

YOUR STEP-BY-STEP PATHWAY TO CWP

INTRODUCTION

The AWS Certified Welder (CW) program is a performance-based certification that verifies a welder's ability to produce acceptable-quality welds in accordance with a defined welding procedure. Unlike certifications that require prerequisite coursework or prior credentials, the CW program focuses on demonstrating hands-on welding skill.

Certification is specific to the welding process, applicable code or standard, and the test configuration defined by the Welding Procedure Specification (WPS) used during qualification. This approach ensures the credential reflects real-world job requirements across a wide range of welding industries.

1 UNDERSTAND THE CERTIFIED WELDER PROGRAM

The Certified Welder credential documents a welder's ability to produce sound welds that meet acceptance criteria established by recognized AWS standards. Testing is aligned with job-relevant conditions and evaluates practical welding performance.

Key characteristics of the CW program include:

- Performance-based testing.
- Certification tied to a specific welding process and applicable code or standard and pre-determined test configuration.
- No prerequisite courses or certifications required.

The CW program is designed to show employers that a welder can perform to code under defined conditions.

2 SELECT YOUR WELDING PROCESS AND CODE

Certified Welder testing is not universal. Each certification applies only to the specific 3-part combination of welding process, code or standard, and test configuration defined in the WPS used during qualification.

Testing is conducted in accordance with AWS QC47, Specification for AWS Certification of Welders and Accreditation of Test Facilities.

Selecting the appropriate process and standard ensures the certification aligns with the type of work being performed and employer expectations.

3 COMPLETE A PERFORMANCE QUALIFICATION TEST

To earn the Certified Welder credential, candidates must complete a welder performance qualification test at an AWS Accredited Test Facility (ATF). AWS ATFs are located both domestically and internationally and administer testing in accordance with AWS requirements.

During the test, the welder follows a defined WPS. The completed weld is evaluated against acceptance criteria specified by the applicable code or standard.

This performance qualification test documents the welder's ability to consistently produce quality welds under controlled conditions that reflect job-site requirements.

4 SUBMIT THE CERTIFIED WELDER APPLICATION

After successfully completing the performance qualification test, candidates must complete the Certified Welder Application.

The application is submitted through the ATF and includes:

- Verification of the completed performance qualification test
- Required documentation associated with the test results

AWS reviews the submitted materials to confirm eligibility and issue the Certified Welder credential.

5 MAINTAIN YOUR CERTIFIED WELDER CREDENTIAL

Certified Welder credentials are maintained through continued welding activity in the process for which the welder was certified.

To keep the credential active, welders must:

- ☐ Maintain a welding log with AWS
- ☐ Submit a Maintenance of Welder Certification prior to expiration

This process verifies that the welder remains actively engaged in welding using the certified process.

6 WHAT CERTIFICATION MEANS FOR YOUR CAREER

The AWS Certified Welder credential provides documented verification that a welder's skills have been evaluated through a structured, code-based performance qualification test. It signals to employers that welding ability has been demonstrated under defined conditions and recognized industry standards.

For entry-level welders, the CW program offers a clear way to demonstrate job readiness. For experienced welders, it provides a portable credential that supports hiring, advancement, and workforce mobility across multiple industries.

READY TO GET STARTED?
LEARN MORE ABOUT CWP