



Specification for AWS Accreditation of Certified Welding Fabricators



American Welding Society



AWS QC17:2008

Specification for AWS Accreditation of Certified Welding Fabricators

2nd Edition

Supersedes QC17:2002

Prepared by the
American Welding Society (AWS) Subcommittee on Certification of Welding Fabricators

Under the Direction of the
AWS Certification Committee

Approved by the
AWS Board of Directors

Abstract

The AWS program for the accreditation of certified welding fabricators has been developed to establish the procedures by which a welding fabricator may seek, obtain, and maintain accreditation from AWS as an AWS Certified Welding Fabricator. This standard also defines the qualification requirements for a company's compliance with welding related functions as described in AWS B5.17, *Specification for the Qualification of Welding Fabricators*.



American Welding Society

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Foreword

This foreword is not part of AWS QC17, *Specification for AWS Accreditation of Certified Welding Fabricators*, but is included for informational purposes only.

This standard was developed by the AWS Certification Committee in response to an industry demand for certification for welding fabricators. The first edition of this standard was published in 2002. This second edition clarifies the certification requirements and streamlines the process for accreditation.

The AWS Certification Committee was formed in 1995. Its predecessor, the Qualification and Certification Committee, was formed in 1975. The Committee is composed of representatives throughout industry and academia who have interests and experience in the certification of welding fabricators. This is one of several documents produced by the committee covering welding personnel and facilities.

Comments and suggestions for the improvement of this standard are welcome. They should be sent to the Secretary, AWS Certification Committee, American Welding Society, 550 N.W. LeJeune Road, Miami, FL 33126.

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Specification for AWS Accreditation of Certified Welding Fabricators

1. Scope

This specification establishes the procedure by which a welding fabricator may seek, obtain, and maintain accreditation from AWS to participate in the AWS Certified Welding Fabricator Program. This standard also defines the requirements for a company's compliance with welding related functions as described in AWS B5.17, *Specification for the Qualification of Welding Fabricators*.

2. Normative References

The standards listed below contain provisions, which, through reference in this text, constitute mandatory provisions of this AWS standard. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced standard shall apply. For dated references, subsequent amendments to, or revisions of, any of these publications do not apply.

AWS A3.0, *Standard Welding Terms and Definitions, Including Terms for Adhesive Bonding, Brazing, Soldering, Thermal Cutting, and Thermal Spraying*

AWS B5.17:2007, *Specification for the Qualification of Welding Fabricators*

3. Definitions

The terms used in this standard are defined in AWS A3.0, *Standard Welding Terms and Definitions*. Other terms used herein are defined below. (Note: As used in this standard, the word *shall* denotes a requirement; the word *should* denotes a guideline; and the word *may* denotes a choice.)

accreditation. Certification as meeting a prescribed standard.

accredited facility. A facility that has made application to the AWS designated third-party agency and received accreditation.

audit. A planned and documented activity performed by AWS-qualified auditors to determine compliance and effectiveness of implementation of the quality manual.

AWS. American Welding Society, 550 N.W. LeJeune Road, Miami, FL 33126.

certificate. A document issued to the facility on successful completion of the requirements for accreditation.

certification. The act of determining, verifying, and attesting in writing to the qualification of personnel or a company in accordance with specified requirements.

corrective action. Disposition of nonconforming product (e.g., accept-is, repair/rework, scrap) and the action taken to determine and eliminate the root cause of a nonconformance to prevent or reduce recurrence of the nonconformity.

key personnel. The Quality Manager or other person responsible for the quality policy and the development, implementation, and maintenance of the quality program. Other personnel that may be classified as key personnel (by the facility) is the senior manager responsible for the overall operation. The production manager may be classified (by the facility) as key personnel.

nonconformance. A deficiency in items, materials, or processes that does not conform to the quality manual, approved procedures, and applicable codes or specifications.

quality manual. Document stating the quality policy and describing the quality system of an organization as detailed in AWS B5.17, *Specification for the Qualification of Welding Fabricators*.

4. Functions

4.1 The Certified Welding Fabricator (CWF) is a fabricator who has complied with the standard and has been granted a certificate by AWS.

4.2 The AWS CWF shall operate an internal quality program, in accordance with a Quality Manual, meeting the requirements of AWS B5.17, *Specification for the Qualification of Welding Fabricators*.

5. Application

5.1 Copies of the application to become a Certified Welding Fabricator and the Quality Manual & Audit Checklist will be provided to the applicant along with this standard.

5.2 An application for accreditation shall be completed and submitted to AWS. With the application, the fabricator shall include a copy of their quality manual. The auditor will review the quality manual prior to the on-site audit.

5.3 After review of the fabricator's quality manual and application for accreditation, the auditor shall notify the fabricator and AWS as to the date of the audit.

6. Audit Requirements

6.1 Objectives. An audit establishes whether or not the welding fabricator complies with the accreditation criteria. Auditors may provide advice in responses to questions or on the basis of observations to provide help to improve the welding fabricator's potential of being in compliance. The AWS auditor shall not be the same individual or entity providing consulting services to the applicant seeking certification as an AWS Certified Welding Fabricator.

