Certified Welding Fabricator (CWF)
Program Information

(The enclosed documents provide information about the AWS Certified Welding Fabricator Program.)

- **General Program Information**
- **Program Requirements**
- **Getting Started and the Application Process**
- **Third Year On-Site Audit Application**
- **Audit Process Overview**
- **Quality Manual & Audit Checklist**
- **Fee Schedule**

Technical Documents:

- **QC17: 2015, *Specification for AWS Accreditation of Certified Welding Fabricators***
- **B5.17:2014, *Specification for the Qualification of Welding Fabricators***

AWS Certified Welding Fabricator

General Program Information

An appropriate welding quality system is the foundation of delivering a quality welded product or service. When designed for the welding fabricator's unique products and suitably committed to paper and practice, the daily manufacturing operations of the welding fabricator are more consistent and traceable when problems arise. It is an increasing trend that customers want to see that a welding quality assurance system is documented and demonstrated. They are concerned that the welding fabricator and that fabricator's subcontractors are capable of welding products that meet specifications.

The core of a welding quality system is a quality manual that identifies the duties and responsibilities of management, supervisors, and welders, and will provide the customer with better information about who is responsible to ensure that the welding meets the applicable specifications. Companies of all sizes can benefit substantially through the systematic improvements encouraged by state-of-the-art quality systems.

Program Requirements

Responding to industry demand, AWS provides this welding certification program for companies that use welding as a joining process. The requirements for this program are set forth in an American National Standard, AWS B5.17, *Specification for the Qualification of Welding Fabricators*. This specification defines the requirement for a company's compliance with welding-related functions and assures, through third-party assessment, that the Welding Fabricator has the personnel, organization, experience, procedures, knowledge, equipment, capability, and commitment to conduct proper weldments. This standard was developed through an ANSI accredited consensus process by the AWS B5 Committee on Qualification. The B5 Committee is composed of representatives throughout industry and academia who have interests and experience in the qualification of welding personnel and facilities.

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Getting Started and the Re-Application Process

In order to re-apply to the AWS Certified Welding Fabricator (CWF) program you should carefully review all documents included in the CWF packet. The next step is to review and revise your Quality Manual for the fabricator shop that is in accordance with the AWS standards: QC17: 2015, *Specification for AWS Accreditation of Certified Welding Fabricators* and B5.17: 2014, *Specification for the Qualification of Welding Fabricators.*

Once the Quality Manual is ready, you will need to implement it into your welding operations at the fabricator shop to be audited. Please follow these steps to complete the application and checklists:

- Implement the activities of your fabricator welding operations to your Quality Manual (To be verified during the on-site audit.)
- Fill out the Third Year On-site Audit Application
- Complete the Quality Manual & Audit Checklist
- Submit all the required documents for review to:

American Welding Society
Attn: Certification Dept.
8669 NW 36 Street, # 130
Miami, Florida 33166-6672

After the application, checklist and Quality Manual are received by the Certification Department, and following a satisfactory review and the document approval, AWS will schedule an on-site audit of your facility by a third-party auditor.

If the results of the audit are satisfactory, a certificate of conformance will be issued by AWS. The certificate verifies your facility meets the requirements to operate in accordance with the AWS QC17:2015, *Specification for AWS Accreditation of Certified Welding Fabricators* for the AWS Certified Welding Fabricator Program.

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Audit Process Overview

This short overview on how AWS will conduct the audit leading to the AWS Certified Welding Fabricator designation is designed to assist the fabrication company in preparing for such an audit.

Audits are an important tool for monitoring and verifying the implementation of a welding quality system and, as such, should be ultimately viewed as a management tool. The audit process can serve as an important tool to uncover strengths and weaknesses in the manufacturing process, lessons that can be immediately utilized or transferred to other divisions of the company to contribute to the process of continuous improvement.

The AWS Certified Welding Fabricator program is intended only to address welding activities and may represent a company's first implementation of a quality system. The program is intended to be used regardless of the welding processes or materials used. The program is not intended to certify that a company's quality system is suitable for specific applications, such as pressure vessels, structural steel buildings or bridges.

The audit will consist of several well-defined steps. Upon application to AWS, a company will submit a welding quality assurance manual that it believes to meet the audit requirements as stated in AWS B5.17:2014, *Specification for the Qualification of Welding Fabricators*. AWS will choose an auditor who will be in charge of the entire audit process, starting with a document review of the welding quality assurance manual.

