

Withdrawal of Welder Qualification Standard NZS 4711

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Introduction

Some changes to the way NZ welders qualify for structural welding will result from the Standards NZ announcement in March 2010 that NZS 4711 is to be withdrawn. With effect from 1 April 2011, new or renewal welder qualifications will not be available under this Standard. For most users of NZS 4711, AS/NZS 2980:2007 Qualification of Welders for Fusion Welding of Steels, will become the standard for welder qualification.

Discussion

For over 35 years NZS 4711 has been the "standard" for welder qualification for structures such as buildings, bridges, cranes and transport applications. While it has served its purpose well, NZS 4711 has become outdated in several respects and is now out of step with current international welder qualification practice. As the resources to revise NZS 4711 are not available it is a logical step to supercede it with the current joint Australian/NZ Standard AS/NZS 2980.

Qualification of welders to AS/NZS 2980 will mean some adjustments for industry, although the process of qualification itself will not change greatly. AS/NZS 2980:2007 is based on the international welder qualification Standard ISO 9606-1, with some modifications to suit the methods of testing and weld acceptance levels specified in related Australian and New Zealand Standards. The Standard not only covers mild and structural steels but also extends to high strength steel, stainless steel, and some other material groups such as nickel alloys.

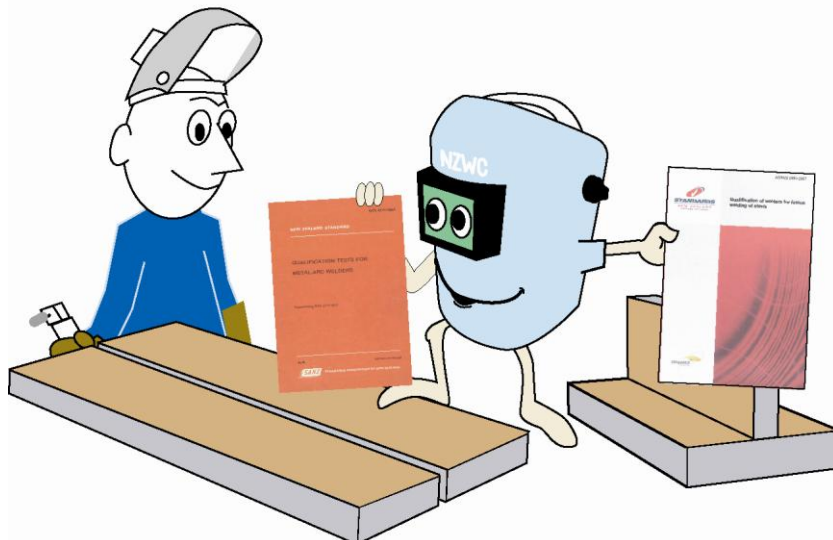


Figure 1: NZ 4711 to be replaced with AS/NZS 2980

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The test pieces will often be the same (or very similar) to those in NZS 4711, and the actual welding test will be conducted under much the same conditions. The test pieces will generally be assessed by the same means including visual examination, bend tests, fracture tests, and there are the options of ultrasonic testing and radiography.

Welder qualification is an essential ingredient in the recipe for ensuring that welded joints are fit for their intended purpose. However in a welder qualification test the emphasis is placed on the welder's ability to manually manipulate the electrode/welding torch and thereby produce a weld of acceptable quality. It is not intended to be a guide for welding during actual construction, and cannot guarantee that an individual will perform to the required standard on the job.

Construction and design standards such as NZS 3404.1 typically specify welding to be done in accordance with a welding standard such as AS/NZS 1554. AS/NZS 1554 not only covers welder qualification but includes the equally important requirements of:

- welding is to be done to qualified welding procedure specifications
- adequate supervision of welders
- appropriate levels of weld inspection

As AS/NZS 2980 is already a welder qualification option in AS/NZS 1554 designers and engineers can be confident that the gradual phasing out of NZS 4711 should not cause any problems. If there are any questions about the change, HERA's NZ Welding Centre is always able to assist.

References

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