

NTCA FIVE-STAR ACCREDITATION



HANDBOOK



FIVE-STAR
CONTRACTOR

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WELCOME

Congratulations on starting the NTCA Five-Star Accreditation process. NTCA developed the accreditation program to establish high standards for companies/business entities whose focus is tile and stone installation. By achieving accreditation company/business entities demonstrate their commitment to advancing the professionalism of the tile and stone industry. A key component of the accreditation program is an independent third-party review. By choosing to review this candidate handbook, you have taken the first step toward joining those companies who will distinguish themselves by earning NTCA Five-Star Accreditation.

How to Use This Handbook

This handbook summarizes key aspects of the Accreditation Program and is intended to help you understand why the program was developed, how it is governed, its policies and procedures, and the steps to earning and maintaining NTCA Five-Star Accreditation. The handbook is a useful reference to you and your company for:

- Making the decision whether to pursue NTCA Five-Star Accreditation
- Identifying who your company's Qualifying Agent should be and developing his or her course of study to meet the Accreditation Program's eligibility requirements
- Completing the accreditation application
- Maintaining NTCA Five-Star Accreditation
- Understanding the financial obligations

NTCA Five-Star Accreditation program is fluid and dynamic and will evolve in accordance with the tile installation profession. No document can address every potential question, policy detail, or future program change. You are encouraged to use this handbook as a supplement to the program information provided on the Accreditation Program website www.ntca-assn as well as the information provided by NTCA staff, who may be contacted at 601-939-2071 or email becky@tile-assn.com.

Again, welcome, and best wishes on earning NTCA Five-Star Accreditation for your company!

CODE OF ETHICS FOR NTCA FIVE-STAR ACCREDITED COMPANIES

- The Commercial and Residential NTCA Five-Star Accredited Companies shall meet National Tile Contractors Association and other industry standards as described in the NTCA Reference Manual; the standards provided in other technical publications; and provide considerate and professional customer service.
- The American Subcontractors Association is credited with developing a Model Code of Ethics for professional subcontractors. NTCA Five Star Accredited Companies are required to comply with and uphold this Code of Ethics.
- Competition. NTCA Five Star Accredited Companies compete fairly for contracts, avoiding any practice that might be construed to be in violation of the letter or spirit of the antitrust laws. The company/business entity avoids any activity that could be construed as bid shopping or peddling. The company/business entity does not knowingly violate any law or regulation governing the competitive process.
- Qualifications. NTCA Five Star Accredited Companies seek to perform contracts only for projects for which the company/business entity has technical competence and experience. The company/business entity does not accept contracts for which it is not qualified. The company/business entity assigns staff to projects in accordance with their qualifications and commensurate with the demands of the services to be provided under the contract.
- Standards of Practice. NTCA Five Star Accredited Companies provide materials and services in a manner consistent with the established and accepted standards of the construction industry and with the laws and regulations that govern it. The company/business entity performs its contracts with competence, reasonable care and diligence. It serves its customers with honesty and integrity.
- Conflicts of Interest. NTCA Five Star Accredited Companies endeavor to avoid conflicts of interest, both corporate and individual. Where a corporate conflict exists, NTCA Five Star Accredited Company will disclose such conflict to its customer or prospective customer. NTCA Five Star Accredited Company regularly educates its staff about personal conflicts of interest and has established a procedure for internal disclosure.
- Public Safety. NTCA Five Star Accredited Companies assure that the safety of its employees, the employees of others on the job site, and the general public is protected during the provision of its services.
- Service Providers and Suppliers. NTCA Five Star Accredited Companies treat its service providers and suppliers in an equitable manner, assuring that they are provided clear direction and prompt payment for service provided. The company/business entity does not knowingly violate any law or regulation governing such relationships.
- Employees. NTCA Five Star Accredited Companies comply with the letter and spirit of laws relating to working conditions, equal employment opportunities, and pay practices. The company/business entity does not knowingly violate any law or regulation dealing with employment.
- Public Information. NTCA Five Star Accredited Company assures that all public statements and disclosures it makes are truthful. The company/business entity also protects the proprietary interests of its customers.
- Compliance with Laws. NTCA Five Star Accredited Company does not knowingly violate any law or regulation.
- Image of the Construction Industry. NTCA Five Star Accredited Company avoids actions that promote its own self-interest at the expense of the construction industry and upholds the standards of the construction industry with honor and dignity.
- Uphold Code of Ethics. NTCA Five Star Accredited Company upholds and abides by the Code of Ethics as a condition of maintaining accreditation.
- We assume these responsibilities freely and solemnly, mindful that they are continuing conditions to, and part of our obligation as an Accredited Company.
- Note: This handbook reflects the policies and procedures as of 08/2022. All policies and procedures are subject to change. If you have any questions or require further information, please visit www.ntca-assn.com or contact the accreditation manager.

