



Standard Specification for Agencies Involved in Testing, Quality Assurance, and Evaluating of Manufactured Building Components¹

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1. Scope

1.1 This specification defines the minimum requirements for agencies engaged in inspections and testing performance in accordance with ASTM standards for factory built building components and assemblies.

1.2 The criteria in this specification are provided for assessing the competence of an agency to properly perform designation testing, quality assurance, and inspection.

1.3 This specification does not cover Special Inspections or construction materials testing or inspection, or both. See Specification E329 for these items.

1.4 The criteria presented herein are divided into three categories of endeavor, namely,

Part A—Standards and Criteria for Testing Agencies

Part B—Standards and Criteria for Quality Assurance Agencies

Part C—Standards and Criteria for Evaluating Agencies

1.5 The fundamental purpose of this specification is to provide criteria for evaluating an agency as denoted in 1.4 either by a user of that service or by an accrediting authority.

1.6 It is not the purpose of this specification to provide a basis for determining the quality of a product or service being evaluated.

1.7 This specification is not intended for the evaluation of those activities normally associated with the production and sale of products and the like, such as a manufacturer's internal quality program. However, any organization may request or perform an evaluation of its own in-house facilities under this specification if it so desires.

1.8 It is not the intent of this specification to be the basis for the determination of the type of agency to be selected by the user.

1.9 This specification is used in conjunction with Specification E541 and Practice E651/E651M.

1.10 The use of SI or inch – pound units, or combination of, will be the responsibility of the technical committees referred to in this standard.

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards*:²

E329 Specification for Agencies Engaged in Construction Inspection, Testing, or Special Inspection

E541 Specification for Agencies Engaged in System Analysis and Compliance Assurance for Manufactured Building

E651/E651M Practice for Evaluating Capabilities of Agencies Involved in System Analysis and Compliance Assurance for Manufactured Building

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions*:

3.1.1 *accrediting authority*—a formal body (or an individual user) that evaluates the capability of an agency in certain specific fields of activity.

3.1.2 *affiliate*—as used in this specification, a corporate or organizational entity that has a management or an ownership relationship, or both, with the agency being evaluated. It does *not* refer to a contractual relationship between organizations, nor does it include the membership of a trade or similar association, or to the companies represented by such membership.

3.1.3 *agency*—an organization or part of an organization, engaged in the activities of testing, quality assurance, or evaluating test results.

3.1.4 *certification*—the process by which recognition is obtained from an appropriate party that a product meets certain specified requirements. Prototype or production models, or both, of the product(s) will have been tested and inspected to check that they do meet the requirements. Quality assurance programs are used to ensure that the product(s) continue to

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² For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, www.astm.org, or contact ASTM Customer Service at service@astm.org. For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

comply with the specified requirements. Satisfactory tests, inspections, and quality assurance are for the basis for certification. Certification may be evidenced by labeling of the product.

3.1.5 *criteria*—common characteristics pertaining to organization, human resources, material resources, and quality systems which provide a basis for evaluating agencies as to their capability to objectively and competently provide the specific service(s) needed by the user.

3.1.6 *evaluating*—the function of obtaining data developed by a testing agency, and utilizing such data to perform calculations, determine suitability, project results, or otherwise draw conclusions resulting from an analysis of these data.

3.1.7 *human resources*—those elements of support and capability that are provided by humans using their mental and physical capabilities.

3.1.8 *inspection*—the process of measuring, examining, testing, gaging, or making other determinations with respect to materials, products, services, or environments.

3.1.9 *material resources*—the instrumentalities, documentation, environments, structures, etc., needed to augment the elements of support and capability provided by humans. (See *human resources*.)

3.1.10 *organization component*—a portion of an organization with specific tasks and activities that constitute a part of the total effort and accomplishments of the organization.

3.1.11 *quality*—the totality of features and characteristics of a material, product, service, system, or environment that bear on its capability to satisfy a specified need(s).

3.1.12 *quality assurance*—a planned system of activities whose purpose is to provide assurance that the overall quality control program (see quality control) is in fact being effectively implemented. This system involves a continuing evaluation of the adequacy and effectiveness of the overall quality control program with a view to having corrective action initiated where necessary. For a specific material, product, service, etc., this involves verification, audits, and evaluations of the quality factors that affect the specification, production, inspection, and use of the material product, service, system, or environment.

3.1.13 *quality control*—a planned system of activities whose purpose is to provide a level of quality that meets the needs of users; also, the use of such a system. The objective of quality control is to provide an overall system integrating the quality factors of several related steps including: the proper specification for what is wanted; production to meet the full intent of the specification; inspection to determine whether the resulting material, product, service, etc., is in accord with the specification; and review of usage to determine necessary revisions of the specification.

3.1.14 *testing*—the determination, by technical means, of the properties, performance, or elements of materials, products, services, systems, or environments, which may involve application of established scientific principles and procedures.

4. Significance and Use

4.1 This specification provides basic criteria for evaluating the qualifications of agencies utilizing the ASTM test methods

to test and evaluate manufactured building components. The existence of a formal accrediting authority such as a federal, state, municipal, or nongovernmental body is not necessary for the use of this specification. These criteria may be supplemented by more specific criteria for particular classes of testing, quality assurance, and evaluative agencies.

4.2 The intent of this specification is to provide a “consensus-system” standardized basis for evaluating a testing, quality assurance, or evaluating agency with respect to its capability to provide the specific service(s) needed by the user without prejudice to the agency offering other services or being affiliated with other agencies or organizations. In those situations where a strict literal interpretation of the phrase “shall be made available,” as used in this specification, would be inordinately burdensome to an agency, it will generally be sufficient that the agency concerned has the information available for “on-site” review. This specification is not intended to be used by accredited agencies or personnel in the performance of Special Inspection services listed in the IBC Code or any other Code.

4.3 The criteria of this specification are described in terms of the basic information necessary for an accrediting authority to evaluate the capability, with respect to objectivity, and competency of a testing, quality assurance, and evaluating agency regarding common characteristics pertaining to the organization, human resources, material resources, and quality systems employed by the agency in performing the services offered. Typically, accreditation of an agency involves the following three essential phases:

4.3.1 Submittal, to an involved accrediting authority, of basic information in accordance with the criteria of this specification by an interested agency.

4.3.2 Evaluation of the agency-submitted information by the involved accrediting authority.

4.3.3 Verification, “on-site,” of the agency-submitted information by the representative(s) of the involved accrediting authority.

4.4 Although three categories are presented, an agency may provide one or any combination of these categories for which it can qualify. An agency requesting qualification under more than one category must satisfy the criteria for each category for which acceptability is desired.

4.5 The criteria set forth herein represent areas upon which agreement can be reached. There may be other areas to be given consideration which may be of importance to the user. The user should include such other areas as a part of its own criteria.

4.6 This specification represents minimum criteria necessary to perform, monitor, or evaluate the test results of those standards promulgated by ASTM Committee E06.

4.7 It is anticipated that the ultimate user of this specification will have the expertise necessary to exercise good judgment in the areas of human resources, physical resources, and quality systems of the agency being evaluated.

NOTE 1—For example, when judging the qualifications of the various individuals in a particular agency, related factors or alternative resources