



## How to Become an Approved Special Inspection Agency

### Background

Chapter 17 of the California Building Code requires that the Special Inspector shall demonstrate competence to the satisfaction of the Building Official. In order to facilitate a review and approval process the City of Richmond does hereby establish the following procedural guidelines for exercising our discretion in determining the qualification for special inspection agencies and testing laboratories.

### Applicability

Any inspection agency or testing laboratory meeting criteria in the SPECIAL INSPECTION QUALIFICATION GUIDELINES (Attachment 1) may apply for listing on the City of Richmond's list of Qualified Special Inspection and Testing Agencies. The list is updated as applications are approved. Approval remains valid for three years and may be renewed indefinitely, as long as the agency remains in good standing and continues to meet the criteria in the Qualification Guidelines.

### Submittal Requirements

- An application package shall be provided as specified in the SPECIAL INSPECTION QUALIFICATION GUIDELINES (Attachment 1).
- A cover letter shall be provided with each submittal of an agency's qualification and specific categories of inspection and testing services.
- An agency may submit evidence of accreditation by the Division of the State Architect's Laboratory Evaluation and Accreditation Program (DSALEA), or International Accreditation Service (IAS), or other recognized accreditation service for evaluation. Complete evidence of approval shall be provided including specific work categories.

### Application Fee

Administrative and Filing fees will apply.

### Review Procedure

The City of Richmond shall evaluate the qualification of the agency based primarily on the qualifications and experience of the agency's staff.

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### **Determination and Appeal**

The Building Official will notify the agency of the outcome of the review. If the agency decides to appeal the Building Official's determination, it may do so in accordance with Richmond Municipal Code section 6.02.130(d).

### **Renewal Process**

- It is the agency's responsibility to submit updated categorical information as stipulated in the QUALIFICATIONS GUIDELINES, including information for new employees, to the City of Richmond at least 90 days prior to the expiration date of the agency's qualification.
- A cover letter shall be provided with an application submittal of an agency's qualification and specific categories of inspection and testing services.
- Renewal is valid for up to three more years.
- See Attachment 2 for more renewal information.

## SPECIAL INSPECTION QUALIFICATION GUIDELINES

### **Qualification guidelines for Inspection Agencies and Special Inspectors:**

Chapter 17 of the California Building Code requires that the Special Inspector shall demonstrate competence to the satisfaction of the Building Official. The City of Richmond has developed a qualification guideline to facilitate a review and approval process to allow qualified agencies to perform in the City of Richmond.

To be considered for qualification, please send one copy of the following information to the City of Richmond Planning and Building Services Division. Please note that if your agency is not able to meet all of these requirements and submit all required information, the City of Richmond will not be able to consider your agency for qualification.

The submittal package must be in a three ring binder (with the name of the agency shown on the spine) and tabbed to correspond with the numbers of the 10 items listed below.

### **Please submit the following:**

- 1 Location of corporate office and all testing facilities operating in the region.
- 2 Name and resumes of Registered Professional Engineer(s) responsible for inspection and testing activities evidencing experience criteria as per ASTM E329-09, paragraph 6.2.1: "... the person shall be a licensed professional/ registered engineer and a full time employee of that agency. The person shall have at least five years engineering experience in testing and inspection of construction materials." Please note that resumes must be very specific in showing a minimum of five years experience in testing and inspection. Resumes shall identify dates and experience specific to testing and inspection.
- 3 Names and resumes of laboratory and field inspection supervisory personnel evidencing experience criteria:
  - 3.a Laboratory Supervisors:
    - i Per ASTM E329-09 paragraph 6.2.2: "A laboratory supervisor shall have at least three years' experience performing test on relevant construction materials." Please note that resumes must be very specific in showing a minimum of three years experience in testing. Resumes shall identify dates and experience specific to testing.
      - II. Certification by ACI (Laboratory Testing Technician, Grade I), NICET (Level III or higher), or equal.
  - 3.b Field Supervisors:
    - i Per ASTM E329-09 paragraph 6.2.3: "A field inspector shall have at least three years inspection experience in the type of work being supervised." Please note that resumes must be very specific in showing a minimum of three years experience in inspection. Resumes shall identify dates and experience specific to testing.

II. Certification by ACI (Concrete Construction Special Inspector or Concrete Transportation Construction Inspector), ICC Reinforced Concrete Special Inspector, NICET (Level III or higher), ASNT (Level II or III) or AWS (CWI), or equal.

- 4 An organizational chart that clearly demonstrates the relationship between the responsible engineer, supervisory personnel and testing/inspection personnel.
- 5 A copy of your regional testing laboratory's latest CCRL Inspection Record including deficiencies and explanations with evidence of how deficiencies have been addressed. A copy of the firm's DSA or IAS laboratory accreditation report may be submitted in lieu of CCRL report.

