Accreditation of Federal Inspection Agencies (FIA)

The National Board of Boiler and Pressure Vessel Inspectors
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NB-390, Revision 7
Approved by BOT: 10/03/16
1.0 Scope

A Federal Inspection Agency designated by, or acceptable to, a branch of the US Federal Government for performing inspection activities on federally owned facilities and those privately owned boilers and pressure vessels falling within a branch of the US Federal government’s regulatory control shall be accredited by the National Board in accordance with the requirements of this document.

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 may perform inspections in one or both of the following scopes:

- Inservice Inspections
- 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
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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 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.

- All documents and communications with the National Board shall be in the English language.

*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 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.

* 7.0 FIA Quality Program

The FIA Quality Program shall, at a minimum, include the following elements and be documented in a manual:

a) Statement of Authority. The program shall identify the authority and responsibility of those persons charged with ensuring the quality program is implemented as described, and their freedom to identify quality
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problems, and to initiate, recommend, and provide solutions. The quality program shall have full support of management, signed and dated by senior management.

b) **Organization.** The Program shall document the organizational structure, functional responsibilities, levels of authority, and lines of responsibilities for activities required for compliance with requirements of this document.

c) **Program Description.** The Program shall describe the scope of the activities for which the Program applies. The Program shall document the policies and describe the process for the implementation of the requirements of this document.

d) **Document Control.** The Program shall describe the process for the review and revision of the Program. Changes to the Program shall be controlled and the process for review and approval of changes shall be specified. The Program shall be controlled to assure appropriate distribution to and use at the location(s) where the prescribed activity is performed.

e) **Training.** The Program shall describe the process for the indoctrination and training of personnel.

f) **Records.** The Program shall describe the process for records management. The description shall include the requirements and the responsibilities for record identification, generation, distribution, and retention. Documentation of inspector qualifications shall be retained, including NB Commission number, by the employer and shall be made available for review by the Jurisdictional Authorities and the National Board upon request.

The records necessary to verify compliance with this document, except for personnel qualification records, shall be maintained for a minimum of five (5) years. The personnel qualification records necessary to verify compliance with this document shall be maintained while the individual is providing inspection services and for a minimum of five (5) years after the individual ceases to provide services.

g) **Inspection Methods for Repairs/Alterations.** The Program shall describe the method of authorizing and accepting repairs/alterations (including signing the NBIC report forms) if the FIA performs such acceptance inspections on pressure retaining items owned/operated by the organization.

h) **Inspection Methods.** The Program shall describe the method of developing, approving and controlling the written process covering the inspection of pressure retaining items, including the scope of expected activity. The method for performing and documenting inspection activities
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shall be described in sufficient detail to permit the Inspector to determine at what stages specific inspections are due to be performed.


\( i \) Reporting. The Program shall describe the process used by the Inspector to take necessary action if an unsafe condition is encountered and to resolve conflicts by referring to a higher authority of the organization.

\( j \) Control of Contracted Services. The Program shall describe the process for contracting and control of services such as NDE, if applicable.

\( k \) Approval. All changes, except as noted below, require prior review and approval of the National Board before implementation. Editorial or other minor changes that do not materially impact the Program are not required to be approved by the National Board. Such changes shall be processed in accordance with the document control provisions of the Program.

\( l \) Audits. Internal audits shall be described in the written program. Areas which shall be addressed include scheduling, use of procedures, documentation, management review, corrective actions/follow-ups, personnel qualifications and maintenance of audit reports.

\( m \) Forms. Internal forms used in the implementation of the quality program shall be included in the written program.

\( n \) National Board Copy. The FIA shall provide the National Board with a controlled copy of the FIA quality program manual.

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

- 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.