

**Preface:** *This reference guide covers the National Floor Covering Association of Canada's Quality Assurance Program in regard to floor covering materials and installation.*

## **1 NATIONAL FLOOR COVERING ASSOCIATION QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAM**

- .01 The National Floor Covering Association (NFCA) **Quality Assurance Program (QAP)** shall be in accordance with requirements noted herein.
- .02 The Quality Assurance Program shall be administered by the Provincial Floor Covering Association having jurisdiction. The Provincial Association must be an **Accredited Quality Assurance (AQA) provider**, as defined by NFCA.
- .03 This NFCA Quality Assurance Program **includes the following floor coverings:**
  - .1 Resilient sheet and tile flooring (including acoustical, slip resistant, and static control resilient flooring).
  - .2 Carpet roll and modular / tile flooring including carpet cushion.
  - .3 Hardwood engineered and solid strip, plank, and parquet flooring (including sanding and finishing).
  - .4 Laminate flooring.
  - .5 Other flooring including bamboo and cork flooring.
  - .6 Resilient, carpet, hardwood, and laminate stair coverings.
  - .7 Related flooring installation materials, bases, trims, and accessories.
- .04 The QA program provides **two different review options:**
  - .1 The **installation review** (prior to and during flooring installation).
  - .2 The **post-installation review** (for flooring already installed).
- .05 The QA program requires a two-year 100% Maintenance Bond.

## **2 QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAM COSTS**

- .01 The National Floor Covering Association (NFCA) **Quality Assurance Program (QAP)** cost for services rendered is based on a percentage of the flooring contract with the percentage established by the Provincial Floor Covering Association having jurisdiction. The total amount will be adjusted to suit the final cost of flooring work at the date of Substantial Performance of the Work. Applicable taxes are in addition to this cost.
- .02 QA Program costs for mileage to the project site and other travel costs are in addition to the fee and shall be in accordance with the policy and rates established by the NFCA Accredited Quality Assurance provider in each jurisdiction.

## **3 QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAM CRITERIA**

The National Floor Covering Association (NFCA) Quality Assurance Program is based on the following criteria and requirements:

- .01 The Design Authority or Owner shall provide project specific floor covering specifications.
  - .1 To ensure that appropriate specifications are provided, the use of NFCA Guide Specifications is strongly recommended.
  - .1 NFCA strongly recommends that floor-covering specifications be written by experienced persons who are qualified to write such specifications. Such qualifications include, as a minimum, the successful completion of the Construction Specifications Canada (CSC) Professional Development Course - Principles of Construction Documentation. For information on this course and the Registered Specification Writer certification courses contact CSC at [www.csc-dcc.ca](http://www.csc-dcc.ca) or 416-777-2198.
- .02 The floor-covering specifications shall be reviewed by the local NFCA Quality Assurance Program's designated Technical Review Committee or reviewer.
- .03 All floor covering work shall be performed by or be under the supervision of Trade Qualified (TQ) or Manufacturer Qualified (MQ) installers as defined in Part A05 - Trade Qualifications.
- .04 All floor covering materials, preparation, and workmanship shall conform to NFCA minimum requirements as defined in the latest edition of the NFCA Reference Manual.
- .05 Substrate surfaces shall be tested in a timely manner by a third-party independent testing agency in accordance with requirements noted in Part A11 - Substrate Testing and in the Scope of Work for each type of flooring.
- .06 All floor covering work shall be reviewed by a third-party Inspection Agency appointed by the Provincial Floor Covering Association having jurisdiction.

#### **4 QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAM SERVICES**

- .01 The Quality Assurance Program third-party independent review services offered to Owners and Design Authorities by the Provincial Floor Covering Association having jurisdiction include the following:
  - .1 Review of floor covering specifications including related drawings and Finish Schedules (preferably before issuing the documents for Bidding).
  - .2 Assurance that the flooring contractor and installers are qualified in accordance with Part A05 - Trade Qualifications - Qualified Installers.
  - .3 Review of floor covering shop drawings (e.g. seaming plans, etc.) when applicable.
  - .4 Review of site conditions, substrates, materials, and installations to limits defined herein and within the NFCA Reference Manual.
  - .5 Reporting of site abnormalities or variations from project specifications and drawings.
  - .6 Assurance that NFCA minimum standards are being adhered to.