APPLICATION PROCESS

- Visit website <http://www.ntca-assn.com> and download NTCA Five-Star Accreditation Handbook.
- Review the NTCA Five-Star Accreditation webpage and gather information
- Request an application and submit application fee
- Complete the online application and include supporting documentation
- Submit completed application and application review fee
- NTCA staff reviews the application to assure it meets the submission requirements
- If application requirements are met, NTCA staff assigns the application to two industry peer reviewers, one with technical expertise in installation and the other with company management and business expertise
- Applicant company will be notified of the reviewers
- Applicant company may declare a conflict-of-interest with the peer reviewers and other reviews will be assigned until such a time that no conflicts of interest are declared
- Peer reviewers are confirmed and review the application and supporting documents
- If Required Peer reviewers and the applicant company schedule a 1-day site visit to the company (Site visit required for Large Commercial)
- The site visit is conducted to assure compliance with accreditation standards
- Peer reviewers submit a report detailing standards in compliance, standards not in compliance
- Applicant company corrects standards found to be in non-compliance and submits corrective actions to NTCA
- Peer reviewers review corrective actions to determine compliance
- When all standards are in compliance, accreditation is awarded for a period of five (5) years
- Company complies with ongoing accreditation maintenance requirements through submission of annual reports
- After 5 years company will re-apply

HISTORY

Origin

In 2008 The National Tile Contractors Association (NTCA) announced the Five Star Contractor Program that recognizes NTCA companies who demonstrated commitment to training, service, quality, superior job performance and safety.

Qualifying participants received a Certificate of Membership, permission to use the Five-Star on their letterhead, and the choice of a variety of premium marketing pieces promoting the Five-Star Program.

NTCA provided Five-Star member companies an exclusive locator feature within the NTCA website indicating the contractors' areas of operation and a link to the member companies' website. This benefit allows Five-Star Contractors to market their company's commitment to best industry practices to general contractors, builders, architects, and homeowners.

By 2020 the NTCA was successful including Five-Star members recognition as preferred contractors in commonly used architectural specification platforms. At that time, it became apparent that the Five-Star program needed to transform from a company recognition program into an official accreditation program.

In 2021 NTCA started working with an expert in accreditation to develop the 10 *Standards for Accreditation and Guidelines for Submission* that companies applying for accreditation must meet and an accreditation process involving independent third-party review. In 2022 the Accreditation Committee was seated and identified three categories of eligible companies for accreditation:

- Large Commercial
- Commercial
- Residential

NTCA began accepting accreditation applications in 2022.

ACCREDITATION OVERVIEW

Mission Statement

- A working group of knowledgeable, passionate, dedicated tile contractor professionals in various market segments assembled to identify tile contractor challenges, provide best practices, develop a consensus process and create business opportunities. Developing training initiatives and establishing best practices in business and in the field instills integrity, professionalism, value, and craftsmanship.



VISION STATEMENT

INTEGRITY

PROFESSIONALISM

CRAFTSMANSHIP

KNOWLEDGE



Purpose/Origin/Eligible Companies

1. *What is the purpose of the NTCA Five-Star Accreditation program?*

The purpose of accreditation is to establish high standards for companies/business entities whose focus is tile installation; who demonstrate rigorous business practices; and are committed to advancing the professionalism of the tile industry. By achieving and maintaining accreditation, companies/business entities demonstrate their quality and value through an independent third-party review. Accredited companies/business entities shall abide by and uphold the NTCA Five-Star Accreditation Code of Ethics.

2. *What are NTCA's goals in creating an accreditation program for the tile installation industry?*

- Increase/maintain the competency of the tile industry, raise the standards, and create a greater awareness of craftsmanship.
- Establish standards that ensure the continued competence of the tile industry by recognizing companies that achieve accreditation.
- Provide the consumer with access to accredited companies.
- Enhance the industry's commitment to the beauty, durability, and value of tile when installed in accordance with industry standards, manufacturers recommendations and best practices.

