

# THE AC472 ACCREDITATION PROGRAM SPECIFIERS



## What is AC472 Accreditation Program?

The AC472 Accreditation Program is the most comprehensive quality assurance accreditation program of its kind. A unique characteristic of the AC472 Accreditation Program is that it audits the integrity of design engineering and manufacturing processes. It focuses on several key areas:

- Audit of order documents providing the customer with clear information on what he/she has ordered.
- Audit of the design/detailing process to assure adherence to requested codes and to confirm that the project requirements are met in a rational engineering manner. This audit not only covers the building-code applications but also the proper use of design standards such as AISC, AISI, etc.
- Audit of raw material usages including proper ASTM standards, ordering practices, tracking of mill certifications, product traceability, etc.
- Audits assure comprehensive traceability of materials and workmanship.
- Audit of manufacturing practices including machinery calibrations, measuring tools, weld certifications, etc.
- Audits to ensure the metal building manufacturer has a well-managed quality assurance system and a qualified staff. This includes verification of licensed professional engineers who design and detail the metal building system, and certified weld inspectors.

This is all verified annually through two on-site inspections of the firm's design and manufacturing facilities and of representative projects to confirm that the appropriate standards are in place and being applied.

This assures customers that their manufacturer has comprehensive quality assurance processes in place that provide high-quality, reliable buildings.

## Why require an accredited manufacturer?

Requiring an AC472-accredited manufacturer provides an extra level of assurance that your building supplier's engineering/order/design/fabrication processes all conform to high-quality standards and are evaluated by a respected independent third party.

Other advantages, which expedite the building approval process, include: building officials can deem AC472-accredited manufacturers as approved fabricators as defined in Chapter 17

of the International Building Code; elimination of additional inspections; cost savings to verify code compliance of metal building fabrication; and assurance the metal building manufacturer's staff has a well-qualified quality system in place.

## Benefits to the Specifier

Benefits to the specifier include:

- You know that the manufacturer undergoes an independent third-party review twice a year and has dedicated resources to provide quality work.
- By requiring accreditation, you can be assured that suppliers have passed the stringent audit requirements of the AC472 Accreditation Program.
- The quality of partners in the building team is improved.
- Allowing only accredited suppliers helps protect your good name by guaranteeing that an audited supplier is on the project.
- Since the specifier is not completing the structural design, accreditation assures that the product is designed by professional engineers with demonstrated knowledge of building systems and applicable codes. The specifier also can be confident that structural welding operations are overseen by certified weld inspectors.

## How will you be sure your customer is buying a building from an AC472-accredited manufacturer?

Only accept bids from IAS AC472-accredited manufacturers. Make sure the contractor tells you the brand of building he is supplying. Also, check the complete list of accredited companies and facilities ([http://www.iasonline.org/Metal\\_Building\\_Systems/MB.html](http://www.iasonline.org/Metal_Building_Systems/MB.html)). If your building brand is not listed on that website, you should ask why the manufacturer has not been accredited.

## And last!

Do not be confused by other certification programs such as ISO or the AISC Fabricators Program. These programs are valuable for some forms of construction, but only the IAS AC472 Accreditation Program addresses all aspects of a metal building system manufacturer's operation, including design engineering.



**Q. What is the International Accreditation Service, Inc.?**

A. The International Accreditation Service (IAS) is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the International Code Council, which evaluates and accredits building departments, special inspection agencies, testing and calibration laboratories, fabricator inspection programs, and oversees the AC472 Accreditation Program for Metal Building Systems Manufacturers.

**Q. What do they do?**

A. IAS measures a manufacturer's ability to conform to documents and standards referenced in building codes through onsite assessment and periodic monitoring by IAS-accredited third-party inspection agencies. It also scrutinizes a manufacturer's quality assurance program.

**Q. Why was the AC472 Accreditation Program developed?**

A. As industry products and design programs advanced, metal building systems became very successful in entering new markets involving larger buildings with high human occupancy. Thus, the members of the Metal Building Manufacturers Association (MBMA), who developed this expanding technology, felt a responsibility to work with IAS to develop an accreditation program to critically evaluate the sales, engineering and manufacturing functions in the metal building systems industry and to comply with the special inspection requirements in Chapter 17 of the International Building Code®.

**Q. There are other accreditation and certification programs like ISO and the AISC heavy fabrication programs. Don't these accomplish the same things as AC472?**

A. No. Those programs only address the manufacturing process--not the unique needs of building systems.

**Q. Why are those needs unique?**

A. Since the design, detailing and manufacturing is done by the same company, these processes are mutually dependent and need to be evaluated together.

**Q. Why doesn't the metal building industry operate like the conventional steel construction process whereby a design professional designs and sizes the steel, with fabricators then bidding on the final design?**

A. The specialized engineering and manufacturing technology of the industry involves tapered beams, rigid frames, cold-formed secondary components, and roll-formed sheeting materials. You cannot segregate the design and manufacturing processes.

**Q. What if the building is supplied by a non-accredited company?**

A. If this happens, you can't know with certainty that the supplier you chose has been subjected to the scrutiny of two annual independent audits that assess design techniques, raw materials, ordering and handling, and manufacturing processes.

**Q. Since all MBMA member companies are committed to accreditation, does that mean that MBMA and AC472 accreditation are synonymous?**

A. No. Any company that meets the AC472 Accreditation Program's strict criteria can be accredited whether or not it is a member of the MBMA.

**Q. Why is the AC472 Accreditation Program a principal focus of the MBMA?**

A. The members of the MBMA sponsor and conduct much of the research targeted on improving building systems technology. Accreditation reinforces the technical efforts of the MBMA in the marketplace and the quality level in the industry.

**Q. If I only accept proposals from AC472 accredited companies, will I have such a limited number of qualified bidders that I end up paying more for my building?**

A. No. There are a significant number of companies with multiple accredited facilities throughout the U.S. who can provide you with competitive choices. A list of accredited firms, along with certificates, can be seen on [http://www.iasonline.org/Metal\\_Building\\_Systems/MB.html](http://www.iasonline.org/Metal_Building_Systems/MB.html).

**Q. If a company is not accredited, does that mean their buildings are not safe?**

A. No, their buildings could be properly designed and fabricated. However, their practices have not been subject to the rigors of an outside audit.

**Q. Is it possible that requiring a building from an accredited manufacturer could lead to lower insurance rates?**

A. It's possible. Insurers are always looking for ways to reduce their risks, and a building designed and manufactured by an accredited manufacturer could potentially reduce insurance risk.

