Am I a “Qualified” or “Unqualified” person under OSHA’s electrical regulations?

The term “qualified” person is discussed in consensus standards such as the NFPA 70, the National Electrical Code (NEC), the National Electric Safety Code (NESC), and NFPA 70E. OSHA also refers to the term “qualified” person in its regulatory electrical standards, such as 1910.331 and 1910.269.

OSHA’s defines qualified person as “one who has received training in and has demonstrated skills and knowledge in the construction and operation of electric equipment and installations and the hazards involved.” In the electrical Safety-Related Work Practices standard, there are additional requirements for the qualified person to have performed for the employer and been given the “Qualified” person designation.

These include:
- The skills and techniques necessary to distinguish exposed live parts from other parts of electric equipment;
- The skills and techniques necessary to determine the nominal voltage of exposed live parts; and,
- The clearance distances specified in 1910.333(c) and the corresponding voltages to which the qualified person will be exposed.

Additionally, qualified persons whose work on energized equipment involves either direct contact or contact by means of tools or materials must also have the training needed to be familiar with the proper use of special precautionary techniques, personal protective equipment, insulating and shielding materials, and insulated tools.

The employer must appoint a person to determine whether a qualified candidate can perform by demonstration the necessary tasks and keep him- or herself and others safe.