3. *What was the process that NTCA went through to establish the accreditation program?*

NTCA established an accreditation committee of subject-matter-experts (SMEs) who collectively represent the industry and the stakeholders it serves. With this industry representation, the accreditation committee drafted the ten *Standards for Accreditation* and corresponding *Submission Guidelines*. NTCA staff developed the application, handbook, and other supporting documents to assist applicant companies with the preparation of their applications. NTCA worked with a consultant with expertise in accreditation to assure the program follows best practices, including: independent third-party review; impartiality; transparency; appeals and due process.

4. *Do all members of NTCA have to be accredited?*

No, the accreditation program is voluntary.


5. *Do you have to be a member of NTCA to apply for accreditation?*

No, this is an industry-wide program.

6. *What types of companies are eligible to apply for accreditation?*

The first phase of the program will focus on three types of companies:

- NTCA Five-Star Large Commercial Contractors serving the heavy commercial market
- NTCA Five-Star Commercial Contractors serving the light commercial market
- NTCA Five-Star Residential Contractors serving residential projects in both the new and remodeling sectors

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7. *How do I know if I should apply for accreditation as a Large Commercial or Commercial company?*
 - Large Commercial consists of companies that install on average over the last 5 years a minimum of 6 million dollars' worth of tile installation sales annually. Has a letter of bondability of minimum \$2 million per project and a minimum of 5 million aggregate.
 - Commercial consists of companies that install on average over the last 5 years a minimum of \$750,000 dollars' worth of sales annually for tile in commercial markets.

 8. *How do I know if I should apply for accreditation as a Residential company?*
 - Residential consists of companies that install on average over the last 5 years a minimum of \$150,000 dollars' worth of sales annually for tile.

 9. *What are the standards that companies applying for accreditation must adhere to?*
 - Companies/business entities focus is on tile installation that aligns with industry standards and best practices.
 - Companies/business entities shall demonstrate they have the financial capability to conduct stated business and shall have adequate resources (e.g. insurance) to cover associated liabilities.
 - Companies/business entities shall operate ethically and shall uphold and abide by the NTCA Five-Star Accreditation Code of Ethics.
 - Companies/business entities shall have implemented an active safety program for all personnel and shall maintain sufficient policies, training, equipment, and materials to achieve safe and effective operations.
 - Company/business entities shall accurately disclose the qualifications and expertise of Installers and subcontractors providing services.
 - Companies/business entities shall have sufficient and competent personnel to conduct their business and to manage and deliver client services.
 - Companies/business entities shall ensure quality service and professional installation of products.
 - Companies/business entities shall accurately represent the services provided.
 - Companies/business entities shall comply with all applicable laws and regulations. Legally enforceable agreements shall be in place for the following, but not limited to: employees; services provided; contracted and subcontracted work; and warranties.
 - Companies/business entities honor warranties and comply with the guarantees made to clients.

Application for Accreditation Processing

10. What is the process for a company wishing to get accredited?

- Review the NTCA Five-Star Accreditation webpage and gather information
- Request an application and submit application fee
- Complete the online application and include supporting documentation
- Submit completed application and application review fee
- NTCA staff reviews the application to assure it meets the submission requirements
- If application requirements are met, NTCA staff assigns the application to two industry peer reviewers, one with technical expertise in installation and the other with company management and business expertise
- Applicant company will be notified of the reviewers
- Applicant company may declare a conflict-of-interest with the peer reviewers and other reviews will be assigned until such a time that no conflicts of interest are declared
- Peer reviewers are confirmed and review the application and supporting documents
- If required Peer reviewers and the applicant company schedule a 1-day site visit to the company (Site visit required for Large Commercial)
- The site visit is conducted to assure compliance with accreditation standards
- Peer reviewers submit a report detailing standards in compliance, standards not in compliance
- Applicant company corrects standards found to be in non-compliance and submits corrective actions to NTCA
- Peer reviewers review corrective actions to determine compliance
- When all standards are in compliance, accreditation is awarded for a period of 5 years
- Company complies with ongoing accreditation maintenance requirements through submission of annual reports

11. What happens after the company submits an application to NTCA?

NTCA staff will review the application and confirm if the application and/or all supporting documents have been completed in accordance with the submission guidelines. Incomplete applications will be sent back to the applicant company and marked as incomplete. Reasons for the determination of incomplete will be provided.

12. How long does the accreditation process take?

Once the application and supporting documents are submitted to NTCA, accreditation may be achieved within 6-9 months. Companies may have up to two years to complete the accreditation process; please see the response to question 14 below.

13. Is there a time limit associated with submitting the application and setting up the site visit?

Yes, from the date that a company requests an application, they have one year to return the completed application. The Qualifying Agent will have one year from the date that the application is approved to complete the site visit if required.

