

PRESTRESS CERTIFICATION FAQs

Q. Why has NPCA created a Prestress Certification Program?

A. NPCA's Prestress Certification Program is a natural expansion of NPCA's already mature Precast Concrete Certification Program. As a representative of manufacturers that produce precast, prestressed and concrete pipe products, NPCA's mission is to raise quality standards throughout the industry. The Prestress Certification Program provides prestressed concrete producers an additional option in the marketplace for independent third-party certification of their plants. NPCA supports all third-party certification efforts for the industry because they raise the quality standards while minimizing the inspection burden for specifiers and regulators.

Q. When was it launched?

A. The Prestress Certification Program was approved in the fall of 2007.

Q. Who created the Prestress Certification requirements?

A. NPCA's Quality Assurance Committee, with the support of the NPCA Technical Committee oversaw the development of the Prestress Certification Program, which is an extension of NPCA's long-standing, nationally recognized Precast Certification Program. As part of NPCA's commitment to developing a rigorous and thorough certification program, NPCA consulted closely with two ENR Top 500 design firms; several state DOT organizations; multiple prestressed concrete manufacturers; and professors with several top civil engineering university programs.

Q. How is the Prestress Certification Program similar to the Precast Certification Program?

A. The two programs are parts of the same whole. The Prestress Certification Program quality requirements are in addition to NPCA's Precast Certification Program. In order to earn a Prestress Certification designation a plant must meet all applicable requirements in the current NPCA Quality Control Manual for Precast and Prestressed Concrete Plants (NPCA QC Manual) in addition to the requirements of the Prestress Certification Program. These additional requirements are detailed in chapter 7 of the NPCA QC Manual.

Plants that elect to participate in the traditional Precast Certification Program will continue to refer to chapters 1-6 of the NPCA QC Manual for requirements applicable to their certification.

Q. How does the Prestress Certification Program differ from the Precast Certification Program?

A. In addition to the requirements specific to prestressed concrete, the Prestress Certification Program will conduct two unannounced inspections annually. The Precast Certification Program will continue to have one unannounced inspection each year. In addition to these required inspections, NPCA conducts an additional unannounced inspection at 10 percent of the plants participating in the program. These inspections are conducted at no additional cost to the plants, and are an added measure of quality control for the program.

Q. How much does the Prestress Certification Program cost?

A. The annual prestress certification fee for NPCA members is \$12,000, which includes the fee for plant certification. The fee for non-members is \$17,000. This fee includes at least two inspections per year. The fee for precast certification only (without prestressed) will continue to be \$3,450 for NPCA members and \$6,000 for non-members, and will include at least one inspection annually.

Q. Who performs the inspections?

A. A representative from one of three independent engineering firms performs the on-site plant audits. This representative is responsible for scheduling and performing the inspection. The inspector then provides a report to NPCA detailing the inspection findings and grade. NPCA will forward the report to the plant.

Q. What resources does NPCA have to help me prepare for the Prestress Certification Program?

A. NPCA's Technical Services staff is always willing to discuss the requirements of the program with you, as well as an optional pre-certification consultation program that can help you prepare for the Prestress Certification Program.

For more information about NPCA's Plant Certification Program please contact Richard Krolewski, promotion specialist, at (800) 366-7731 or via email at rkrolewski@precast.org.