For agencies with no laboratory testing facility, the agency must:

- 5.a Provide evidence your agency has established a quality system appropriate to the type, range, and volume of its capabilities,
  - 5.b Provide evidence your agency has the necessary equipment to perform field tests required during the sampling of fresh concrete (i.e., slump, temperature, unit weight, air entrainment), and,
  - 5.c Provide a list of qualified agencies performing laboratory testing on your behalf, outlining their scope of service, and including copies of subcontracts/agreements evidencing your arrangements with those firms. Any financial arrangements shall be blacked out prior to your submittal.
- 6 A brief general description of the agency including background information related to type of services offered, years in business, major projects and areas served (a company brochure may satisfy this requirement).
  - 7 Samples of the typical inspection, lab and final compliance reports that you agency uses.
  - 8 Matrix list of all special inspectors showing inspection areas for which they are qualified by experience and appropriate certifications for RC, PC, SM, SW, HSB, NDT, SWC, & FP categories as noted in the table below. INSPECTORS WHO DO NOT HAVE THE NECESSARY EXPERIENCE AND CERTIFICATIONS TO MEET THESE CRITERIA WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED FOR QUALIFICATION. Special inspectors-in-training shall be included in the matrix. Please include only those inspectors who are performing inspections and tests that are applicable to the program. Please follow the format of the attached sample matrix (Exhibit A).
  - 8.a Provisions for Soils and Foundations Inspections: As per CBC Chapter 17, Section -Special inspector qualifications *“The registered design professional in responsible charge and engineers of record involved in the design of the project are permitted to act as the approved agency and their personnel are permitted to act as special inspectors for the work designed by them, provided they qualify as special inspectors”*. Inspections of the Soils, Deep Footings, and Piles shall be performed by the Geotechnical Engineer of Record

or an Inspection Agency approved by the Geotechnical and Structural Engineers of Record for the project. For soils and foundation work, the City will accept inspections and reports prepared under the supervision, signed, and stamped by the Geotechnical Engineer of record. Alternatively, the Geotechnical Engineer can apply for an Approved Inspection Agency status with the City and designate qualified inspectors. If approved, such designated inspectors can provide the intermittent daily inspections and reports without the engineer's signature. The Final Report for the soils and deep footing inspections still has to be prepared and signed by the responsible Engineer of the Inspection Agency.

**Inspection Category    Appropriate    Experience/Certification**

Reinforced Concrete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Minimum one year experience, and</li> <li>b) Certification by ACI (Field Technician Grade 1), and</li> <li>c) Certification by ICC (Reinforced Concrete)</li> </ul>
Pre-stressed Concrete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Minimum six months plus three years of experience in Reinforced Concrete, and</li> <li>b) Certification by ACI (Field Technician Grade 1), and</li> <li>c) Certification by ICC (Pre-stressed Concrete)</li> </ul>
Structural Masonry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Minimum one year experience, or six months plus one year experience in Reinforced Concrete, and</li> <li>b) Certification by ICC (Structural Masonry)</li> </ul>
Steel Welding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Minimum three years of experience , and</li> <li>b) Certification by ICC (Structural Steel &amp; Welding) or (Certified AWS Welding Inspector)</li> </ul> <p>Note: Current certifications for structural Steel and Welding Special Inspectors are valid until the date of expiration.</p>
<u>Steel (high-strength) Bolting</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Minimum one year experience, and</li> <li>b) Certification by ICC (Structural steel &amp; Bolting)</li> </ul> <p>Note: Current certifications for structural Steel and Welding Special Inspectors are valid until the date of expiration.</p>
<u>Nondestructive (NDT)</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Personnel qualified in accordance with nationally recognized NDT personal qualifications practice or standard, such as ANSI/ASNT-CP-189 or SNT-TC- 1A, or</li> <li>b) American Society for Nondestructive Testing (ASNT) Level II and a minimum one year of direct testing experience as determined and approved by an in-house ASNT Level III</li> </ul>
Structural Wood Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Certification by ICC (Commercial or residential Building Inspector), and</li> <li>b) A minimum two years of direct experience in engineered wood products, or</li> <li>c) A minimum of five years of direct experience as a journeyman carpenter</li> </ul>
Spray-on Fire-resistant material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Minimum one year experience, and</li> <li>b) Certification by ICC (Spray-Applied Fireproofing)</li> </ul>

9 Copies of applicable certifications and renewals, and copies of fronts and backs of ID cards for all inspectors listed on the matrix. Except as permitted for "inspectors-in-training," all special inspectors performing reinforced concrete, pre-stressed concrete, structural masonry, fireproofing and structural steel & welding special inspections shall be certified by applicable discipline. **Please put certification and I.D. card packages in alphabetical order and submit only those certifications that are applicable to this program.**

9.a Photo identification cards shall be provided for each inspector. The front of the card shall include the name and location of the issuing firm, inspector's name and photograph, and a statement signed by the responsible engineer ensuring the employee is experienced and certified in accordance with the criteria of this program. The reverse side of the card shall identify appropriate special inspection and testing categories provide by the firm. ID cards shall use an "X" to designate qualification in each category, and a "I-T" to designate in-training. These designations must be placed clearly to the left side of the applicable inspection type.

