



AWS Welding Certification - The AWS Welder Program - Is it Working?

By [Jody Collier](#)

What is the American Welding Society (AWS) certified welder program?

The construction trades welders like pipefitters, boilermakers, and ironworkers are all routinely required to pass welding certification tests every time they enter a new job. For construction workers, that can be several times a year. Sometimes the welders even take the same exact test multiple times a year. So someone at the AWS thought they could eliminate all this unnecessary testing by establishing the AWS certified welder program.

How does the AWS certified welder program work?

The AWS has a program for welding schools and welding certification test shops to become what is known as an AWS accredited welding certification test facility. Through an auditing process and an on site visit, the accredited test facility certificate is awarded if the criteria is met. Welders who wish to become certified through the AWS certified welder program can search for accredited test facilities on the AWS website.

Once an accredited test facility is chosen, the welder contacts the AWS accredited test facility and arranges a date for the welding certification test event.

What kind of welding certification test is available?

It depends on the capabilities of the AWS accredited test facility. Several types of welding tests could be administered by one facility depending on materials available and testing equipment.

Welding certification tests are usually given using a qualified welding procedure or one that is prequalified and available for purchase from the AWS.

How long is the welding certification good for?

A welder that certifies using the AWS certified welder program is certified indefinitely provided he or she provides acceptable evidence of welding activity at required intervals. The record of welding activity must be auditable and documented.

What are the drawbacks?

There are a lot of drawbacks. A 10 dollar charge per cert every 6 months? I would call that a drawback. Especially if you have 10 or 12 certs.

In addition to the expense, the program has not achieved widespread acceptance. In other words, contractors still want to test welders instead of relying on previous certification...even if the welding certification is with the AWS. My guess is it is because the contractor is responsible for the quality of their welds, not the AWS.

Some things never change.

To read a very different perspective on welding certification along with plenty of welding tips and tricks read Jody Collier's page on [Welding Certification](#) and For TIG, MIG, STICK welding and a buttload of other stuff, visit <http://www.weldingtipsandtricks.com/>



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