

The National Storm Shelter Association (NSSA)
and
Storm Shelter Quality
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The Quality Control Process

The highest quality assurance level in storm shelters is afforded by Producer Member Grade in the National Storm Shelter Association. The application process for Producer Members requires that applicants:

1. Pledge to produce only those shelters that meet or exceed the NSSA standard
2. Abide by the Bylaws and Code of Ethics of NSSA
3. Build one of the prescriptive plans in FEMA 320 or have their shelter designs and design changes checked for compliance with the NSSA Standard by a NSSA-approved independent third party engineering company
4. Have their shelters tested for debris impact resistance
5. Affix a seal bearing the producer's name, certification of compliance, and a serial number to each shelter; give a Certificate of Installation to the owner and file a copy with NSSA

This process is especially important for quality control in residential shelters where relatively few qualified professionals are engaged in the design of storm shelters.

Strengths of the Process

- Well-qualified wind engineers experienced in shelter analysis, verify compliance with the NSSA standard
 - The NSSA Standard is consistent with the forthcoming International Code Council/National Storm Shelter Association (ICC/NSSA) standard expected to be available in January, 2008
 - Verifying compliance with the NSSA standard will make the transition to the ICC/NSSA Standard seamless
- A cadre of architects and engineers experienced in storm shelter design are available to serve as information resources to the industry

Benefits of the Process

- **Shelter producers** have quality checks and professional expertise available for product development and/or improvement/optimization
- **Consumers** can readily distinguish shelters and producers whose quality has been verified from those whose quality has not been verified
- **Building officials** and **inspectors** have a higher level of confidence and comfort in accepting or approving components and products
- **Government officials** and **program directors** have a quality control partner and have available expertise to help guide and evaluate policy

Summary

The NSSA quality verification process unquestionably results in a uniformly higher level of quality in shelter installations than where the NSSA seal is not required. The process is also considered meritorious for other segments of the building industry where traditional quality control processes have resulted in lower quality than desired.