14. *What fees are associated with the accreditation process?*

CATEGORY	REQUEST APPLICATION FEE	APPLICATION REVIEW FEE	SITE VISIT**
NTCA Members			
Large Commercial	\$ 100	\$ 1,500	\$750**
Commercial	\$ 100	\$ 1,000	N/A
Residential	\$ 100	\$ 500	N/A
Non-NTCA Members			
Large Commercial	\$ 200	\$ 2,500	\$750**
Commercial	\$ 200	\$ 2,000	N/A
Residential	\$ 200	\$ 1,000	N/A
**Site visit is \$750, plus inspector's travel, lodging, and meals.			

15. *Are site visit costs included in the application review fee?*

No, the entire cost of the site visit will be paid by the applicant. This includes site reviewer travel, lodging, and meal costs in addition to a daily fee of \$750.

16. *Are there any discounts available for companies that apply for multiple types of accreditations?*

Companies applying for accreditation for multiple designations (e.g., Large Commercial, Commercial, Residential) will only pay the most expensive accreditation fee.

17. *Are there any discounts available for companies that apply for multiple locations at the same time?*

For companies applying for accreditation for multiple locations the total application fee per location will be reduced by \$250.

18. *Once a company is accredited, is it for life?*

No. Accreditation is awarded for a period of five years. Each year within the five-year cycle, the accredited company's qualifying agent will be required to fill out an annual renewal form indicating any and all significant changes that have occurred within the company that affect accreditation.

The company's qualifying agent or a company key employee representative will commit to continued engagement in the tile industry by attending at minimum one (1) National Tile event/convention such as but not limited to (e.g., TISE Surfaces, Coverings, Total Solutions Plus) and one (1) mandatory NTCA Five-Star Accreditation Event, as well as one (1) local training such as but not limited to (e.g., Industry workshops, regional trainings, manufacturers trainings.)

There is also a yearly renewal fee which covers the ongoing staffing, development, and promotional marketing costs associated with the Accreditation Programs. See breakdown below.

CATEGORY	ANNUAL RENEWAL FEE
NTCA Members	
Large Commercial	\$ 2,300
Commercial	\$ 1,300
Residential	\$ 800
Non-NTCA Members	
Large Commercial	\$ 3,000
Commercial	\$ 2,000
Residential	\$ 1,500

In addition to the yearly renewal, there will be a mandatory site visit every five years for NTCA Five-Star Large Commercial Contractors (to be paid for by the accredited company).

19. *What happens to the application fee of a company if it is not accepted?*
All application fees are non-refundable.

Site Visit

20. *What Company designations need to have a Site Visit?*
Only the Large Commercial designation requires a Site Visit.
21. *Who is responsible for the costs associated with the site visit?*
All travel expenses for the site visit will be invoiced to the applicant.
22. *Will I be informed ahead of time who will be performing the site visit?*
Yes, the company will know who is performing the site visit at the initial assignment of reviewers when conflicts-of-interest are evaluated and will be able to request an alternate site inspector if a conflict of interest is determined.

23. *What should I have available for the site visit?*

- Current copy of TCNA & NTCA Technical Manuals
- Written safety policy documents (including training staff procedures)
- Evidence that a quality control process is in place (layout/cutting, packing, transportation, installation)
- HAZMAT/SDS Sheets/OSHA 300 & 301 logs
- Specific Training Program documents for example (forklift, scaffold, scissor lift)
- New staff orientation/training documents
- Employee handbook
- Evidence of apprenticeship or skill or trade development program
- Evidence of job control and work order system
- Evidence of a complaint resolution process
- Evidence of Better Business Bureau complaints resolution (if BBB has complaints on file)
- Examples of customer warranty agreements
- Examples of customer care and maintenance instructions

Appeals and Due Process

24. *If my company is not awarded accreditation, can I appeal the decision?*

Yes, there is an appeals process.

25. *What is the appeals process?*

A company must submit a written request of appeal to the Appeals Commission Chair at bart@tile-assn.com within 30 days of receipt of the notice that their application for accreditation has been denied. Upon receipt of written request for appeal, NTCA staff will send an acknowledgement letter to the appellate company. Appeals will be limited to a review of the written record and will not involve a hearing. The Appeals Committee will review the written record and render a final written decision within 60 days of receiving the appeal.

General Questions

26. *When should a Large Commercial or Commercial accredited company be specified?*

As a general rule Large Commercial is suggested when a tile/stone contract is above \$1 million; Commercial is suggested when a tile/stone contract is below \$1 million.

