

Choosing a Project Inspector



By Sandy Pringle

Following are some things to think about when choosing a project inspector

What is Title 24?

Title 24 is the governing set of codes for construction on State projects, including schools. It consists of the California Building Code, Plumbing, Electrical, Mechanical, Administrative, Fire and ADA Compliance codes and, by reference, another 48" high stack of volumes for everything from the American Concrete Institute, the Sheet Metal Association, and references to the Masonry Institute, the Steel Manuals, Gypsum Association, even the Hollow Core Door Manufacturer's Association.

Qualification requirements by the State of California, Division of the State Architect

The different classification examinations that inspectors may qualify for are dictated by their prior experience which is carefully examined in Sacramento.

Who Chooses the Project Inspector?

Three years documented pertinent experience with reference letters from architects and engineers will open the doors.

Who can be a Project Inspector?

The initial selection of the project inspector is made by the district's team who then passes their selection on to the architect and engineer and upon

completion of their successful interviews, the application is forwarded to DSA for their approval. This is supposed to happen before the project begins.

The DSA Project Inspector Exam

The Project Inspector Examination is 8 hours long and consists of 4 hours of open book code questions and 4 hours of closed book code and plan reading.

Inspector's Corporate Composition

Will a sole proprietorship type of operation suffice? Many smaller projects would be OK, but larger projects can easily get away from a single inspector. How about insurance? Insurance is a huge issue with the need for **professional liability** that actually covers the inspection aspects of a project a paramount consideration. This coverage is easily misleading and requires an insurance professional's examination of the actual policy to determine what is actually covered. In the very possible event of litigation, is there support for the district's interests?

Adequate Project Coverage

Will the firm be able to provide qualified coverage in the event of illness or vacation? Will the firm be able to provide additional qualified inspectors for more complex projects or to cover additional work as may arise? Is there a networking system for the inspector to

access? Are they able to respond to the always present "urgent attention Events?"

Project Inspector Training

Training can ultimately prove detrimental if the accent is on the passing of the examination only. Training should include Inspector Training to develop relationship skills to interact with all parties of the project. References tendered to substantiate a resume should be verified.

Continuing Education

The district should consider the professionalism of an organization. Do they support the development and maintenance of both training programs and continuing education programs to help keep the Inspectors current with the developments in the industry and codes. What professional organizations do they belong to? Do they actually participate and contribute to the organization's goals?

Access to Information

Project inspectors are required to maintain a collection of books, but should also have access to all the other information and technical manuals referenced by code. In the field electronic access and documentation combined with the ability to distribute reports promptly via e-mail or electronic bulletin boards is crucial.

