

Achieving Quality Contractor Recognition

Benefits Abound Through AFSA Program

The American Fire Sprinkler Association (AFSA) launched its Quality Contractor program in 2010 to publicly recognize and honor fire sprinkler contracting firms that have documented their commitment in four key areas of corporate responsibility: safety, training, quality of life (employee benefits), and industry and community relations. A company that meets the criteria set forth in the program is formally designated a “Quality Contractor” by AFSA.

The program is similar to programs developed by other industry trade groups that reward their members who pursue a higher level of professionalism and is not an accreditation or certification program.

“The AFSA Quality Contractor is an industry recognition that your company is doing it right and is a great marketing tool,” comments AFSA Director of Membership Jeff Livaudais. “It’s proof of having met the highest industry standards.”

Contractors that achieve this designation enjoy national and local publicity through logo identification and special AFSA convention incentives. Other potential benefits may be experienced within the company through increased employee morale and productivity and greater customer recognition.

“Having received the title of Quality Contractor from AFSA has been a major benefit to Fire Tech,” comments Linda Biernacki, AFSA Board member and president of Fire Tech Systems, Inc., Shreveport, La. “Not only does it distinguish us from other sprinkler companies in our area, it instills pride in our employees. Our employees work hard to stay ahead of the competition and this lets them know that the hard work does pay off.”

“We have the Quality Contractor logo on our website and we also attach a Quality Contractor sticker to most outgoing mail. Some employees have this on their email signature,” says Biernacki. “We let our current customers and potential customers know we have

achieved this designation. When we fill out bid packages, we include that information. When we’re talking with potential customers about inspections and maintenance contracts, we always let them know.”

Jeff McCurley, business manager with S&S Sprinkler Company, LLC, Mobile, Ala., promotes their Quality Contractor designation as well.

“We use the logo on our website, brochures – we have it on every piece of marketing we offer to customers. We are showing it off on everything. We even have a company profile that I send to current customers that lists the award on it. We are very proud of the award. While it was tough to achieve, it was well worth the process!”

In addition to national and local recognition and promotion, contractors that receive this designation are allowed to use the Quality Contractor recognition logo in bid documents, as well as on letterhead, business cards, brochures and jobsite signs, just as Fire Tech and S&S Sprinkler do. Quality Contractor members may also use the program as a human resources tool by featuring the designation in job advertisements, including it as part of the employee handbook and using it to develop benchmarks in quality, safety, education, employee benefits, industry image and community activities.

Application Process: Before applying for the AFSA Quality Contractor recognition, a company must be able to demonstrate three basic criteria: a written safety policy, a current and active training program, and a minimum of three continuous years of AFSA membership.

“The application process seems daunting or overwhelming,” states Biernacki, “but I would recommend having a team of key employees working through the process together. Don’t get discouraged; if there is a criteria that you do not have, take your time and implement the



Linda Biernacki says AFSA’s Quality Contractor designation “instills pride in employees.”

recommendation. This is part of the process to elevate your company to excellence!”

AFSA Quality Contractor recognition does not mean that the business’ products or services have been evaluated or endorsed by AFSA, or that AFSA has made a determination as to the business’ product quality or competency in performing services. Businesses are under no obligation to seek AFSA recognition.

“The process was well worth it,” states McCurley. “First, it showed me and the other managers that we are moving in the right direction with our Quality Control Quality Assurance (QCQA) and safety programs. Second, we are an exceptional company and working to be better. It is a tough process, but it is worth going through.”

Parks Moore, manager, S&S Sprinkler Company, LLC concurs: “The program has been beneficial to us from a marketing and a recognition standpoint. We’ve received national recognition from AFSA for our participation in the program. It has definitely been worth the process and we plan to renew our application. I would recommend it to other contractors.”

For more information about AFSA’s Quality Contractor program and to download a brochure or application form, visit firesprinkler.org