



June 3, 2008

**TO: PARTIES INTERESTED IN INSPECTIONS FOR ICC-ES EVALUATION REPORTS**

**SUBJECT: Revisions to the Acceptance Criteria for Inspection Agencies, Subject AC304-0508-R1 (MB/SR)**

Dear Madam or Sir:

Revisions to the subject acceptance criteria were approved by the ICC-ES Evaluation Committee at the May 28, 2008, hearing, with a June 1, 2008 effective date. The criteria was revised primarily to add requirements for inspection agencies to use the current version of the ICC-ES forms, and to include requirements for changing inspection agencies.

A proposal was put forward by staff to identify minimum qualifications for inspectors that conduct qualifying inspections. The proposal was withdrawn as a result of comments made at the meeting. Staff seeks the help of interested parties to address this issue.

Evaluation reports issued on or after the effective date noted above, and falling within the scope of this criteria, will be required to comply with the enclosed edition of the criteria. Evaluation reports issued prior to the effective date may be in compliance either with the enclosed acceptance criteria or with the previous edition. Evaluation reports based on a superseded version of an acceptance criteria must be brought into compliance with the most recent edition at the time the reports are reissued. Therefore, applicants should submit data verifying compliance at the time they apply for re-examination.

If you have any questions, please contact Michael Beaton, Senior Regional Manager, at (800) 423-6587, extension 3292. You may also reach us by e-mail at [es@icc-es.org](mailto:es@icc-es.org).

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kurt Stochlia".

Kurt Stochlia, P.E.  
Vice President

KS/gh

Enclosure

cc: Evaluation Committee



## ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA FOR INSPECTION AGENCIES

### AC304

Approved May 2008

Effective June 1, 2008

Previously approved October 2005

### PREFACE

Evaluation reports issued by ICC Evaluation Service, Inc. (ICC-ES), are based upon performance features of the International family of codes and other widely adopted code families, including the Uniform Codes, the BOCA National Codes, and the SBCCI Standard Codes. Section 104.11 of the *International Building Code*® reads as follows:

The provisions of this code are not intended to prevent the installation of any materials or to prohibit any design or method of construction not specifically prescribed by this code, provided that any such alternative has been approved. An alternative material, design or method of construction shall be approved where the building official finds that the proposed design is satisfactory and complies with the intent of the provisions of this code, and that the material, method or work offered is, for the purpose intended, at least the equivalent of that prescribed in this code in quality, strength, effectiveness, fire resistance, durability and safety.

Similar provisions are contained in the Uniform Codes, the National Codes, and the Standard Codes.

This acceptance criteria has been issued to provide all interested parties with guidelines for demonstrating compliance with performance features of the applicable code(s) referenced in the acceptance criteria. The criteria was developed and adopted following public hearings conducted by the ICC-ES Evaluation Committee, and is effective on the date shown above. All reports issued or reissued on or after the effective date must comply with this criteria, while reports issued prior to this date may be in compliance with this criteria or with the previous edition. If the criteria is an updated version from the previous edition, a solid vertical line (|) in the margin within the criteria indicates a technical change, addition, or deletion from the previous edition. A deletion indicator (→) is provided in the margin where a paragraph has been deleted if the deletion involved a technical change. This criteria may be further revised as the need dictates.

ICC-ES may consider alternate criteria, provided the report applicant submits valid data demonstrating that the alternate criteria are at least equivalent to the criteria set forth in this document, and otherwise demonstrate compliance with the performance features of the codes. Notwithstanding that a product, material, or type or method of construction meets the requirements of the criteria set forth in this document, or that it can be demonstrated that valid alternate criteria are equivalent to the criteria in this document and otherwise demonstrate compliance with the performance features of the codes, ICC-ES retains the right to refuse to issue or renew an evaluation report, if the product, material, or type or method of construction is such that either unusual care with its installation or use must be exercised for satisfactory performance, or if malfunctioning is apt to cause unreasonable property damage or personal injury or sickness relative to the benefits to be achieved by the use of the product, material, or type or method of construction.

**Acceptance criteria are developed for use solely by ICC-ES for purposes of issuing ICC-ES evaluation reports.**

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# ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA FOR INSPECTION AGENCIES (AC304)

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

**1.1 Purpose:** The purpose of this acceptance criteria is to establish requirements for inspection agencies that conduct qualifying and follow-up inspections of products, materials or systems recognized in ICC-ES evaluation reports.

**1.2 Scope:** This criteria pertains to qualifying inspections of products, materials or systems recognized in ICC-ES evaluation reports, and to periodic follow-up inspections when these are required by the code, ICC-ES rules of procedure or a relevant ICC-ES acceptance criteria or evaluation guideline. The purpose of the inspections is to verify that the product being labeled with the ICC-ES evaluation report number is consistent with the product recognized in the evaluation report and with the quality documentation submitted to ICC-ES.

### 1.3 Reference Documents:

**1.3.1** ISO/IEC Standard 17020-1998, General Criteria for the Operation of Various Types of Bodies Performing Inspection.

**1.3.2** ICC-ES Acceptance Criteria for Quality Documentation (AC10).

### 1.4 Definitions:

**1.4.1 Announced Inspection:** An inspection that is scheduled in advance. Typically, announced inspections involve qualifying inspections of manufacturing facilities, or they occur where production is sporadic and notification of production is needed before an inspection can be conducted.

**1.4.2 Unannounced Inspection:** An inspection that is conducted at the manufacturing site without prior notification or with minimal prior notification.