27. *When should a Residential accredited company be recommended?*

As a general rule Residential is suggested when a tile/stone contract is in the new or remodel residential sector.

28. *How will I find out if my company has been accredited?*

A written report will be issued to the company's Qualifying Agent with the following status: decision pending (requires company to supply additional information); accreditation denied; or accreditation granted.

29. *Is there a time frame from the beginning to the end of the accreditation process that my company has to complete the accreditation process?*

The applicant will have a maximum of 2 years (depending upon when various stages of accreditation are completed) to complete the process from the date the application is requested.

30. *Who will have access to information submitted during the accreditation application process?*

All parties that are privy to information submitted during the accreditation application process will be vetted prior to review for any conflicts of interest and will be required to sign a legally binding confidentiality agreement.

31. *Will accredited companies have use of an "NTCA Five-Star Accredited" logo?*

Yes, accredited companies will have use of the corresponding "NTCA Five-Star Accredited" logo for business cards, stationary, website, etc.

32. *What types of changes in an accredited company's business model could jeopardize their accredited status?*

In order to maintain its accreditation status, the Qualifying Agent of an accredited company must notify NTCA in writing at least thirty (30) business days prior to the adoption of any material change to its business model (name change, transfer of controlling interest in the company, bankruptcy, receivership, business termination, Qualifying Agent departure or change, or any other changes which might materially impact the company's operations and/or its accreditation status). In the case of a qualifying agent departure, a new qualifying agent must be appointed. If the company doesn't provide timely notice or allow NTCA to investigate proposed changes, the company may be placed on probationary status until the issues are resolved to NTCA's satisfaction.

33. *What is the difference between a certification program and an accreditation program?*

A certification program refers to the formal recognition of an individual person, while an accreditation program refers to the formal recognition of a company.

34. *Will other areas of the tile industry be included in the accreditation process?*

The Accreditation Committee recognizes that once these three programs are launched and have established a successful track record, the program model could be used to create similar programs for other facets of the tile industry.

APPLICATION COMPONENTS

The application form is based entirely on validating the applicant's ability to meet the 10 accreditation standards that are outlined in the following section.

General Information About the Application:

- Most questions require the applying company to submit appendices to the application form.
- All responses required in the application form must be typed or printed, unless otherwise stated.
- All documentation must be submitted in English.
- The applicant must provide the application and all supporting documentation either with wet signatures or digital signatures.
- The applicant must sign the Waiver, Indemnity and Release Agreement form and agree to abide by the NTCA Five-Star Program policies.
- A nonrefundable application fee (payable in U.S. dollars) is required when requesting the application.
- Failure to comply with the application instructions stated above may result in delay of application review, denial of an application, and/or forfeiture of all application fees.
- Company will have to attest to a number of items (as spelled out in the "eligible company section") some of which will be verified by the site visit.

Company Information:

- Applicant Company must be a legal business entity (such as a corporation, partnership, or sole proprietorship) with or without subsidiaries or strategic business units performing various support functions for the Applicant Company.
- In a case such as a franchise where businesses are legally separate units; each company must individually submit an accreditation application, even when ownership of multiple companies is by one individual.
- If the Company (as defined above) has additional operating locations each operating location must have a Qualifying Agent; facilities within the same state or within a 50 mile radius may share a Qualifying Agent as long as the agent meets the Qualifying Agent definition for each operating location.
- Each operating location must undergo a site visit for Large Commercial designation.
- At this time, accreditation is only available to U.S. based, U.S. territory-based companies.

Qualifying Agent Information:

- A Qualifying Agent is the designated company representative responsible for filing and maintaining accreditation records for the applicant company.
- Qualifying Agents must be the owner/principal and/or a member of the Company's senior management team who has as a responsibility for the care and supervisory control of the operating location required to enforce and maintain compliance with each of the required standards of the current NTCA Accreditation Program Handbook.
- The Company must have one Qualifying Agent; however, there is no limit to the number of Qualifying Agents a Company has.

COMPANY VERIFICATION

COMPANY VERIFICATION OF THE AUTHENTICITY AND COMPLETENESS OF APPLICATION INFORMATION

- The company will sign a statement indicating the following: “We agree that the company currently complies with and will continue to comply with and maintain the Standards for NTCA Five-Star Accredited companies at all times during the period of accreditation. We further agree that we will submit an annual accreditation report and associated fees, and that if there are substantive changes to the company, including but not limited to a name change, transfer of ownership, bankruptcy, qualifying agent departure, or situations that bring the company into nonconformance of one or more of the program standards, we will notify the NTCA Five-Star accreditation program director in writing within 30 days of the change.”

