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# The Construction File

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## *A Guide to Standards and Practices in the Construction Industry*

### **Myths of Gold Seal Requirements as a Condition of Contract**

Recently there have been public owners who have implemented requirements for certification for Site Superintendents as a condition of contract on construction projects. The certification has been the CCA Gold Seal certification with the alternative requirement that the Site Superintendent be interned in the Gold Seal program within a specified time period, after award of contract. This development has raised concerns in some sectors; it is obvious that a bit of background information on this matter is required.

This requirement is the outcome of public owners looking for ways to manage the risks associated with the level of expertise of project personnel under stipulated sum bidding. The requirement has been a response to the owners desires to implement a standard that manages the level of expertise managing their project sites. The Site Superintendent is the person they consider the first line of responsibility on their project and, who has significant control over the schedule and quality of the workmanship. The expertise of the site supervision is the one area that owners report to the Construction Association as the most important in the success of a project. For this reason, due to earlier projects where inexperienced site supervision has had less than desirable outcomes, these owners have decided they need to take action to reduce their risk.

Rather than making up their own requirements they looked to the industry for a solution. This was a commendable decision because history shows that working with the industry has led to mutually workable solutions. Consequently it evolved that Gold Seal could be a method of certification; however, with the clear caution that implementing such a standard may limit the ability of bidders who would bid on their projects. It was then suggested that standards for site supervision could be implemented with a minimum requirement to have the person interned in the Gold Seal program, rather than an instantaneous need for contractors to have Superintendents with Gold Seal Certification. This would allow raising the bar but would not limit the owner's capability to secure competitive bids. Nor, would it limit the capability of any contractor to bid.

The question has also arisen about whether a Gold Seal requirement as a condition of contract is a pre-qualification or qualification criteria? We do not see this as pre-qualification or unacceptable qualification criteria as it would be a comparable standard to the requirements for a Canadian Welding Bureau certificate or any other level of certification that may be specified in bidding documents.

Responding to the myths of Gold Seal as a Condition of Contract:

- It does not limit the owner's capability to secure competitive bids nor, would it limit the capability of any contractor to bid when implemented with the minimum requirement for indenturing in the Gold Seal Program after award of contract.
- It is not pre-qualification or qualification criteria but is like any other level of certification that may be specified for personnel on a project.
- It is not an effort to exclude potential bidders by limiting the number of eligible supervisors in the market.
- It is an effort to insure that a standard that has been built for and by industry is utilized by owners to satisfy their requirements.

For the BCCA Gold Seal as Condition of Contract policy go to:  
<http://www.bccasn.com/policies/goldseal.html>

or view our Construction File on the policy at:  
<http://www.bccasn.com/constrfile/ConstrFile0505.pdf>.

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