

# IAS MEMO



**TO:** IAS-accredited Special Inspection Agencies and Other Interested Parties

**FROM:** Raj Nathan, Senior Vice President

**DATE:** June 7, 2017

**SUBJECT:** Memo to Revise the Accreditation Criteria for Special Inspection Agencies, Subject AC291-0417-0417-R2 (RN/AM)

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Dear Madam or Sir:

Following the IAS accreditation committee meeting on April 25, 2017, IAS is soliciting input from IAS-accredited Special Inspection Agencies and interested parties regarding the IFC Firestop Special Inspector Examination.

The committee directed IAS staff to solicit additional input for this examination based on public testimony and submittal from Mr. Brice Miller, Fire Containment Training Services LLC. The submittal is appended to this memo.

Staff recommendation is the addition of IFC Firestop Special Inspector Examination under the required certification column of AC291, Table 1, No. 11, Fire Stop Systems. The addition would modify the section to read: UL Firestop Examination or FM Firestop Examination or IFC Firestop Special Inspector Examination.

You are invited to submit comments with regards to the subject and email to [iasinfo@iasonline.org](mailto:iasinfo@iasonline.org). Comments received by August 7, 2017, will be considered by the accreditation committee.

RN/nl

Attachment

3/8/2017

Gmail - FW: IAS Accreditation Committee Hearing, Tuesday, April 25, 2017 AC291 response



Nancy Libby <nlibby5188@gmail.com>

**FW: IAS Accreditation Committee Hearing, Tuesday, April 25, 2017 AC291 response**

3 messages

Raj Nathan <RNathan@iasonline.org>

Fri, Mar 3, 2017 at 10:19 AM

To: "Nancy Libby (nlibby5188@gmail.com)" <nlibby5188@gmail.com>

A response to add to AC291 by email. To be added to committee review.

**From:** Brice Miller [mailto:brice@firecontainmenttraining.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 01, 2017 10:50 AM  
**To:** Raj Nathan  
**Subject:** RE: IAS Accreditation Committee Hearing, Tuesday, April 25, 2017

Hi Raj,

Thank you for your email and providing this helpful information. Hopefully my request below works out ok.

My request is to replace the required certifications in Table 1 (8.0 minimum qualification for Special Inspectors) No 8. 11 under special inspection category Firestop Systems. It now lists the UL firestop exam or the FM firestop exam. These exams are excellent for firestop installers; however, neither one of these exams were developed for Firestop Special Inspectors. My request it to replace these two exams with a nationally recognized and proven Firestop Special Inspector exam by the International Firestop Council (IFC)

Existing Minimum Qualifications:

|    |                  |        |   |
|----|------------------|--------|---|
| 11 | Firestop Systems | Note 4 | <del>UL Firestop Examination or FM Firestop Examination</del> |
|----|------------------|--------|---|

Proposed Minimum Qualifications:

|    |                  |        |  |
|----|------------------|--------|--|
| 11 | Firestop Systems | Note 4 | IFC Firestop Special Inspector Examination |
|----|------------------|--------|--|

Please also see attached, the original email I sent on the matter, as well as the summary of the IFC Examination.

Please let me know if you need any additional information or have any questions.

Best,

Brice

**Brice Miller**

Fire Containment Training Services LLC

brice@FireContainmentTraining.com

7727 Park Ridge Circle

Fort Collins, CO 80528


Office: (970) 223-4985

Mobile: (970) 430-9960

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**2 attachments**

 **IAS Accreditation Committee update of AC291.docx**  
14K

 **IFC summary of special inspector study and examination program.docx**  
175K

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**Nancy Libby** <nlibby5188@gmail.com>  
To: Raj Nathan <RNathan@iasonline.org>

Fri, Mar 3, 2017 at 2:21 PM

Thank you. Will add this to the responses and copy AK.  
[Quoted text hidden]

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**Raj Nathan** <RNathan@iasonline.org>  
To: Nancy Libby <nlibby5188@gmail.com>

Fri, Mar 3, 2017 at 3:00 PM

thanks

**From:** Nancy Libby [mailto:nlibby5188@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 03, 2017 2:22 PM  
**To:** Raj Nathan  
**Subject:** Re: FW: IAS Accreditation Committee Hearing, Tuesday, April 25, 2017 AC291 response

[Quoted text hidden]

To: International Accreditation Service, Accreditation Committee  
From: Brice Miller – Fire Containment Training Services  
Date: May 4, 2016  
Re: Update to AC291

I would like to thank the International Accreditation Service (IAS) for giving me this opportunity to request an update of AC 291 related to Firestop Special Inspections. My request is to replace the required certifications in Table 1 (8.0 minimum qualification for Special Inspectors) No 8. 11 under special inspection category Firestop Systems. It now lists the UL firestop exam or the FM firestop exam. These exams are excellent for firestop installers; however, neither one of these exams were developed for Firestop Special Inspectors. My request it to replace these two exams with a nationally recognized and proven Firestop Special Inspector exam by the International Firestop Council (IFC)

As a former Code Official I was asked to be the Executive Director of the IFC and it was evident about four years ago that the International Firestop Council was very serious about the development of an exam for Firestop Special Inspectors. The IFC hired some of the best firestop special inspectors in the US to assist in the development of this exam. I was very impressed with their commitment to the development of a comprehensive test for firestop special inspectors. Attached is a summary of the IFC examination program that explains the study curriculum and more on the examination. If you would like to see additional information on this excellent program, please go to their website at: [www.firestop.org](http://www.firestop.org)

For the last 10 years I have had the opportunity to provide firestop training to Building and Fire Code Officials and many of them are looking for qualified Firestop Special Inspectors and companies. I truly believe that after having taught over 1000 firestop special inspectors they will take advantage of this process through the International Accreditation Services once you have a proven, cost effective exam for firestop inspectors and not firestop installers.

