



Accreditation of Federal Inspection Agencies (FIA)

The National Board of Boiler and Pressure Vessel Inspectors
1055 Crupper Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43229
614.888.8320

 **nationalboard.org**

NB-390, Revision 9
Approved by BOT: 7/30/2020

Accreditation of Federal Inspection Agencies (FIA)

1.0 **Scope**

A Federal Inspection Agency is an organization designated by, or acceptable to a branch of the US Federal Government.

This document contains requirements for Federal Inspection Agencies to obtain a National Board Certificate of Accreditation for the purpose of employing National Board Commissioned Inspectors to perform inservice inspection activities of items owned/operated by the organization.

An FIA seeking a National Board *Certificate of Accreditation* shall have and maintain a written quality program that meets the requirements of this document and NB-381, *Quality Program for Inspection Organizations*.

A FIA meeting the requirements of this document may perform Inservice Inspections, and may extend their scope to include Repair/Alteration Inspections for National Board Inspection Code (NBIC) Compliance

An FIA may perform authorization, in-process and acceptance inspections (including signing the NBIC report forms) associated with repairs/ alterations of pressure-retaining items owned/operated by the Federal Agency. This includes repairs/alterations performed by the Federal Agency holding an "R" Certificate or by other "R" Certificate Holders performing work on pressure retaining items owned/operated by the Federal Agency. A description of the process for performing these inspections shall be included in the Quality Program.

2.0 **Application**

- An FIA seeking to obtain or renew a *Certificate of Accreditation* shall apply to the National Board using forms obtained from the National Board. (See Paragraph 9.0.) Application for renewal shall be made at least six (6) months prior to the expiration date of the *Certificate of Accreditation*.
- Applicants for a new or renewed *Certificate of Accreditation* require a review at a location or locations where the applicant's inspection activities are controlled. The applicant shall specify the location(s) at which the written quality program will be fully demonstrated. It is not necessary to review each facility covered by the same program provided documentation is made available to the review team.

An FIA, in the process of obtaining a *Certificate of Accreditation*, but is ineligible to employ Inspectors prior to the issuance of the *Certificate of Accreditation*, may request a *Provisional Certificate of Accreditation* from the National Board. An FIA seeking to obtain a *Provisional Certificate of Accreditation* shall apply to the National Board using forms obtained from the National Board. (See paragraph 9.0.) The *Provisional Certificate of*

Accreditation of Federal Inspection Agencies (FIA)

Accreditation permits the prospective FIA to employ National Board Commissioned Inspectors during the process of accreditation. The *Provisional Certificate of Accreditation* also permits employees of the prospective FIA to make application for a National Board commission or endorsement. The organization will not be permitted to perform inspections until Inspectors have received their commissions and the organization has been issued a *Certificate of Accreditation*. Further details of the process are described in Attachment 1.

- The FIA shall include a controlled copy of its quality program with the application for a *Certificate of Accreditation* and the application for a *Provisional Certificate of Accreditation*.
- Where the written quality program exists in more than one language, at least one version shall be in English and identified as the authoritative version.

3.0 **Review of Applicant's Facility**

- Prior to issuance or renewal of a *Certificate of Accreditation*, the FIA, its written quality program, and its facilities are subject to a review and verification of implementation of its quality program by the National Board. The organization shall fully demonstrate the implementation of the Quality Program.
- Upon notification of the review dates from the National Board, it is the responsibility of the FIA to make arrangements for the review.
- The decision to issue, renew or withhold the *Certificate of Accreditation* is determined by the National Board based upon information contained in a *Quality Review Report*, NB-244, prepared by the Review Team Leader.
- When all requirements have been met, a *Certificate of Accreditation* will be issued. *Certificates of Accreditation* are issued for a three (3) year period, and shall expire on the triennial anniversary date.

4.0 **Inservice Commissioned Inspector Requirements**

The FIA shall employ inspectors who meet the requirements of NB-263, *RCI-1, Rules for Commissioned Inspectors* and who hold a valid National Board Inservice Commission (IS), and an R Endorsement if the scope of inspection includes repair/alteration inspections.

