



## Third Party Inspector Qualifications

In order for an inspector to demonstrate his or her competence to perform inspections, the International Code Council (ICC) has developed tests measuring knowledge in specific areas of expertise. These tests are rigorous examinations of the Codes and their application to everyday construction. Typical certifications are Building Inspector, Electrical Inspector, Mechanical Inspector, Plumbing Inspector, Fire Inspector, and Plans Examiner. Certified inspectors take continuing classes to allow recertification every two years. An ICC certification in a specific area of expertise is the primary requirement for qualification to perform municipal inspections. An ICC certified inspector also meets or exceeds all requirements for third party inspectors as proscribed in CA Civil Code Title 7 § 43.99. Pacific InterWest Building Consultants, Inc. (PIW) requires all of its field inspectors and plan checkers to hold current ICC certification. Most third party inspection companies do not require this level of expertise. All PIW inspectors would be pleased to show you proof of certification upon request. When considering preconstruction reviews, Pacific InterWest suggests

it is imperative that any persons performing architectural plan reviews hold an ICC Certified Plans Examiner certificate. A fire inspection certification would also be required for projects utilizing fire rated construction. The objective of a Peer Plan Review is to minimize construction document omissions and inaccuracies by reviewing and commenting on design issues that have historically lead to construction defect claims. Pacific InterWest's principal concerns are water intrusion, fire resistive construction, sound attenuation and overall building performance. The Pacific InterWest staff members assigned to supervise and perform plan reviews are ICC Certified Plan Reviewers and California Licensed General Contractors, with no less than 15 years experience.

The new California Code has elements of the old and new Code, necessitating the special classification of Plans Examiner. The new Code took effect January 1, 2008 and the new CA Plans Examiner Certification was not available until March. Richard Edwards, Pacific InterWest's V.P. of Operations, was one of the first to qualify for, and receive, this certification.

### Inside this issue:

---

*Two Types of Third Party Inspections - Page 2*

*Next Issue:*

#### **Risk Rater™ Checklists**

- Qualifies Construction Deficiencies by Severity
- Quantifies Construction Deficiencies by Occurrence
- Assigns a Risk Value to each Project





## Two Types of Third Party Inspections: Completed Assembly Inspections vs. Process Inspections Which is Best?

There are two fundamentally different inspection protocols utilized by independent third party inspectors during the construction process. The first protocol is generally referred to as “Completed Assembly Inspections.” This type of inspection is performed at specific, pre-determined stages of construction on completed elements only. This is the type of protocol used by municipal inspectors. As each building component is completed, an inspection is requested. If the inspection results are satisfactory, the item or process is “signed off” and construction proceeds to the next construction element. In this way, each “completed assembly” is inspected.

The second inspection protocol is commonly known as “Process Inspections.” Process Inspections are performed randomly, generally during unannounced site visits, throughout the course of construction. Predetermined construction “milestones” are reviewed by the inspector as they present themselves. This type

of inspection verifies that, in general, each process is being performed properly. It should be noted that an inspector performing process inspections can make the claim that “everything” has been inspected. In fact, everything *has* been inspected, *at some stage of the process* and *at some location*. However, one should listen closely and reflect on the meaning of “everything” in this context; every installation has not been inspected at each stage. Those performing Process Inspections cannot claim to ensure that each completed assembly has been satisfactorily installed. For example, there is no safeguard against defective workmanship by different field crews.

Process Inspections typically require fewer site visits and are (or should be) less costly than are Completed Assembly Inspections. While Process Inspections can be a cost effective alternative to establish an overall audit of construction processes, the risk of undiscovered construction defects may be substantially higher.

### Pacific InterWest BUILDING CONSULTANTS, INC.

Pacific InterWest  
Building Consultants Newsletter  
Kathy Yung, Editor  
Editorial Office  
1600 S. Main St. Ste. 380  
Walnut Creek, CA 94596  
Phone: 925-939-5500  
Fax: 925-939-9561  
E-mail: [kathy@pacificinterwest.com](mailto:kathy@pacificinterwest.com)  
[www.pacificinterwest.com](http://www.pacificinterwest.com)

Contributors:  
David E. MacLellan  
Brian Fetherstonhaugh  
Richard T. Edwards

### SB 800 Compliance Manuals

#### Publications and Training Seminars for Builders

- California Building Performance Guidelines for Residential Construction (2006)
- The National Home Maintenance Manual
- The Handbook of Specifications and Scopes of Work for Trade Contractors
- New! SB 800 (Title 7) Compliant Seminar—The Homebuilder “Fix It” Construction Dispute Resolution Law—A Summary Compliance Guide for the California Homebuilding Industry



[www.HouseFixIt.com](http://www.HouseFixIt.com)



Handy Hammer™