- .7 Assurance that only specified materials and workmanship are provided.
- .02 QA Reviews shall be conducted in a timely manner. This should normally provide the Owner and/or Design Authority sufficient time to issue corrective orders if required. Note that timely QA reviews depend on timely requests by the Owner / Design Authority as well as on the location of the site.
- .03 The QA Inspector's mandate is to **observe and report** and offer technical advice and assistance.
- .04 This QA review does not replace reviews by the flooring manufacturer and/or supplier representatives.
- .05 Standards and specifications are only as good as their enforcement. This must be done by the Design Authority. The QA Program review will also ensure that this is done.
- .06 Perfection does not exist but Quality does. The only way to ensure consistent Quality is through the QA Program.
- .07 **The Design / Specifying Authority benefits by:**
  - .1 Review of drawings, schedules, and specifications pertaining to floor coverings.
  - .2 An unbiased third-party review of the flooring installation.
  - .3 Provision of review reports.
  - .4 Assurance that materials and workmanship conform to manufacturers and NFCA minimum requirements.
- .08 **Owners benefit by:**
  - .1 Receiving bids based on the use of qualified materials and workmanship, proven systems and adherence to NFCA minimum standards.
  - .2 Obtaining the best value for their dollar.
  - .3 Assurance of materials and workmanship backed by a two-year Maintenance Bond.

## 5 QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAM REVIEWS

- .01 **QA Program Installation Reviews**
  - .1 NFCA Quality Assurance Installation Review service is designed to aid design authorities (architects, interior designers, specifiers, and others in the industry) and to ensure that every stage of a floor-covering project, including substrate preparation, will be completed in accordance with NFCA requirements. This program includes:
    - .a A review of project specifications to ensure that they meet minimum NFCA requirements.
    - .b On-site reviews of flooring installation at key stages of the work.
    - .c Assurance that specified materials are supplied and installed.
    - .d A written report indicating whether site conditions, preparation, materials, and installation adhere to NFCA minimum requirements.

- .2 The objective of the Installation Review service is to ensure the success of flooring work by providing independent third-party review services. Use of the QA Assurance Program by the Owner and/or Design Authority will ensure that flooring work will be installed in accordance with NFCA minimum requirements.

**.02 QA Program Post-Installation Reviews**

- .1 The NFCA Quality Assurance Program Post-Installation Review service is designed to review floor-covering installations after installation (when QA Installation Reviews have not been done) and to aid in the resolution of problems if they have occurred. This program includes:
  - .a A review of project specifications.
  - .b A review of project flooring installation to ascertain if the installation met current industry and NFCA standards to the extent possible by observation.
  - .c A written report indicating whether site conditions, preparation, materials, and the installation adhered to NFCA minimum requirements to the extent possible by observation.

**.03 QA Program Reviews**

- .1 Review services provided under the QA Program shall be as detailed herein and shall be under the auspices of the NFCA Accredited Quality Assurance provider in each jurisdiction.
- .2 Each Provincial Floor Covering Association shall administer the NFCA Quality Assurance (QA) Program and provide review services as detailed herein within their own area of jurisdiction.
- .3 Where there is no Provincial Floor Covering Association in the area of the flooring work or where the Provincial Floor Covering Association does not offer an NFCA QA Program, an inspection shall be conducted by an independent third-party inspection agency that is accredited by the NFCA or BCFCFA. In this instance the administration of the QA Program and third-party inspection services will be arranged through another appropriate local group or Association that is monitored by the NFCA or BCFCFA.
- .4 The local NFCA Accredited Quality Assurance provider shall be contacted in regard to the Review Programs and for the appropriate Review Request Form.

**6 NFCA REVIEW STANDARDS**

**.01 Qualifications**

- .1 To qualify for NFCA Quality Assurance Program services, floor covering installation firms must provide a Surety (with Bid) and a two (2) year 100% Maintenance Bond (with contract) in accordance with bonding requirements noted herein. Subject to conditions and terms established between the Provincial Floor Covering Association and a Bonding company within the area of jurisdiction.