How to Apply

- In order to apply for accreditation, an applying company must contact the Five-Star Accreditation staff at 601-939-2071 or email becky@tile-assn.com to start the application process. There is a nonrefundable \$100 fee (\$200 for non-NTCA Members) that is associated with requesting an application.

Additional Fee Information

- Request Application Fee
 - NTCA Member (non-refundable)
 - Large Commercial - \$100
 - Commercial - \$100
 - Residential - \$100
 - Non-NTCA Member (non-refundable)
 - Large Commercial - \$200
 - Commercial - \$200
 - Residential - \$200
- Application Review Fee (non-refundable and due prior to Application Submission)
 - NTCA Member
 - Large Commercial - \$1,500
 - Commercial - \$1,000
 - Residential - \$500
 - Non-NTCA Member
 - Large Commercial - \$2,500
 - Commercial - \$2,000
 - Residential - \$1,000
- Site Visit Fee (Large Commercial) - \$750 (plus travel, lodging, and meal expenses)
- Annual Renewal Fee
 - NTCA Member
 - Large Commercial - \$2,300
 - Commercial - \$1,300
 - Residential - \$800
 - Non-NTCA Member
 - Large Commercial - \$3,000
 - Commercial - \$2,000
 - Residential - \$1,500



Yearly Renewal

In order to maintain its accreditation status, the Qualifying Agent of an accredited company must notify NTCA in writing at least thirty (30) business days prior to the adoption of any material change to its business model (name change, location change, transfer of any amount of ownership interest or control in the company, bankruptcy, receivership, sale of all or substantially all of the company's assets, Qualifying Agent departure or change, or any other material changes which might materially impact the company's operations and/or its accreditation status). The failure to timely provide NTCA with the requisite notice or the ability to investigate the material changes which are being proposed may result in the company being placed on probationary status until the issues are resolved to the complete satisfaction of NTCA. In the case of a qualifying agent departure, a new Qualifying Agent must be appointed.

There is also a yearly renewal fee, which covers the ongoing staffing, development, and promotional marketing costs associated with the Accreditation Program. (see cost breakdown above)

Additional Information

For additional information on the NTCA Five-Star Accreditation Program, please contact the Five-Star Accreditation staff at 601-939-2071 or email becky@tile-assn.com.

SITE VISIT

Site Visit Details

Upon acceptance of the application, a site visit will be scheduled with the applicant. At the site visit, the NTCA third party representative will conduct a review of the applicant's facility, and three (3) projects as follows: one (1) completed installation, one (1) installation in progress, and one (1) other installation. The selection of the projects will be agreed upon by the reviews and the applicant company / business entity prior to visit.

All travel, lodging, and meal expenses plus the \$750 site visit fee will be paid by the applicant.

Facility Review

- Existence of the physical location described on the application
- EEOC signage posted (where required by law)
- Minimum Wage signage posted (where required by law)
- Worker's Compensation signage posted (where required by law)
- Proper handling/recycling of water discharge and/or review government variance documents
- Ventilation & PPE for dry grinding
- Anything in practice that is inconsistent with policy
- Clean facility and good housekeeping practices
- Any safe material handling equipment used such as forklift, GTP handling tools, etc.

Verification of Document Implementation

- The applicant should have the following documents / resources compiled for review:
 - Current copy of TCNA & NTCA Technical Manuals
 - Written safety policy documents (including training staff procedures)
 - Evidence that a quality control process is in place (layout/cutting, packing, transportation, installation)
 - HAZMAT/SDS Sheets/OSHA 300 & 301 logs
 - Specific Training Program documents for example (forklift, scaffold, scissor lift)
 - New staff orientation/training documents
 - Employee handbook
 - Evidence of apprenticeship or skill or trade development program
 - Evidence of job control and work order system
 - Evidence of a complaint resolution process
 - Evidence of Better Business Bureau complaints resolution (if BBB has complaints on file)
 - Examples of customer warranty agreements
 - Examples of customer care and maintenance instructions

Large Commercial Installation Site Visits

- When visiting an ongoing commercial project, the site inspector will verify or witness:
 - Actions in compliance with company safety policy
 - MSDS sheets on premise
 - Approved shop drawings / plans on premise
 - Contract documents and specifications for compliance
 - Confirm installation tolerances are compliant with approved documents
 - Material storage and handling for safety precautions and integrity of the tile
 - Project scaffolding and rigging techniques for safe and efficient methods if applicable

- When visiting a finished commercial project, the site inspector will verify or witness:
 - Contract documents and specifications for compliance
 - Confirm installation tolerances are compliant with approved documents

On-Going Site Visit Requirement

- Accredited NTCA Five-Star Large Commercial Contractors will be required to have reoccurring site visits every five (5) years, in order to ensure that each company remains in compliance with the Accreditation Standards.