The purpose of the document review is to determine whether the relevant audit requirements as stated in the B5.17 standard are addressed in the welding quality assurance manual. The auditor may request additional documents from the company at this point, if they are relevant to the document review. The Auditor will be in communication with the responsible person (management representative) at the company to resolve any concerns noted in the document review. At this point, it will be noted that there will be little attention paid to any detailed references in the quality manual to non-welding fabrication activities (painting, bolting, etc.). Companies that require full quality system audits, including the processes of detailing, bolting, non-welding material control, painting, etc. for the purpose of code, control requirements and quality improvement should investigate other third-party certification programs (i.e. American Institute of Steel Construction, American Society of Mechanical Engineers).

When the auditor has come to an agreement with the company with regards to how the welding quality manual addresses welding performed by the company, it will be time to schedule an on-site audit. The company and auditor will agree on a date and time for this event in the audit process.

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Audit Process Overview (continued)

The on-site audit will start off with an opening meeting. The auditor will review his/her plan for conducting the audit and how he/she will collect the needed information. At this point, the auditor should describe who in the company will be interviewed, and approximately how long will be required to conduct the interviews. Any required safety briefings or requirements will be presented by the company, and it is suggested that a company representative be assigned to accompany the auditor(s) on the company property to act as a guide, to introduce the auditor(s) to company personnel and to gain access to restricted areas. During the opening meeting, the company is encouraged to ask any questions about the conduct of the audit.

During the audit, the goal of the auditor is to collect information to verify that a welding quality system is adequately described by the company's quality assurance manual and is being implemented. This information can be derived from personnel interviews, observations of current activities, documents (written policies, procedures, instructions, contracts), records (inspection reports, welder and procedure qualification records, meeting minutes), or other reports and data summaries. Interviews are one of the most important tools for information collection, and the auditor(s) will ask to speak to employees at every level of the organization as they attempt to determine the information flow within the company with regards to welding fabrication.

Once the auditor(s) have determined that they have adequately collected enough information and verified this information against the audit criteria (as stated in the company's quality manual), a list of audit findings will be compiled to be presented to the company's management in the closing meeting. Bear in mind, that the object of an audit is not to examine every last procedure or activity that is relevant to welding fabrication. Usually only a sample of the company's welding activities will be examined, and a successful audit does not mean that the company is doing everything 100% correct. But a successful audit does indicate a higher level of confidence that things are being done right.

The findings of the audit may take several forms. A finding can indicate that the company is conforming to its quality system or it can indicate that a nonconformance was noted. A major nonconformance may indicate that there is reason to doubt the ability of the quality system to affect the desired quality of the welded products; a minor nonconformance may indicate an easily correctable glitch in the system. Findings can also take the form of a suggestion for a further improvement to the system.

If a finding requires that the company take certain steps to correct a situation, a Non-conformance Report (NCR) will be issued by the auditor. The NCR should describe what was observed, and how that observation supports a finding that the audit criteria, as stated in the company’s quality manual, were not met. The auditor and the company representative will agree only at this point that the observation was made, and on a deadline date for resolving the

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Audit Process Overview (continued)

NCR. Agreement at this point does not have any relevance to the actual resolution of the NCR, only on its issuance. This is done for each NCR that may be issued by the auditor.

The discussion of the NCRs, if any, is one of the major activities that take place during the closing meeting. The purpose of a closing meeting is to present information to the company on what conclusions were drawn from the audit and to make sure that all of the issues are understood by all parties. Discussion may take place where there are diverging opinions between the auditor and the company. Any unresolved items should be recorded by the auditor.

The company and the auditor will agree on a date by which each of the outstanding NCRs will be resolved. The final resolution of the NCR in the days following the on-site audit will take the form of an agreement between the auditor and the company on the corrective action(s) that will be taken to address each situation; the process will be documented on the NCR form itself.

After the auditor leaves, and before the agreed upon resolution dates, the company should carefully consider each finding that was presented by the auditor(s). A systematic consideration of these findings is the engine behind continuous improvement of the welding fabrication processes in use at that location. Those findings that result in the issuance of NCRs should receive special consideration, in light of the fact that they represent deviations from the desired audit criteria in the AWS standard. The company should endeavor to discover the root cause(s) that led to the observations and take steps to address the root causes, and not just the symptoms themselves. Where corrective action(s) lead to changes in the company's quality documentation, steps must be taken to make sure that all affected personnel receive the updated documentation and any training or orientation necessary to implement the new procedures.

Upon agreement between the auditor and the company on the resolution of the outstanding NCRs, the auditor will file his/her recommendation on certification with the AWS Certification Department and, if recommended, a certificate will be issued attesting that the fabricator is certified as an AWS Certified Welding Fabricator, meeting the audit requirements as stated in the AWS B5.17 standard. Maintenance of certification will consist of annual internal self-audits for years two and three; after three years, recertification will occur by another document review and on-site audit.