- .2 All floor covering work shall be reviewed. The reviews required shall be carried out in strict accordance with the Quality Assurance Program as noted herein by a qualified (i.e. Quality Assurance Program accredited) Inspection Agency / Inspector assigned by the Provincial Floor Covering Association. Only Inspectors who have been approved under the Quality Assurance Program shall be assigned.
- .3 The project floor covering specification must meet minimum NFCA requirements noted in the NFCA Reference Manual and any amendments to these requirements subsequently issued by NFCA. Any changes to specification requirements issued after application for a QA Program review shall be forwarded to the QA provider.
- .4 Where a discrepancy occurs between the project floor covering specification and NFCA requirements the specification shall prevail. The work shall be reviewed but a "non-conforming" disclaimer shall be noted on the specification and on Quality Assurance Program review forms, unless the specification is amended to suit NFCA requirements.

**.02 Quality Assurance Review Requirements**

- .1 Where the Quality Assurance Program has been specified or where a Quality Assurance Program Review is requested a **Request for Review (RFR)** form must be completed, signed, and forwarded to the applicable Provincial Floor Covering Association. Such forms are obtainable from the Provincial Floor Covering Association having jurisdiction. Refer to Part A04A - RFR Guide Form.
- .2 The QA **Request for Review** form shall contain the following pertinent information:
  - .a The name, description, and location of the project and the projected start date.
  - .b The types of floor coverings to be installed and the types of substrates they are to be installed on.
  - .c The name, address, phone, fax, and email numbers of the following:
    - Flooring contractor.
    - General Contractor or Construction Manager.
    - Specifying Authority (Consultant).
    - Owner / Owner's Representative.
  - .d The name, address, phone, fax, and email number of the Bonding Company providing the two-year 100% Maintenance Bond.
  - .e The floor covering Contract Price.
  - .f Any special comments relating to the project and floor covering requirements.
- .03 Upon receipt of a **Request for Review** form, the Provincial Floor Covering Association shall assign a QA Inspector, record the details on the form, and return a copy to the assigned Inspection Agency (inspector) as confirmation, as well as a copy to the flooring contractor. The Specifying Authority as well as the named bonding company shall also be advised.

## 7 FLOORING CONTRACTOR REQUIREMENTS

### The following shall take place:

- .01 Where the Quality Assurance Program has been specified or where a Quality Assurance Program Review is requested the flooring contractor shall complete a **Request for Review** form as noted herein. The submission of this form shall take place upon receipt of the floor covering contract and/or shall precede commencement of flooring work by a minimum of ten (10) full working days to allow for assignment of a QA Inspector. A copy of this form shall also be forwarded to the General Contractor or Construction Manager, Consultant (specifying authority), and Owner (if a direct contract) as verification of application.
- .02 The flooring contractor shall also maintain contact with the General Contractor, Construction Manager, or Owner (if a direct contract) and shall keep the assigned Inspection Agency and the AQA Association advised of the expected starting date of flooring work.
- .03 **Prior to commencement of flooring work the flooring contractor shall provide the QA Inspection Agency with the following:**
  - .1 A list of names, qualifications, and experience of installers scheduled to work at the site for the duration of the work. Any changes in personnel shall be subject to pre-approval of the QA Inspection Agency.
  - .2 A copy of the project flooring specifications and applicable drawings (floor plans and any details affecting flooring installation), finish schedule, and any addenda modifying specified flooring requirements for review by the QA Agency / Inspector.
  - .3 A schedule of materials intended for use on the project. Changes approved by the Specifying Authority, if any, shall be provided to the QA Inspector as approval is secured.
- .04 The flooring contractor shall notify the QA Inspection Agency a minimum of **five (5) full working days** prior to the start of the floor covering work. Where possible, the QA Inspector shall inspect the job on the first day of commencement of floor covering work.