6.2 Agency. The AWS auditor will perform the on-site audit. All personnel conducting audits will be properly trained and qualified by AWS.

6.3 Opening Meeting. An opening meeting shall be held at the fabricators location with key personnel. The auditor shall discuss the following at the opening meeting:

- (1) The objectives as stated in 6.1.
- (2) The steps of the audit.
 - (a) Opening meeting
 - (b) Quality manual review
 - (c) Shop review, observations of operations specified within the fabricators quality manual

(d) Closing meeting

(3) All information seen and discussed and the outcome of the audit shall be confidential.

6.4 Quality Manual Review. The auditor shall review the quality manual with the fabricator. The auditor's review shall be documented on the Quality Manual & Audit Checklist.

6.5 Shop Review. Auditors are given a Quality Manual & Audit Checklist to follow in performing an audit. The checklist is intended to ensure that audits are conducted uniformly and completely as possible while verifying the implementation of the quality manual.

6.6 Closing Meeting

6.6.1 At the conclusion of an audit, the auditor shall review the Quality Manual & Audit Checklist with the fabricator, identifying all nonconformances that must be corrected before the auditor can recommend certification. Nonconformances can be corrected at the time of the audit.

6.6.2 Nonconformances that can not be corrected at the time of the audit shall be noted on the nonconformance report form. The auditor and the fabricator will agree on a date by which each of the nonconformances will be corrected; such a date will not exceed one month from the date of the closing meeting. The auditor will work with the fabricator to resolve each of the individual nonconformances. The corrective action will be noted on the nonconformance report form. Resolutions of the corrective action request will be forwarded to the AWS Certification Department. The nonconformance report may be reviewed upon any subsequent audit.

6.6.3 The auditor shall inform the fabricator of the recommendation for certification, pending the resolution of any outstanding nonconformances. The auditor's recommendation is presented to the AWS Certification Department, which makes the final decision on certification.

6.6.4 The auditor shall review with the fabricator the appeals procedure in accordance with Clause 8 of this standard.

7. Certification of Accreditation

7.1 AWS shall issue to each CWF applicant who complies with the requirements of this standard, a serialized (unique number) certificate stating the applicant has met the AWS certification requirements. Accreditation shall be valid for three (3) years unless revoked for reasons as defined in Clause 9. The certificate shall indicate the expiration date of certification.

7.2 The Certificate shall reference which AWS structural welding code(s) or AWS specification(s) that was (were) used during the audit.

Example: “The Fabricator’s welding program was audited to AWS D1.1, *Structural Welding Code—Steel*, excluding weldment design.”

8. Appeals Procedure

The fabricator has the right to appeal any aspect of the accreditation process to the AWS Certification Subcommittee on Certification of Welding Fabricators. The appeal shall be made in writing and should list the specific adverse action that is being appealed, the relevant sections of the AWS B5.17 or AWS QC17 standards, and the fabricators suggested resolution. Supporting non-conformance report(s) or other correspondence should also be included in the appeal. The decision of the AWS Certification Subcommittee on Certified Welding Fabricators will be final.

Appeals should be directed to the AWS Certification Subcommittee on Certified Welding Fabricators at the following address:

Certification Department
American Welding Society
550 N.W. LeJeune Road
Miami, FL 33126

9. Revocation

9.1 Any person or entity (complaining witness) including the Certification Committee, corporations, association members exclusive of AWS staff, and governmental agencies, may submit a written complaint of alleged non-conformances to the accreditation rules with the AWS Certification Department.

9.2 If found guilty of an unauthorized practice in a proceeding conducted in accordance with AWS QC9, *Administrative Procedures for Alleged Violations of AWS Certification Programs* (available from the AWS Certification Department), the AWS Subcommittee on the Certification of Welding Fabricators shall have the following powers:

- (1) Reprimand,
- (2) Invoke probation,
- (3) Suspend,
- (4) Refuse to renew certification, and
- (5) Revoke certification.

10. Reinstatement

Reinstatement of a revoked certificate shall be allowed with no penalty or prejudice to the fabricator, provided the cause for such revocation has been rectified to the committee’s satisfaction.

11. Recertification

11.1 The CWF shall be responsible for the following:

(1) Maintaining a current address with the Certification Department for mailing of correspondence relative to the fabricator’s application, examination, and certification/recertification.

(2) Submit a CWF 3rd Year On-Site Audit Application postmarked at least three months prior to the expiration date.

11.2 The CWF shall be recertified every three (3) years by meeting the requirements of this standard and successfully undergoing a re-audit by AWS or their representative.

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List of AWS Documents on Certification

Designation	Title
QC1	<i>Standard for AWS Certification of Welding Inspectors</i>
QC4	<i>Standard for Accreditation of Test Facilities for AWS Certified Welder Program</i>
QC5	<i>AWS Standard for Certification of Welding Educators</i>
QC7	<i>Standard for AWS Certified Welders</i>
QC13	<i>Specification for the Certification of Welding Supervisors</i>
QC15	<i>Specification for the Certification of Radiographic Interpreters</i>
QC17	<i>Specification for AWS Accreditation of Certified Welding Fabricators</i>
QC19	<i>Standard for AWS Certification of Robotic Arc Welding Personnel</i>

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