PURPOSE OF NTCA FIVE-STAR ACCREDITATION PROGRAM



FIVE-STAR
CONTRACTOR



The purpose of accreditation is to establish high standards for companies/business entities whose focus is tile and stone installation; who demonstrate rigorous business practices; and are committed to advancing the professionalism of the tile and stone industry. By achieving and maintaining accreditation, companies/business entities demonstrate their quality and value through an independent third-party review. Accredited companies/business entities shall abide by and uphold the NTCA Five-Star Accreditation Code of Ethics.

TERMINOLOGY

Companies/Business Entities

- A common business structure and may include Sole Proprietor, Partnership, Limited Liability Partnership, Limited Liability Company, C Corporation, S Corporation, or other legally accepted business structures.

Qualifying Agent

- A Qualifying Agent is the designated company representative responsible for filing and maintaining accreditation records for the applicant company.
- Qualifying Agents must be the owner/principal and/or a member of the Company's senior management team who has as a responsibility for the care and supervisory control of the operating location required to enforce and maintain compliance with each of the required standards of the current NTCA Accreditation Program Handbook.
- The Company must have one Qualifying Agent; however, there is no limit to the number of Qualifying Agents a Company has.
 - Large Commercial: must have 10 years of commercial experience within the past 20 years
 - Commercial: must have 10 years of commercial experience within the past 20 years
 - Residential: must have 3 years of residential experience within the last 5 years

Key Personnel

- He or she has a direct and significant impact on the value of the business. The employee's role in the company, responsibilities and decisions impact sales, profitability, growth, product development or another critical value driver in the business.

Qualified Labor

- Tile installers who are Certified Tile Installers (CTI) through the Ceramic Tile Education Foundation or have completed a (3) three-year Department of Labor (DOL) approved tile apprentice program.

Consultant

- A person who provides expert advice professionally for the tile industry.

ELIGIBLE COMPANIES

NTCA represents the interests of a wide range of tile companies: producer, importer/exporter, distributor, supplier, installer, consultant, restoration, etc. This list becomes even more dynamic when the aspects of service to the residential or commercial markets are considered. Company must be owned and located in the U.S. (50 states and territories).

The first phase of the program will focus on four types of companies:

- NTCA Five-Star Large Commercial Contractors serving the heavy commercial market.
- NTCA Five-Star Commercial Contractors serving the light commercial market.
- NTCA Five-Star Residential Contractors serving residential projects in both the new and remodeling sectors.

The Accreditation Committee recognizes that once these three programs are launched and have established a successful track record, the program model could be used to create similar programs for other facets of the industry.

STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION AND SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

- In order to be awarded accreditation, companies/business entities must meet all accreditation standards and comply with submission requirements.



Standard 1: Companies/business entities' focus is on commercial tile and stone installation that aligns with industry standards and best practices.

Submission Guidelines:

Applicant companies/business entities shall submit evidence of their focus on commercial tile and stone installation. Please submit the following documents, and if you do not have one of the listed documents provide an explanation as to why not. If there are documents not listed that support your company/business entities' focus on commercial tile and stone installation, please submit those documents and highlight sections of the documents that demonstrate compliance with the standard.

1. Submit the following documents:
 - a) Articles of Incorporation, Partnership Agreement, Certificate of Organization, or Business Name Registration.
 - b) If applicable, submit the most recent renewal certificate from the Secretary of State in the State in which your company/business entity is registered.
 - c) Renewal certificate must have the same companies/business entity name or structure. If not provide an explanation for changes to the organization name and structure.
 - d) If incorporated in more than one state, submit all Articles per state.
2. Submit All Current Business Licenses
 - a) State or City Issued License(s)
3. Submit All Contractor's License (if applicable in state(s) of business)
 - a) Trade License for Tile Installations
4. Describe business history and business locations
 - a) Provide a written narrative of the company/business entities' history, e.g. when established, number and place of locations, states of business operation
5. Specify the percentage of Tile & Stone Installation Revenue of your total Revenue for the last 3 years. Please explain how you derived the percentage of tile & stone installation.
6. Provide evidence that your company/business entity stays engaged in the tile industry and informed of updates to industry standards and best practices and annually participates in a minimum of one national program and one regional or local program, including but not limited to: industry training and educational opportunities, workshops and/or virtual workshops, regional training sessions, industry conventions.

