested party, or parties, without first identifying the party, the speaker, and disclosing any possible financial interest.

B) The AWS NDE Inspector shall publicly express no opinion on welding inspection subjects unless it is founded upon adequate knowledge of the facts in issue, upon a background of technical competence pertinent to the subject, and upon honest conviction of the accuracy and propriety of the statement.

Conflict of Interest

A) The AWS NDE Inspector shall avoid a conflict of interest with the employer or client and shall disclose any business association, or circumstance that might be so considered.

B) The AWS NDE Inspector shall not accept compensation, financial or otherwise, from more than one party for services on the same project, or for services pertaining to the same project, unless the circumstances are fully disclosed and agreed to by all interested parties or their authorized agents.

C) The AWS NDE Inspector shall not solicit nor accept unusual gratuities, directly or indirectly, from any party, or parties, dealing with the client or employer in connection with the Inspector's work. Unusual gratuities would be those not normally associated with social interactions in the working environment.

D) The AWS NDE Inspector shall, while serving in the capacity of an elected, retained, or employed public official, neither inspect, review, nor approve work in the capacity of an AWS NDE Inspector on projects also subject to the individual's administrative jurisdiction as a public official, unless this practice is expressly dictated by a job description and/or specification and all affected parties to the action are in agreement.

E) The AWS NDE Inspector shall neither pay, solicit, nor offer, directly or indirectly, any bribe or commission for professional employment with the exception of the usual commission required from licensed employment agencies.

F) The AWS NDE Inspector shall neither falsify, exaggerate, nor indulge in the misinterpretation of personal academic and professional qualifications, past assignments, accomplishments and responsibilities, or those of the inspector's associates. Misrepresentation of current certification status at the time of, or subsequent to, submission of requested employment information, or in the solicitation of business contracts wherein current certification is either required or inherently beneficial (advertisements for training courses, consulting services, etc.) shall be a violation of this Code of Ethics.

G) The AWS NDE Inspector shall not function as an independent examiner in public fields out of his or her capability, without first investigating for possible industry or public requirements and for additional education/experience requirements (e.g., industrial labs, in the concrete and soil testing field, etc.).

H) The AWS NDE Inspector shall not disclose confidential or proprietary information concerning business affairs or technical processes of a present or former client or employer without their written consent.

CAUTION: While the AWS NDE Inspector may have established excellent credentials, certification alone may not legally qualify the Inspector to provide examination services to the public. Contract documents, or building or jurisdiction laws may require inspection to be performed under the direction and responsibility of others, such as a Registered Professional Engineer.

Unauthorized Practice: Any violation of any part of the standard of conduct prescribed by this program, if related to an AWS NDE Inspector's occupation, including any violation of the Code of Ethics contained in this Guide, shall constitute an unauthorized practice subject to the imposition of sanctions.

Revocation

Committee: The Committee shall have the power to suspend, refuse renewal, or revoke the AWS NDE Inspector's certification for misrepresentation of facts regarding personal qualifications, status, assignments, etc., relating to the AWS NDE Inspector's certifications whether such misrepresentation was made at the time of application or on subsequent applications (renewal, etc.). The Committee may place on probation or reprimand a certificate holder, if found guilty of any unauthorized practice (as outlined in Unauthorized Practice) in a proceeding conducted in conformance to AWS QC9, *Administrative Procedures for Alleged Violations of AWS Certification Programs* (Available from the AWS Certification Department). The Committee may transmit its findings in any matter to the Certification Scheme for Welding Inspection Personnel (CSWIP) where such a communication is deemed to be mutually beneficial.

Courts: The Committee may apply to any court of competent jurisdiction for further enforcement of its administrative decisions and rulings.

Reinstatement: Reinstatement of a revoked certificate shall be allowed with no penalty or prejudice to the individual provided the reason for such revocation has been rectified to the Committee's satisfaction.

FORMS

The following forms are available from:

The American Welding Society
Certification Department
550 NW LeJeune Road
Miami, FL 33136

... all forms may be photocopied as needed.

Application - AWS NDE Radiographic Interpretation Inspector - NEW APPLICANT

To be used by new applicants to the program.

Application - AWS NDE Radiographic Interpretation Inspector Training – NEW APPLICANT

To be used by new applicants to the program.

Application – AWS NDE RI Re-Certification Application – NEW APPLICANT

To be used by applicants who want to maintain their Certification in the program.

AWS Visual Acuity Form

The form for demonstrating visual acuity, to be completed by an eye examiner, and submitted with all application forms.

AWS NDE Inspector Activity Log

The form to be used as a template for the documentation of continued NDE activities.

Document Revision History

2/1/1998	Original	Guide to AWS NDE Inspector Certification
5/1/98	Revision A	Updated the guide to reflect the combination of ferritic and austenitic radiographs in the singular certification of Radiographic Interpreter.
7/16/98	Revision B	Removed the requirement that experience must have occurred not more than one year prior to the date of the examinations for the respective method(s).
10/15/98	Revision C	Clarified RI examination scoring Replaced reference texts Replaced sample questions Sample questions in all methods were replaced. They are not marked with a bar in left margin
Cert	11/16/2000	Guide to AWS NDE Radiographic Interpretation Inspector Certification
Cert	06/12/2001	Replaced Retest Application with Training Application Deleted Renewal Information Deleted Retest Information Changed Visual Acuity Record
Cert	02/13/2002	Added Re-Certification Application Changed wording on activity log Changed AWS logo on cover