



**INTERNATIONAL
ACCREDITATION SERVICE**
Leading Accreditors Since 1975

AC291 Special Inspection Agencies

**ACCREDITATION CRITERIA FOR IBC® SPECIAL INSPECTION
AGENCIES
AC291**

About IAS



International Accreditation Service (IAS) is a wholly owned subsidiary of the International Code Council (ICC), a professional membership association that develops the codes and standards used to construct residential and commercial buildings, including homes and schools.

About IAS



As one of the leading accreditation bodies in the United States, IAS is a signatory to several international mutual recognition arrangements (MRAs), which ensures worldwide acceptance of IAS-accredited organizations.

About IAS

- Fully recognized as an accreditation body by ILAC, NACLA and APLAC
- National and international organizations that oversee the proper operation and compliance with international standards of bodies that accredit testing laboratories, calibration laboratories and inspection bodies



INTERNATIONAL LABORATORY
ACCREDITATION COOPERATION



National Cooperation for
Laboratory Accreditation



What is Accreditation?

Accreditation is a formal, independent verification that a program or institution meets established quality standards and is competent to carry out specific conformity assessment tasks.

What is Accreditation?

Typically, governmental regulatory agencies such as the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) or the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) require accreditation to verify the technical competence of organizations like laboratories, inspection bodies and certification agencies.

What is Accreditation?

Organizations responsible for the public safety and welfare such as building departments, hospitals, schools, police and fire departments also seek accreditation to demonstrate their competence and reliability.

What is Accreditation?

Accreditation has been used for over 50 years as the definitive means of evaluating organizations, and is now utilized by all the world's major economies and many developing economies

Who Does IAS Accredit?

IAS accredits testing and calibration laboratories, inspection agencies, product certification agencies, inspection programs for metal building manufacturers, steel and concrete fabricator inspection programs, training agencies and curriculum developers, field evaluation bodies, building departments, and third-party building department service providers

Who Does IAS Accredite?

A pioneer in the accreditation profession, IAS actively develops new accreditation programs for organizations seeking to demonstrate the highest level of competence and service in an industry

IAS Accreditation Programs

Twelve Programs Currently

- Testing Laboratories
- Calibration Laboratories
- Inspection (Quality Control) Agencies
- Fabricator Inspection
- Building Departments
- Third Party Service Providers
- Special Inspection Agencies
- Product Certification Agencies
- Field Evaluation Bodies
- Training Agencies
- Curriculum Development
- Metal Building Inspection

Inspection Agency Accreditation

- IAS accreditation can be used to help companies or organizations improve the quality of their services or products thereby improving their public image and marketability. The IAS accreditation process provides independent, objective evidence that an organization operates at the highest level of ethical, legal and technical standards.

Advantages of IAS Accreditation

The accreditation process helps organizations improve their operations and quality of service based on actions taken to comply with accreditation requirements. Organizations involved in conformity assessment (i.e. testing laboratories, inspection agencies, etc.) improve their processes using input gained during onsite assessments and by learning about best practices from experienced IAS assessors and peer evaluators. Ultimately, accreditation results in reduced costs, time saving and improvement of products and services

Advantages of IAS Accreditation

- Provides proof of competence, impartiality, confidentiality and proper inspection methods

Inspection Agency Accreditation

- Based on ISO/IEC 17020:1998, the internationally recognized standard for inspection agencies
- In demand due to increased international trade and concerns about product failure, risks to health, and the need to meet legal, regulatory and customer requirements
- Provides proof of competence, impartiality, confidentiality and proper inspection methods

International Accreditation Service AC291

IAS Accreditation Committee:

A committee appointed by the IAS Board of Directors to monitor the work of and to develop accreditation criteria for IAS.

- Five Councils-
 - Testing laboratories
 - Calibration laboratories
 - Building department
 - Product certifiers
 - Training and curriculum developers

International Accreditation Service AC291

IAS Accreditation Criteria AC291 is designed to provide:

- Accredited SIA's are accepted by jurisdictions enforcing building codes
- A quality assurance program that will deliver a level playing field for all accredited agencies
- Provides confidence to the building owner
- Reduces the overall cost by reducing or eliminating rework

International Accreditation Service

AC291 Continued

Overview of AC291

- What is special inspection?
 - Monitoring the construction work critical to the integrity of the building structure to ensure that the construction progresses in accordance with the approved plan.
- Why special inspections needed?
 - A series of structural failures in 1982 prompted the United States Government to appoint a subcommittee to investigate the problem. ICC addressed the subcommittee findings by enacting and enforcing the special inspection provisions.
- Two major benefits through the special inspections are;
 - Public safety;
 - Contractors could continue to work even when the building department is closed.

International Accreditation Service AC291 Continued

How Does the IAS Accreditation Program Work?

- By establishing benchmarks for:
 - A quality assurance program complying with IAS AC291 and Rules of Procedure for IBC[®] Special Inspection Agency Accreditation and the IBC[®]
 - Policies for meeting the requirements of IAS AC291
 - Quality procedures for supporting the policies
 - Quality Tools to implement the policies and procedures
 - A current matrix of special inspector qualifications and corresponding certifications

International Accreditation Service Accreditation Criteria 291

Structure of Quality Assurance System

What is Quality?