## 8 NFCA REVIEW PROCEDURES

### The following shall take place:

- .01 Upon receipt of a **Request for Review** form, the AQA Association shall assign an Inspection Agency (inspector), record the details on the form, and return a copy to the assigned Inspection Agency (inspector) and flooring contractor as confirmation. The Consultant (specifying authority) and named bonding company shall be informed.
- .02 Upon being assigned, the Inspection Agency shall contact the flooring contractor to ascertain the actual starting date of flooring work, obtain project specifications including addenda / bid modifications and applicable drawings and schedules, and discuss any concerns that the flooring contractor may have in regard to project documentation and job site conditions that may be detrimental to flooring work.

- .03 If necessary, the Inspection Agency shall involve the AQA Association and the Consultant (specifying authority) to review the specifications to resolve discrepancies and concerns expressed by the flooring contractor.
- .04 During the floor covering application, the frequency of QA reviews shall be sufficient to ensure adequate Quality Control in accordance with NFCA QA Program requirements. In rural or remote areas, reviews may be carried out at intervals as arranged with the AQA Association.
- .05 The QA Inspector shall report using the appropriate **NFCA QA Pre-Installation** or **Interim Flooring Review Report** form and shall sign and submit it to the AQA Association. The Association shall in turn provide copies of the report to each participant listed on the *Request for Review* form.
- .06 On completion of flooring work the QA Inspector shall report using the **NFCA QA Final Flooring Review Report** form and shall sign and submit it to the AQA Association. The Association shall provide a copies to each participant listed on the *Request for Review* form.
- .07 The QA Inspector shall check for proper preparation of substrate surfaces, confirm that specified / correct products are being used, and that the installation and finishing of materials is in accordance with NFCA, manufacturer's, and specification requirements. This information shall be noted on the review report form.
- .08 The QA Inspector shall observe the progress of flooring work and installation practices being carried out. This information shall be noted on the review report form.
- .09 The QA Inspector shall also report any damage done by other trades (DBO) to prepared flooring substrates prior to installation of flooring or to installed flooring on appropriate review report forms.
- .10 All review reports shall note any variation from NFCA, manufacturer, or specification requirements, deficiencies if any, and whether flooring work is completed in accordance with NFCA Quality Assurance Program requirements.
- .11 A final review will be required at the completion of the work, but preferably while the flooring contractor still has a work force on the job site. At this time the QA Inspector will issue an **NFCA QA Final Flooring Review Report**. This report shall state that the flooring work has been carried out in accordance with the intent of the specifications, drawings, addenda, etc., or contrary if applicable, noting any deficiencies or discrepancies on the review report form. Any deficiencies noted on the form must be corrected before the bonding company is notified of the completion of flooring work.
- .12 The Inspection Agency shall respond to the request for a "Final Flooring Review" when flooring work is substantially complete. If it is not, further requests for a Final Flooring Review will prompt additional charges.

## 9 INSPECTION AGENCY (QA Inspector) RESPONSIBILITIES

### The Inspection Agency / QA Inspector shall:

- .01 Obtain a copy of the floor covering contract documentation as noted in 6.03.
- .02 **Review the specifications** and contact the Specifying Authority, and the AQA Association to clarify any anomalies or irregularities. It is particularly important that this be done prior to commencement of work.
- .03 **Verify that substrate moisture and alkalinity testing has been conducted** by an independent testing agency in accordance with minimum NFCA requirements, floor covering manufacturer's recommendations, and as noted herein.
- .04 **Inspect substrate surfaces** prepared for floor covering before commencement of flooring work to ensure proper surface preparation, level tolerances, and readiness for floor covering.
- .05 **Verify that humidity and temperature requirements** in areas of floor covering installations are with minimum NFCA requirements and floor covering manufacturer's recommendations for type of flooring to be installed.
- .06 **Note any environmental or substrate deficiencies**, which may adversely affect flooring installation and performance and/or appearance on the inspection report.
- .07 **Submit written reports** as noted herein to the AQA Association.
- .08 In all instances of obvious deficiencies in substrate and preparation requirements, in floor covering materials and installations, or where completed work varies from manufacturer's recommendations and NFCA requirements, the QA Inspector shall immediately notify the flooring contractor and the General Contractor or Construction Manager and request immediate conformance and advise a stoppage of work to ensure conformity. Such deficiencies and actions shall be noted on the appropriate review forms.
- .09 If floor covering work proceeds where deficiencies are not corrected in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations and NFCA requirements, the flooring contractor, General Contractor or Construction Manager, design authority, and bonding company shall be notified.