If the company and the auditor do not agree on a finding that is significant to the certification status of the company, the company may appeal the issue to the AWS Certification Committee for a resolution of the disputed issue. Any proprietary information presented by the company during the course of the audit process for the AWS Certified Welding Fabricator program will remain as confidential and will not be disseminated for any reason. NCRs and information related to the document review and on-site audit will remain secured in AWS files and may be reviewed for subsequent audits.

Certified Welding Fabricator

Initial On-site Audit Application

American Welding Society
8669 NW 36 Street, # 130
Miami, Florida 33166-6672
(800 or 305) 443- 9353

Email:accreditation@aws.org

We request the American Welding Society (AWS) accredit the following facility as a participant in the AWS Certified Welding Fabricator Program in accordance with provisions of the AWS B5.17 and QC17 Standards for the qualification and Certification of AWS Welding Fabricators.

Facility Information:

Facility Name: _____

Facility Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Province / Country: _____

Mailing Address (if different from above):

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Province / Country: _____

Contact Information:

Contact Name (Print): _____

_____ _____ _____

Signature **Title** **Date**

Phone Number: ( ) - Ext: Fax Number: ( ) -

Email Address: _____

American Welding Society

Certified Welding Fabricator

Initial On-site Audit Application

Application Fees:

☐ **Initial On-site Audit (North American Fee Schedule)*** **Fee: $3,205 USD****

**** Requires QAM and, a completed CWF Quality Manual & Audit Checklist.***

***** Auditor's travel, lodging and meal expenses will be invoiced to the CWF after the audit***

☐ **Initial Year On-site Audit (International Fee Schedule)*** **Fee: $1,820 USD****

**** Requires QAM and, a completed CWF Quality Manual & Audit Checklist.***

***** Auditor's fees and travel, lodging and meal expenses will be invoiced to the CWF after the audit.***

Quality Assurance Manual: Enclosed ☐

CWF Quality Manual & Audit Checklist: Enclosed ☐

Please allow 6-8 weeks for On Site Audit scheduling.

Preferred Audit Dates: (1) _____ (2) _____

List those code(s) used by the fabricator: _____

List any past or present certifications: _____

Method of Payment						
❑ Check #: _____	❑ Visa	❑ Master Card	❑ American Express	❑ Diners Club	❑ Discover	
Credit Card #:				Exp. Date:	-	-
Card Verification/Security Code: _____	Signature: _____					

AWS Use Only		
Date Received:	Account #:	Amount: *See current CWF price schedule for applicable fees.*

Certified Welding Fabricator (CWF)
Quality Manual and Audit Checklist

FOR AWS USE ONLY			
Audit ID:	**Organization:**	**Auditor(s):**	**Audit Date:**

AUDIT CHECKLIST

Instructions: *Please answer all questions below in the Quality Manual Index column, indicating the corresponding page or section number of your Quality Manual.*

QUALITY MANUAL REQUIREMENTS		Facility Review	Auditor Review		Auditor Confirmation of Implementation					
Standard Reference	Standard Reference Topic	Quality Manual Index	S	U	Objective Evidence	OK	NCR	OFI*	Observation*	N/A
6.0	Quality Manual Requirement									
Auditor Comments:										
6.1	Cover Page									
Auditor Comments:										
6.2.1 (B5.17) 5.2 (QC17)	Management Support, Identify Welding Code or Specification									
Auditor Comments:										
6.2.2	Management Support, Support of Management									
Auditor Comments:										
6.2.3	Management Support, Quality Authority									
Auditor Comments:										
6.2.4	Management Support, Signed & Dated Quality Manual									
Auditor Comments:										
6.3.1	Organization Chart									
Auditor Comments:										

Certified Welding Fabricator (CWF)
Quality Manual and Audit Checklist

QUALITY MANUAL REQUIREMENTS		Facility Review	Auditor Review		Auditor Confirmation of Implementation					
Standard Reference	Standard Reference Topic	Quality Manual Index	S	U	Objective Evidence	OK	NCR	OFI*	Observation*	N/A
6.3.2	Organization, Delegation of Authority									
Auditor Comments:										
6.4.1	Document Control, Quality Manual									
Auditor Comments:										
6.4.2	Document Control, Contract Documents									
Auditor Comments:										
6.4.3	Document Control, Drawings									
Auditor Comments:										
6.4.4	Document Control, Quality Records-Forms-Reports									
Auditor Comments:										
6.4.5	Document Control, Record Retention									
Auditor Comments:										
6.5 (1)	Material Control, Purchasing									
Auditor Comments:										
6.5 (2)	Material Control, Receiving Inspection									
Auditor Comments:										
6.5 (3)	Material Control, Identification & Traceability									
Auditor Comments:										
6.5 (4)	Material Control, Material Test Reports									
Auditor Comments:										