A planned and systematic pattern of all actions necessary to provide adequate confidence that management, technical planning and controls deliver expected results.

International Accreditation Service AC291 Continued

Why is Quality Needed?

- A proactive approach to quality improves on efficiency and reduces costs associated with projects
- Provides repeatable service
- Maintains accountability
- Reduces down time
- Increases business
- Provides peace of mind for the consumer

International Accreditation Service

AC291 Continued

Quality Assurance

- IAS Accreditation Criteria for Special Inspection Agencies, AC291 establishes quality assurance and not quality control requirements.
- SIAs follow an established quality program.
- Benefits include well-documented and accurately reported inspection reports.
- Contributes to public safety.

International Accreditation Service

AC291 Continued

Quality Assurance (Cont.)

- IAS Accredits the quality system and overall operations of SIA's
- IAS does not approve the inspectors but evaluates their competency to provide inspections for which they are assigned by their management

Scope of Inspection

➤ **Section 3.2.1**

Agency's field and type of inspection, including detailed procedure for each field of inspection.

IAS offers accreditation in many fields (scopes) of special inspection

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Affidavit

➤ Section 3.2.5

An affidavit signed by a responsible officer of the agency attesting to compliance with the third-party requirements.

- The agency and its inspection staff should not be part of or have financial or other interest in the construction, manufacture, installation or maintenance of the structures or components, which they inspect;
- Entities that supply similar competitive items or services;
- The agency and its staff must not engage in any activities that may conflict with their independence of judgment and integrity;
- The agency must operate in a nondiscriminatory, transparent manner so as to allow full access to its services by interested parties.

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AC291 Section 3.2.6

Policies and procedures on how the agency ensures confidentiality of client information.

- The policies must identify the areas for maintaining confidentiality of client information and a procedure for implementation.
- Implementation of Sections 3.2.4 and 3.2.6 must provide objective evidence that the entire staff has read and understood these requirements.

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Inspector Matrix

AC291 Section 3.2.7.5

The matrix must include the following information:

- Name of the inspector;
- Inspector certification against the fields of inspections;
- The date of certification;
- The date of employment;
- The date of first monitored inspection.

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Equipment

AC291 Section 3.2.9

The Special Inspection Agency must have the following:

- Policies and procedures on calibration;
- Policies and procedures for maintenance;
- Procedures for transporting and handling field equipment;
- A list of equipment including the calibration date;
- Handling defective equipment, especially the nuclear density gauges.

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Record Retention and Backup

AC291 Section 3.2.14

The Special Inspection Agency must have the following documentation:

- Policies and procedures to retain of records of all activities;
- Policies and procedures for the security of the records;
- Back up records;

Records include but are not limited to the following:

- Contract review;
- Inspection and test reports;
- Insurance policies;
- NCR's and NCR resolutions;
- Calibration;
- Records of changes made to the approved documents;
- Complaints and resolutions.

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Complaints and Feedback

AC291 Section 3.2.16

Documented procedures for client feedback and for processing complaints and appeals from clients and regulatory agencies must be available.

- Positive feedback is a compliment.
- Complaints are opportunities for improvement if correctly handled.
- Records of all complaints and resolutions thereof must be maintained.

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Complaints and Feedback (Cont.)

Complaints include all negative feedbacks from anyone outside the agency that would impact the work undertaken by the agency.

The procedure must include:

- Receiving;
- Investigating;
- Contacting the complainant;
- Conveying the results of the investigation;
- The corrective actions planned and implemented;
- Root cause analysis and preventive actions taken
- Follow-up audit to verify that the action taken has met the intent.

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Inspection Reports

AC291 Section 4.0

Inspection reports issued by the agency shall accurately and clearly outline the results of special inspections.

Inspection reports shall comply with Section 1704 IBC Building Code and must contain the following information, as applicable:

- **4.1** Inspection date, and arrival and departure times of the inspector

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Training, Supervising and Monitoring

AC291 Section 5.0

- SIAs shall have procedures for the training and supervision/monitoring of inspectors.
- Detailed records of training and supervision/monitoring activities must be maintained and be made available for review.
- Procedures must include plans for continued training to keep pace with quality system changes, code changes and developing technology.

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Inspector Training

Certified Inspector is a qualified inspector. But may not be a competent inspector. SIAs must verify the competence of the inspector by observing his inspection in the field.

Accordingly, all inspectors must be trained in specific requirements by the field supervisor or senior Inspector or shall obtain training/education through other formal, arrangements that are applicable to the inspector's duties.

All such training must be documented by the agency.

IAS Special Inspection Agencies Inspector Responsibility (Cont.)

- Reviewing contract requirements-Did the inspector perform and understand the following functions:
 - Review duties, authority, qualification, scope of work, reporting requirements including lines of communication as required in the contract documents
 - Review contract specification
 - Review drawings, structural design and erection drawings
 - Understand how requests for information (RFI)s are effectively managed.

IAS Special Inspection Agencies Inspector Responsibility (Cont.).

- Know who the Engineer of Record and the Building Official are including their contact information
- Review the current schedule of activities included in the scope of work
- Determine if the contract documents require special (such as wind, seismic provisions etc) and which provisions apply for the project

“A Proud member of the International Code Council”

Thank You



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