## 10 NFCA VERIFICATION AND TESTING REQUIREMENTS

- .01 To ensure that floor covering installations meet NFCA requirements the QA Inspector shall verify and test for the following:
  - .1 **Verify substrate and ambient air temperatures** in areas of floor covering work to ensure they are within floor covering material manufacturer's recommendations and NFCA requirements. No flooring work shall be performed until such temperatures are within these limits.
  - .2 **Verify relative humidity** in areas of flooring work area to ensure that it is within floor covering material manufacturer's recommendations and NFCA requirements. No



flooring work shall be performed until the relative humidity is within this limit.

- .3 Obtain independent third-party moisture testing results from General Contractor and **verify moisture content of all** substrates. The General Contractor shall provide and pay for such testing (of concrete and other substrate types if required) in a timely manner so as not to impede the progress of flooring installations. Such testing shall be conducted in accordance with NFCA requirements prior to substrate preparation and the application of flooring materials. No floor covering shall be installed until the moisture content of the substrate is within the limits recommended by the floor covering material manufacturer and those required by NFCA. Note that where the flooring is done as a direct contract with an Owner such testing must be provided by the flooring contractor (refer to Scope of Work for each flooring type).
- .4 Obtain independent third-party alkalinity testing results from the General Contractor and **verify alkalinity content** of all concrete substrates. The General Contractor shall provide and pay for such testing in a timely manner prior to substrate preparation and the application of flooring materials so as not to impede the progress of flooring installations. Such testing shall be conducted in accordance with NFCA requirements. No floor covering shall be installed until the pH (alkalinity) level of concrete substrates is within the limits recommended by the floor covering manufacturer and those required by NFCA. Note that where the flooring is done as a direct contract with an Owner such testing must be provided by the flooring contractor (refer to Scope of Work for each flooring type).
- .5 **Verify substrate level tolerances** to ensure that they are in accordance with the floor covering material manufacturer's recommendations and NFCA requirements.
- .6 **Review substrate surface preparations** to ensure that they are in accordance with floor covering material manufacturer's recommendations and NFCA requirements. This shall include preparation methods and procedures as well as products used.

**Note:** Preparation methods and procedures as well as products used shall be as specified or approved by addenda prior to Bid Closing. No other materials or methods will be accepted. The practice of substituting materials or methods after contract award is not approved by NFCA even though it may be authorized by the Specifying Authority. Substitutions shall be noted on **NFCA QA Pre-Installation** and **Interim Flooring Review Reports** when they occur and on the **NFCA QA Final Flooring Review Report** on completion. Substituted materials or methods that do not meet NFCA requirements will be reviewed and noted as non-conforming on review forms.

## 11 MATERIALS AND METHODS

- .01 All materials and installation methods shall be as recommended by the specified material manufacturers and shall meet NFCA minimum requirements for the conditions of installation and purposes of use.
- .02 In the case of Pre-Installation Review Program requirements only materials and installation methods specified by the design authority or pre-approved by the design authority prior to Bid Closing shall be used. Substituted materials or materials accepted after Contract award will be inspected but not included under the QA Bond (refer to NFCA Review Procedures above).

- .03 In the case of Post-Installation Review Program requirements materials and installation methods shall be reviewed for conformance to manufacturer's recommendations and NFCA requirements only to the extent possible by observation.
- .04 In no case will the QA Inspector make any direct product recommendations or endorse any performance claims of the product manufacturers.

