
Specification for AWS Accreditation of Certified Welding Fabricators

AWS QC17:2015

Specification for AWS Accreditation of Certified Welding Fabricators

3rd Edition

Supersedes QC17:2008

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*.



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Foreword

This foreword is not part of AWS QC17:2015, *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, followed by the second edition published in 2008. This third 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.

A vertical line in the margin indicates a revision from the 2008 edition. |

Comments and suggestions for the improvement of this standard are welcome. They should be sent to the Secretary, AWS Certification Committee, American Welding Society, 8669 NW 36th St, #130, Miami, FL 33166. |

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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. Reference Documents

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

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

AWS QC9, *Administrative Procedures for Alleged Violations of AWS Certification Programs*

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 AWS (the 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 Auditor. The person performing the on-site audit who is properly trained and qualified by AWS.

AWS. American Welding Society, 8669 NW 36th St, #130, Miami, FL 33166

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 as-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 this 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 CWF 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. The application must specify which nationally or internationally recognized code(s) or specifications the welding fabricator's quality manual encompasses, as specified in AWS B5.17.

5.2.1 AWS Certification Department will review and accept (if permissible) applications requesting the use of other codes and specifications not published by AWS.

5.2.2 The fabricator shall include a copy of their quality manual with the application.

5.3 After the auditor has reviewed 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 fabricator's 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 fabricator's 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 cannot be corrected at the time of the audit shall be noted on the nonconformance report form. Nonconformances shall be corrected within 30 days of the date of the closing meeting. The nonconformance report (NCR), listing the corrective action resolution, will be forwarded to the AWS Certification Department by the auditor. The NCR may be reviewed upon any subsequent audit. All nonconformances, including those corrected at the time of audit, shall be included in the auditor's final Audit Report.

6.6.3 The auditor shall inform the fabricator of the audit recommendation that will be presented to the AWS Certification Department, which makes the final decision on certification. The auditor recommendation can be one of the following:

- (1) Recommend certification
- (2) Recommend certification, pending NCRs are corrected and resolved
- (3) Follow-up audit required
- (4) Failed audit (would need to reapply)

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. The certificate shall indicate the expiration date of certification.

7.2 The Certificate shall reference the welding code(s) or specification(s) used during the audit.

Example: "The Fabricator's welding program was compliant to xxx, 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 fabricator's suggested resolution. Supporting nonconformance 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
 8669 NW 36th St, #130
 Miami, FL 33166

9. Revocation

9.1 Any person or entity may submit a written complaint of alleged violation or unauthorized practices to the QC17 accreditation rules with the AWS Certification Department.

9.2 If a complaint of alleged violation or unauthorized practices to the accreditation rules in accordance with AWS QC9, *Administrative Procedures for Alleged Violations of AWS Certification Programs*, is found to be valid, appropriate action may be taken as specified by the hearing panel.

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 satisfaction of the AWS Certification Department.

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 (3) 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.

Annex A (Informative)

Requesting an Official Interpretation on an AWS Standard

This annex is not part of AWS QC17:2015, *Specification for AWS Accreditation of Certified Welding Fabricators*, but is included for informational purposes only.

A1. Introduction

The following procedures are here to assist standard users in submitting successful requests for official interpretations to AWS standards. Requests from the general public submitted to AWS staff or committee members that do not follow these rules may be returned to the sender unanswered. AWS reserves the right to decline answering specific requests; if AWS declines a request, AWS will provide the reason to the individual why the request was declined.

A2. Limitations

The activities of AWS certification committees regarding interpretations are limited strictly to the interpretation of provisions of standards prepared by the committees. Neither AWS staff nor the committees are in a position to offer interpretive or consulting services on (1) specific engineering problems, (2) requirements of standards applied to fabrications outside the scope of the document, or (3) points not specifically covered by the standard. In such cases, the inquirer should seek assistance from a competent engineer experienced in the particular field of interest.

A3. General Procedure for all Requests

A3.1 Submission. All requests shall be sent to the Managing Director of AWS Certification Department. For efficient handling, it is preferred that all requests should be submitted electronically through certification@aws.org. Alternatively, requests may be mailed to:

Managing Director
Certification Department
American Welding Society
8669 NW 36th St, # 130
Miami, FL 33166

A3.2 Contact Information. All inquiries shall contain the name, address, email, phone number, and employer of the inquirer.

A3.3 Scope. Each inquiry shall address one single provision of the standard unless the issue in question involves two or more interrelated provisions. The provision(s) shall be identified in the scope of the request along with the edition of the standard (e.g., QC1:2007) that contains the provision(s) the inquirer is addressing.

A3.4 Question(s). All requests shall be stated in the form of a question that can be answered “yes” or “no.” The request shall be concise, yet complete enough to enable the committee to understand the point of the issue in question. When the point is not clearly defined, the request will be returned for clarification. Sketches should be used whenever appropriate, and all paragraphs, figures, and tables (or annexes) that bear on the issue in question shall be cited.

A3.5 Proposed Answer(s). The inquirer shall provide proposed answer(s) to their own question(s).

A3.6 Background. Additional information on the topic may be provided but is not necessary. The question(s) and proposed answer(s) above shall stand on their own without the need for additional background information.

A4. AWS Policy on Interpretations

The American Welding Society (AWS) Board of Directors has adopted a policy whereby all official interpretations of AWS standards are handled in a formal manner. Under this policy, all official interpretations are approved by the certification committee that is responsible for the standard. Communication concerning an official interpretation is directed through the AWS staff member who works with that certification committee. The policy requires that all requests for an official interpretation be submitted in writing. Such requests will be handled as expeditiously as possible, but due to the procedures that must be followed, some requests for an official interpretation may take considerable time to complete.

A5. AWS Response to Requests

Upon approval by the Certification Committee, the interpretation is an official interpretation of the Society, and AWS shall transmit the response to the inquirer, publish it in the *Welding Journal*, and post it on the AWS website.

A6. Telephone Inquiries

Telephone inquiries to AWS Headquarters concerning AWS standards should be limited to questions of a general nature or to matters directly related to the use of the standard. The *AWS Board Policy Manual* requires that all AWS staff members respond to a telephone request for an official interpretation of any AWS standard with the information that such an interpretation can be obtained only through a written request. Headquarters staff cannot provide consulting services. However, the staff can refer a caller to any of those consultants whose names are on file at AWS Headquarters.

List of AWS Documents on Certification

AWS 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>Standard for Certification of Welding Educators</i>
QC7	<i>Standard for AWS Certified Welders</i>
QC9	<i>Administrative Procedures for Alleged Violations of AWS Certification Programs</i>
QC13	<i>Specification for the Certification of Welding Supervisors</i>
QC14	<i>Specification for the Certification of Welding Sales Representatives</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 the AWS Certification of Robotic Arc Welding Personnel</i>
QC20	<i>Specification for AWS Certification of Resistance Welding Technicians</i>

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