10 Wet signed and stamped statements from the responsible professional engineer(s):

- That he/she is the full-time employee responsible for supervision of technical staff and that all qualifications requirements and local building code requirements are followed by the agency and its employees.
- Certifying that the special inspectors will perform in accordance with CBC Chapter 17; And that they are identified, qualified, and issued I.D. cards according to current guidelines.
- Assuring that testing and inspection services will be performed in compliance with procedures specified in ASTM E329-09, in particular, paragraph 9.1: "It shall be the responsibility of the agency to ensure that it performs only tests and inspections, or both, for which it is adequately equipped and staffed, and that its employees perform only tests and inspections, or both, for which they are adequately trained."
- Completed, signed and stamped Acknowledgement of Review Process, responsible Engineer's Certification, and Special Inspection Agency Summary and Letter of Agreement (enclosed).

The required categorical information must be updated, including information for new employees, and submitted to the City of Richmond at least 90 days prior to the expiration date of the firm's recognition. Any changes to agency name, ownership, key personnel, responsible professional engineer, laboratory relocation, or additions and deletions of offices within the region must be reported to the City of Richmond within 90 days of the change. Relocated laboratories shall submit the updated CCRL report to the City of Richmond for review within 180 days. Failure to report these changes may result in revocation of the City of Richmond's qualification of that agency.

Exhibit A

**SAMPLE MATRIX**  
INSPECTOR QUALIFICATION MATRIX

Inspector Name	Date of Hire	ACI Grade 1	RC *	SM	PC	HSB	SW	NDT	SWC	FP
Inspector A	05/04/99	X	X	X	I-T	I-T				
Inspector B	07/31/98	X	X	X				X	X	X
Inspector C	10/01/00	X	X		X	X	X	X		
Inspector D	10/01/00	X	X	X	I-T	I-T	X		X	X
Inspector E	10/01/00				I-T				X	X

Legend:

RC = Reinforced Concrete

SM = Structural Masonry

FP = Fireproofing

PC = Prestressed Concrete

HSB = High Strength Bolting

SW = Steel Welding

SWC = Structural Wood Construction

NDT = Nondestructive Testing

I-T = in training as lacking  
certification and/or experience  
X = Meets experience and certain  
certification criteria

\* = American Concrete Institute (ACI) Grade 1 is required

## **Renewal Qualification of Special Inspection Agencies and Testing Laboratories**

The special inspection agencies and testing laboratories desiring to continue on construction projects within the City of Richmond are required to renew their qualification at least 90 days prior to their expiration date.

Include a current matrix of inspectors and evidence of certification.

The following statements must be signed and stamped by the responsible professional engineer(s):

- Acknowledgement of City of Richmond Review Process
- Responsible Engineer's Certification
- Special Inspection Agency Summary and Letter of Agreement

If you have any questions or concerns regarding qualification renewal, please contact the City of Richmond Planning and Building Services Department.



*Acknowledgement of City of Richmond Review Process*

Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Company Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Company Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

*As an officer of the company located at the address referenced above, I have requested a review of our application for approval as a Special Inspection Agency by the City of Richmond.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print name and title)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

## RESPONSIBLE ENGINEER'S

- A. *I am the "full time employee" responsible for the supervision of technical staff and certify that all qualification requirements and local building code requirements are followed by the agency and its employees.*
- B. *I certify that Special Inspectors will perform in accordance with CBC Chapter 17. Each Special Inspector will be identified, qualified, and issued ID cards according to the experience and certification requirements stated in the Special Inspection Qualification Guideline.*
- C. *I assure that Testing and Inspection Services will be performed in compliance with procedures specified in ASTM E 329-09, in particular, paragraph 9.1: "It shall be the responsibility of the agency to ensure that it performs only tests and inspections, or both, for which it is adequately equipped and staffed, and that its employees perform only tests and inspections, or both, for which they are adequately trained."*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Responsible Engineer (print name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Responsible Engineer (signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Affix Stamp Here

SPECIAL INSPECTION AGENCY SUMMARY AND LETTER OF AGREEMENT

Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Company Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Company Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and Address of Testing Laboratory \_\_\_\_\_  
(if different from the above)

Special Inspection Categories: RC ( ) PC ( ) SM ( ) HSB ( ) SW ( ) NDT ( ) SWC ( ) FP ( )

*I understand that any changes to agency name, ownership, key personal, responsible professional engineer, or additions and deletions of offices within the region must be reported within 90 days, in writing, to the City of Richmond. I further understand that failure to report these changes may result in forfeiture of the qualification of this agency. This agency agrees to abide by these conditions and will submit a report of any changes to the information submitted.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Responsible Engineer (print name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Responsible Engineer (signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Affix Stamp Here