



Mail Bag

Reader Questions Why Some Don't Use Welding Procedure Specifications

I read with interest the article titled “What Are Welding Procedure Specifications” by Albert Moore in the Spring 2010 issue of *Inspection Trends*. I know manufacturing companies in (my) area that do not use Welding Procedure Specifications (WPSs), their welders are not qualified to any code, and their welders inspect their own welds. How can these companies get away with this type of practice? Is it legal? Is it not unsafe? Where is the quality control?

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There is tons of steel fabricated by contractors who are not bound by any legal requirements. Many contracts do not reference a specific welding standard, so the contractors are free to do as they please (and they do).

I have reviewed a number of project specifications, purchase orders, etc., that stated the welds must meet “first-class workmanship standards.” I do not know of any welding standard that has defined “first-class workmanship

standards.” I have also read “all welds to be in accordance with AWS,” with no reference to a specific AWS welding standard or code. Once again, the contractor is free to do as he pleases. It is incumbent on the customer to properly specify the welding requirements.

It is no different from a person buying a new car: The customer should tell the salesman what kind of car is needed with as much detail as possible. If the customer simply says he wants a car, the salesman can give him any car on the lot and has met the criteria of it being a “car.”

I was on a project once where the contractor told the steel erector that he better have four welding machines on the job site the next morning or he was fired. The steel erector showed up with four brand-new welding machines, dropped them off, and drove away.

The contractor turned to me and said, “I told him I wanted four welding machines. There they are. I should have been more specific.”

The moral is that you do not get anything unless you ask for it. A properly written specification is essential to getting what is required.

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