I hope this request can be included in the IAS Accreditation Committee agenda during the June meeting. Please let me know if you will need further information and I will be honored to provide it. I understand that your meetings are on a webcast and I might be able to attend or have the opportunity to be on a speaker phone during the meeting if that is acceptable.

I look forward to hearing from the IAS regarding this request.

Sincerely,

Brice Miller  
Fire Containment Training Services LLC  
7727 Park Ridge Circle  
Fort Collins, CO 80528  
Phone: 970-223-4985  
Email: [brice@FireContainmentTraining.com](mailto:brice@FireContainmentTraining.com)



Subject: IFC exam for firestop special inspectors

To whom it may concern:

The IFC has been asked to provide a summary explaining why its examination program for firestop special inspectors is unmatched in providing a thorough, accurate and fair evaluation of the competence of proposed firestop special inspectors.

### Study Curriculum

- IFC study curriculum is provided free of charge online ([www.firestop.org/inspection](http://www.firestop.org/inspection))
- Requires 40-60 hours of self-study
- Specifically designed to provide the knowledge needed by firestop special inspectors, including a detailed study of ASTM E2174 and E2393, the two standards required by IBC 1705.16.
- Includes
  - o Videos
  - o published articles (including peer-reviewed journal articles)
  - o PowerPoint presentations
  - o Authoritative source documents providing the verbatim rules related to firestopping such as from Underwriters Laboratories, ASTM, ICC, and the Gypsum Association
  - o Guidance documents developed and published by IFC, and widely referenced in north America and worldwide
- The online self-study curriculum purposely excluded any firestop industry knowledge that would definitely not be pertinent to the understanding needed by a special inspector. This keeps the study volume and time to the feasible minimum, which respects the value of time by the professionals who would undertake the study and examination program.
- Provides an available structured study program even for those who will not seek independent accreditation or certification.

### Examination

- Creation of first draft of examination questions was contracted out to arguably the single most experienced firestop special inspector in North America
- Exam includes questions based on each one of the references in the study program. None is omitted. And there are no questions that would pre-suppose any other knowledge other than from the online self-study program. This gives all prospective students an equal opportunity to study and pass the exam.
- Exam questions test comprehension of the concepts, never a verbatim regurgitation of verbiage from the references

International Firestop Council • 2660 S Utica Ave, Tulsa, OK  
74114

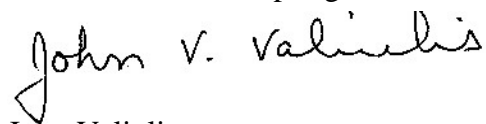
T: 918-200-3757 • [info@firestop.org](mailto:info@firestop.org) •

[www.firestop.org](http://www.firestop.org)

- Exam questions were critically reviewed and revised for accuracy and comprehension by the most tenured experts from among the major worldwide firestop manufacturers (individual experience ranged from 10 to 25 years in the development, testing, and installation of firestop systems)
- Exam tried as Beta test on highly experienced firestop industry veterans, as a final check on comprehension and clarity of test questions, and to clearly establish realistic number of questions for the 2-hr exam
- Exam is given online by reputed online test provider [www.test.com](http://www.test.com). Since 1996, Test.com has evolved and proven itself as the standard in the world of building software for online testing and certification programs. Security measures provided by test.com include random order of exam questions, random order of exam multiple choice answers, and others. Contact test.com for details.
- An online practice test is made available at test.com at the IFC's expense to allow test takers to gauge their preparedness for the 2-hr full exam.
- Attesting to the examination's level of difficulty, over 95% of the 400+ candidates who have taken the practice test have failed on a first attempt. Those failing are encouraged not to take the full exam without extensive further study.
- As of April 2016, 31 people have received a passing grade on the special inspector exam. They have been listed by the IFC at [www.firestop.org/certificate-holders](http://www.firestop.org/certificate-holders), to allow easy verification of their exam status.
- To ensure integrity of the test experience (i.e. no cheating possible), each exam is remote proctored live via webcam by the online service ProctorU.com. ProctorU provides online proctoring for several hundred academic institutions and corporate certification programs.
- The fact that the testing and proctoring are online and on-demand makes it feasible for exam candidates to establish and document their expertise without the undue burden of needing to travel to a test location, or to wait for one of just a few test dates per year. Given that IBC 2012 and later will eventually require firestop special inspection across the entire US (as 2012+ IBC is adopted), this model fits well with the ICC's reach to all corners of the US.
- The IFC does not make available, and does not permit, any publicly available "test preparation session", which would likely and maybe inevitably be focused on answering the exam questions, not on an in-depth understanding of the extensive study materials.

Should any questions arise, please do not hesitate to contact me. T: 918-200-3757

Email • [info@firestop.org](mailto:info@firestop.org)



John Valiulis

Executive Director, International Firestop Council