Certified Welding Fabricator (CWF)
Quality Manual and Audit Checklist

QUALITY MANUAL REQUIREMENTS		Facility Review	Auditor Review		Auditor Confirmation of Implementation					
Standard Reference	Standard Reference Topic	Quality Manual Index	S	U	Objective Evidence	OK	NCR	OFI*	Observation*	N/A
6.5 (5)	Material Control, Filler Materials									
Auditor Comments:										
6.6.1	Welding, Welding Procedure Specifications (WPSs) & Procedure Qualification Records (PQRs)									
Auditor Comments:										
6.6.2	Welding, Welder Performance Qualification									
Auditor Comments:										
6.6.3	Welding, Filler Metal Controls									
Auditor Comments:										
6.7.1	Inspection, Weld Inspection									
Auditor Comments:										
6.7.2	Inspection, Weld Inspector Qualifications									
Auditor Comments:										
6.7.3	**Inspection, NDE Inspector Qualifications** Can you provide your SNT-TC-1A Written Practice(s) for all other NDE methods used at this facility?									
Auditor Comments:										
6.7.4	Inspection, NDE Procedures									
Auditor Comments:										
6.7.5	Inspection, Subcontractor's NDE Personnel Qualifications									
Auditor Comments:										
6.8, 6.8.1	Nonconformance System, Authority for Identification									
Auditor Comments:										

Certified Welding Fabricator (CWF)
Quality Manual and Audit Checklist

QUALITY MANUAL REQUIREMENTS		Facility Review	Auditor Review		Auditor Confirmation of Implementation					
Standard Reference	Standard Reference Topic	Quality Manual Index	S	U	Objective Evidence	OK	NCR	OFI*	Observation*	N/A
6.8.2	Nonconformance System, Documenting Nonconformance									
Auditor Comments:										
6.8.3	Nonconformance System, Identification & Final Disposition									
Auditor Comments:										
6.9	Measuring & Testing Equipment	.								
Auditor Comments:										
6.9.1	Measuring & Testing Equipment, Calibration									
Auditor Comments:										
6.9.2	Measuring & Testing Equipment, Calibration Verification									
Auditor Comments:										
6.9.3	Measuring & Testing Equipment, Calibration Identification									
Auditor Comments:										
6.9.4	Measuring & Testing Equipment, Calibration Records									
Auditor Comments:										
6.10	Internal Quality Audits									
Auditor Comments:										
6.11	Sample Forms									
Auditor Comments:										
7.0	Library									
Auditor Comments:										

Certified Welding Fabricator (CWF) Price Schedule*

North American Price Schedule

Initial Audit Fees	AWS Price	Auditor Fee Included in AWS Price?
Document review	$840	
Initial On-site Audit**	$2,365	Yes
Total	**$3,205**	
Additional Facilities		
Document review	$695	
Initial On-site Audit**	$2,080	Yes
Total	**$2,775**	
Re-Audit		
Auditor's Fees	$1,350	No
Auditor's travel Expenses**	TBD	No

3rd Year Recertification Audit Fee		
Document review	$695	
On-site Audit**	$2,080	Yes
Total	**$2,775**	

AWS Certification for AISC Accredited Fabricators		
Initial Application	**$495**	
Renewal Application	**$170**	(paid annually)

International Price Schedule

Initial Audit Fees	AWS Price	Auditor Fee Included in AWS Price?
Document review	$840	
Initial On-site Audit**	$980	No***
Total	**$1,820**	
Additional Facilities		
Document review	$695	
Initial On-site Audit**	$695	No***
Total	**$1,390**	
Re-Audit		
Auditor's Fees***	TBD	No***
Auditor's travel Expenses**	TBD	No***

3rd Year Recertification Audit Fee		
Document review	$695	
On-site Audit**	$695	No***
Total	**$1,390**	

AWS Certification for AISC Accredited Fabricators		
Initial Application	**$560**	
Renewal Application	**$235**	(paid annually)

***Fees are subject to change due to individual circumstances for each facility.**

****Applicants are directly responsible for the auditor's travel expenses.**

***Auditor fees for international CWFs are as follows:

Each Travel Day	$430
On-site Audit Fee	$900
Total Fee	**(dependent on # of audit and travel days required)**