## 12 CONFORMANCE

- .01 If flooring materials are suspected of not meeting specification requirements, the QA Inspector shall take samples from materials being installed for testing purposes. A laboratory test shall then be performed to ascertain conformance with specification requirements. If the test results indicate non-conformance or discrepancy with specification requirements, this shall be noted on the appropriate Review Report.
- .02 All such conformance testing shall be paid for by the appropriate party (supplier or flooring contractor).
- .03 Non-conforming materials shall be removed and replaced with conforming materials at the expense of the appropriate party.

## 13 GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

- .01 The QA Inspector shall discuss with the flooring contractor any serious discrepancies found in regard to the specifications, improper application methods, and/or non-compliance with good floor covering trade practices. Should the QA Inspector fail to obtain the flooring contractor's cooperation on the issue, a report shall be filed with the AQA Association for transmittal to all project participants.
- .02 Should the flooring contractor disagree with the QA Inspector's assessment, a written objection should be filed with the AQA Association. Immediately upon receipt of this objection, a subcommittee or representative of the **Technical Committee** of the Floor Covering Association having jurisdiction will visit the job site in question and file a written report to the AQA Association, within three days (maximum) of the job site visit.
- .03 This report will advise the flooring contractor that if the Technical Committee's decisions are not in his/her favour, he/she shall correct the situation in a timely manner to the satisfaction of the AQA's Technical Committee. A review report will not be issued until the work is brought up to the standard contained in the Technical Committee's Report. A copy of this report will be sent to the design authority.
- .04 The QA Inspector and the flooring contractor's representative shall be invited to any hearing or site visit undertaken by the Technical Committee. It is the intention that all floor-covering participants abide by the final decisions of the AQA Association's Technical Committee.

## 14 SPECIAL NOTE

- .01 Regardless of any review carried out on behalf of the AQA Association, the flooring

contractor is fully responsible for carrying out the floor covering manufacturer's recommendations and NFCA Quality Assurance Program requirements.

**15 QUALITY CONTROL**

- .01 When the specifications call for the inclusion of the Quality Assurance Program, the review of site conditions, materials, and installation shall be undertaken by an Inspection Agency (QA Inspector) assigned by the AQA Association.
- .02 All QA Reviews shall be in accordance with requirements noted herein and to the standards contained throughout the NFCA Reference Manual.

**16 QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAM BONDING REQUIREMENTS**

- .01 As part of the Quality Assurance Program, the floor-covering contractor shall provide a Consent of Surety issued by a surety licensed in the appropriate jurisdiction at the time of bid submission or prior to commencement of flooring work. The surety shall state that a two (2) year 100% maintenance bond will be provided subject to acceptance of flooring work by the AQA Association.
- .02 The Maintenance Bond shall be issued by the Surety Company subject to Quality Assurance Program Review Reports and any limitations stated on such reports.
- .03 All floor covering work shall be in accordance with NFCA Reference Manual requirements and shall be reviewed by the local AQA Association's Inspection Agency (QA Inspector). The cost for such reviews shall be included in the cost of flooring work.
- .04 Reviews shall be as detailed herein.
- .05 No flooring work shall commence until a Consent of Surety has been received by the AQA Association.

**17 QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAM BOND PROVISIONS**

- .01 The two (2) year 100% Maintenance Bond shall cover the correction of flooring material and installation defects due to faulty materials or workmanship at no expense to the Owner, which appear during the two (2) year period following Substantial Performance of the floor covering contract.
- .02 Cash or a certified cheque is not acceptable in lieu of a Consent of Surety.
- .03 Excluded from the AQA Association's Bond requirements are monolithic and wood subfloor / substrate materials and substrate conditions and finishes unless otherwise included by NFCA requirements.
- .04 The Bond is only effective if the flooring contractor has been paid in full for flooring work and if the Quality Assurance Program provider and the flooring contractor have been given written notice of any defect within the two-year period.

- .05 The Bond shall not apply if flooring repair work has been carried out by others.
- .06 The Bond shall not apply where defects arise through any other cause such as lack of maintenance, negligence, or lack of due care and attention.
- .07 The Quality Assurance Program provider shall not be liable for any business interruption, loss of profits or revenue, or any other special, incidental, or consequential damages during repair work. Such items shall also not be included under the Bond requirements.

**END OF PART A04**