**1.4.3 Listed Products:** Products required by the code or ICC-ES acceptance criteria to be subject to periodic inspection of production by an accredited inspection agency. For the purpose of this criteria, the terms "listed" and "labeled" shall be used synonymously.

**1.4.4 Manufacturing Facility:** A manufacturing facility is defined as the location or locations where any of the following occur: major production, critical assembly or labeling of the listed product.

## 2.0 REQUIREMENTS

### 2.1 Inspection Agencies:

**2.1.1** Inspection agencies shall comply with ISO/IEC Standard 17020 and shall be so accredited by the International Accreditation Service (IAS) or by an accreditation body that is a partner with IAS in a mutual recognition arrangement pertaining to inspection bodies. The scope of accreditation shall be consistent with the type of product being inspected, and shall include accreditation under the requirements of AC304.

**2.1.2** The agency shall have documented procedures for the qualification of personnel performing qualifying or follow-up inspections.

**2.1.3 Site of Inspections:** The inspection agency shall conduct inspections at the manufacturing location(s) at which the major quality control functions are conducted.

### 2.2 Qualifying Inspections:

**2.2.1** Prior to issuance of a new evaluation report, or to revision of an existing report where the revision includes adding a new product or a new manufacturing facility, a qualifying inspection shall be conducted by the agency and shall be reported to ICC-ES on a form, designated as Q-21, that is provided for that purpose. The agency shall use the most recent version of the form, which is available on the ICC-ES web site ([www.icc-es.org](http://www.icc-es.org).) Corrective action requests (CARs) resulting from the inspection relating to Part B of Form Q-21 shall be resolved to the satisfaction of the inspection agency, and their resolution reported to ICC-ES.

**2.2.2** The purpose of the qualifying inspection is to verify (1) that the manufacturer has the means, methods and manpower to produce the product that is being recognized in the evaluation report; (2) that the manufacturer is producing a product that is consistent with the product being recognized in the evaluation report; (3) that the manufacturer has a documented quality system that meets the requirements of AC10; and (4) that the manufacturer is operating in accordance with the documented quality system.

**2.2.3** ICC-ES shall provide to the agency a draft evaluation report, the product specifications submitted by the applicant and relevant production specification values. The agency shall correlate these documents to current production. The agency is authorized to obtain from the manufacturer sufficient information to correlate the product originally qualified to current production. This information may include, for example, product specifications, test reports or other initial qualifying data.

**2.2.4** The agency shall validate the documented quality system in accordance with AC10 requirements and shall verify the product specifications and relevant production specification values provided to the agency by ICC-ES. The agency shall confirm to ICC-ES that no significant changes have occurred, or shall notify ICC-ES of any significant changes.

**2.3 Follow-up Inspections:** When an inspection agency contracts with an ICC-ES evaluation report holder to conduct follow-up inspections, the inspections shall comply with Section 2.3 of this criteria.

**2.3.1** The agency shall have documented procedures for conducting the inspections.

**2.3.2** The agency shall verify that the manufacturer maintains a quality system conforming to the requirements of AC10. A copy of the manufacturer's quality documentation shall be made available to the agency.

**2.3.3** The inspections shall (1) assess the effective implementation of the manufacturer's quality system in accordance with the requirements of AC10; and (2) verify that the product being manufactured is consistent with the product specifications provided to ICC-ES.

**2.3.4** The frequency of follow-up inspections shall be a minimum of four unannounced inspections reasonably spaced throughout the year or as otherwise required by relevant acceptance criteria or as agreed to by ICC-ES. When production is sporadic, the inspection agency shall communicate with the manufacturer to determine when

## ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA FOR INSPECTION AGENCIES (AC304)

production will take place and will schedule inspections for the period of production.

In situations where a facility has not produced ICC-ES-recognized products for an extended period of time, a minimum of one unannounced, on-site inspection per year shall be conducted by the inspection agency. The inspection shall be done to independently determine whether any significant changes have occurred in the quality system documentation that might adversely affect the ability of the manufacturer to produce products that comply with the evaluation report.

**2.3.5** When requested by ICC-ES, the agency conducting inspections for the ICC-ES evaluation report holder shall provide a Quality Control Inspection Summary form documenting inspections conducted since the last issuance of the evaluation report. Significant nonconformances and resolution of the nonconformances shall be documented and included with the form. When required, forms will be requested when the report applicant applies for renewal of the evaluation report.

### **2.4 Change of Agency:**

When a report holder changes the inspection agency used for follow-up inspections, the incoming inspection agency

shall conduct a qualifying inspection in accordance with Section 2.2 of this criteria and shall report the results of the inspection to ICC-ES on a form designated as Q-21, which is provided for that purpose. The incoming agency shall also identify and resolve all outstanding CARs identified by the outgoing inspection agency.

### **2.5 Notification:**

**2.5.1** The agency shall notify ICC-ES in writing prior to termination of the report holder's inspection agreement with the accredited inspection agency.

**2.5.2** The agency shall notify ICC-ES in writing if there is a failure to conduct follow-up inspections in conformance with Section 2.3.4.

**2.5.3** Whenever an inspection indicates a major quality control deficiency, as determined by the agency, it shall be brought to the immediate attention of the manufacturer for correction. If the deficiency is not corrected by the manufacturer within ten days of notification, the deficiency shall be brought to the attention of ICC-ES. The agency shall provide details of supplementary inspections and related actions resulting in correction of the deficiency. ■