* **5.0 Organization and Management**

- In addition to the employment of the Inspector(s) described in Paragraph 4.0, the FIA shall employ one or more supervisors/technical manager(s), however named, who have the overall responsibility for: carrying out inspection activities in accordance with this document; the required duties described in NB-263, *RCI-1, Rules for Commissioned Inspectors*; and monitoring the performance of the Inspector. The supervisor/technical manager shall also hold a valid National Board Inservice Commission (IS) and an R Endorsement, if the scope of inspection includes repair/alteration inspections.
- The FIA shall provide one or more supervisors/technical manager(s) to be in attendance during the review and verification of implementation of its quality program by the National Board.
- The FIA shall provide for ongoing training to maintain the competence of its personnel.
- The FIA shall provide instructions to Inspectors specifying their respective duties and responsibilities.

* **6.0 Independence, Impartiality and Integrity**

- The personnel of the FIA shall be free from any financial or other pressures which might affect their judgment. Procedures shall be implemented to ensure that persons or organizations external to the FIA, cannot influence the results of inspections carried out.
- The FIA shall be independent to the extent that is required with regard to the conditions under which it performs its services. It shall meet the criteria described below:
 - The FIA shall be independent of the parties involved.
 - The FIA and its staff responsible for carrying out the inspection shall not be the designer, manufacturer or supplier of the items which they inspect, nor the authorized representative of any of these parties.
 - The FIA and its staff shall not engage in any activities that may conflict with their independence of judgment and integrity in relation to their inspection activities.
 - There shall be an agreement that the National Board Commission and Endorsements issued to the Inspector will remain the property of the FIA, and will be returned to the FIA upon termination of the agreement.

Accreditation of Federal Inspection Agencies (FIA)

- There shall be an agreement that the Inspector will not engage in any activity constituting a conflict of interest.

7.0 **FIA Quality Program**

The FIA Quality Program shall, at a minimum, include the elements identified in NB-381, *Quality Program For Inspection Organizations*. All required elements shall be addressed and documented in the program quality manual.

Once a successful review has been completed, a controlled copy of the most current approved Quality Manual must be submitted to the National Board.

8.0 **Due Process**

The National Board provides procedural due process in connection with accreditation activities. There are several levels to which an aggrieved party may appeal. The process may be initiated by contacting the National Board's Executive Director.

9.0 **National Board Forms/Information**

- All documents and communications with the National Board shall be in the English language.
- The Application form for a new or renewed *Certificate of Accreditation* and the Application form for a *Provisional Certificate of Accreditation* may be obtained from the National Board Accreditation Department.
- The FIA may submit the Application and the Quality Program via email or through conventional mail services.
- Contact with the National Board for Application forms, submittal of Applications/Quality Programs and general correspondence may be made as follows:
 - Email: accreditation@nationalboard.org
 - Address: The National Board of Boiler and Pressure Vessel Inspectors
Accreditation Department
1055 Crupper Avenue
Columbus, OH 43229

**Issuance of National Board Commission/Endorsements
to Inspectors Employed by Prospective FIA's Making an Initial Application
for an FIA Certificate of Accreditation**

- Inspectors/Supervisors holding valid National Board commissions and applicable endorsements may have their Commissions and Endorsements transferred from a previous employer to the prospective FIA making initial application for an FIA *Certification of Accreditation*. The Inspector shall submit an *Application for Change of Employment*, NB-216-1, to the National Board.

Upon acceptance of the Application, the National Board will send an acknowledgement to the prospective FIA indicating the Inspector's/ Supervisor's commissions/endorsements will be transferred to the FIA upon issuance of the FIA *Certificate of Accreditation*.

- Inspectors not holding a National Board commissions/endorsements shall submit an *Application for the Inservice Commission* (NB-120-1) to the National Board, and shall:
 - identify the prospective FIA as their employer,
 - comply with the education and experience requirements of NB-263, *RCI-1*, *Rules for Commissioned Inspectors*, and
 - complete any required training and pass the examination for the commission.

When the above requirements are met, the National Board will send an acknowledgement to the prospective FIA indicating the individual's commissions/endorsements will be issued to the FIA upon issuance of the FIA *Certificate of Accreditation*.