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7. Provide evidence that the installation of tile and stone consistently meets industry standards in all aspects of assemblies. Submit work samples attesting to the competency of the applicant company/business entity, including photographs of completed jobs and a description of work performed, e.g. size of job, materials used, methods and standards used. Work sample must be completed within the last 5 years prior to the submission of the application for accreditation.
 - a) Large Commercial:
 - Four (4) tile installations each project with a minimum tile contract of \$750,000 completed during the past five (5) years.
 - One (1) tile installation project with a minimum of \$1 million completed during the past five years.
 - b) Commercial:
 - Three (3) installations each project should have a minimum tile contract of \$100,000 completed during the past five (5) years.
 - Two (2) installations each project should have a minimum tile contract of \$150,000 completed during the past five (5) years.
 - c) Residential:
 - Complete fifty (50) standard residential projects completed during the past five (5) years
 - Submit three (3) samples of your residential work completed in the last five (5) years of project valued at a minimum of 25K

Standard 2: Companies/business entities shall demonstrate they have the financial capability to conduct stated business and shall have adequate resources (e.g. insurance) to cover associated liabilities.

Submission Guidelines:

Applicant companies/business entities shall submit evidence of their financial capability to conduct their stated business. Please submit the following documents, and if you do not have one of the listed documents provide an explanation as to why not. If there are documents not listed that support your company/business entities' financial capability, please submit those documents and highlight sections of the documents that demonstrate compliance with the standard.

1. Submit a Letter of Payment and Performance Bondability
 - Submit a letter of Bondability on the Surety letterhead, showing bonding capacity levels of your organization.
 - a) Large Commercial
 - Has a letter of bondability of minimum \$2 million per project and a minimum of \$5 million aggregate.
 - b) Commercial & Residential
 - Not required, however if you have one, please submit
2. Submit proof of tile annual sales meeting minimum requirements
 - a) Large Commercial
 - Large Commercial consists of companies that install on average over the last 5 years a minimum of \$6 million dollars' worth of tile installation sales annually.
 - b) Commercial
 - Commercial consists of companies that install on average over the last 5 years a minimum of \$750,000 dollars' worth of sales annually for tile in commercial markets.
 - c) Residential
 - Residential consists of companies that install on average over the last 5 years a minimum of \$150,000 dollars' worth of sales annually for tile.

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Submission Guidelines:

Applicant companies/business entities shall submit evidence of their financial capability to conduct their stated business. Please submit the following documents, and if you do not have one of the listed documents provide an explanation as to why not. If there are documents not listed that support your company/business entities' financial capability, please submit those documents and highlight sections of the documents that demonstrate compliance with the standard.

3. Submit Certificates of Insurances

- a) Submit certificate(s) of insurance directly from your coverage provider to identify the coverages necessary to conduct your business, e.g. General Liability, Workman's Comp, Umbrella Policies, Pollution, Automobile Liability, Professional Liability, Employee Practice Liability Insurance.
- b) Minimum coverages for each designation
 - Large Commercial
 - 1 million for Contractor General Liability
 - Worker's Compensation meets statutory requirements
 - 5 million Umbrella
 - Commercial
 - 1 million for Contractor General Liability
 - Worker's Compensation meets statutory requirements
 - 3 million Umbrella
 - Residential
 - Provide Certificate of Insurance for workers compensation showing limits as well as any other business you have
 - 500,000 for Contractor General Liability per occurrence
 - 1 million for Contractor General Liability General Aggregate

4. Vendor Good Standing

- a) Submit your three (3) largest tile and stone vendors in which your organization does business with so that we may submit a Financial Reference Form to them for verification that the organization's business account is in good standing.

Standard 3: Companies/business entities shall operate ethically and shall uphold and abide by the NTCA Five-Star Accreditation Code of Ethics.

Submission Guidelines:

Applicant companies/business entities shall submit evidence of their compliance with the NTCA Five-Star Accredited Companies Code of Ethics.

1. Submit a signed copy of the NTCA Five-Star Accredited Companies Code of Ethics. The code must be signed by a company principal. This form will be sent for electronic signature.

Standard 4: Companies/business entities shall have implemented an active safety program for all personnel and shall maintain sufficient policies, training, equipment, and materials to sustain safe and effective operations.

Submission Guidelines:

Applicant company/business entities shall submit evidence of their compliance with safety standards. Please submit the following documents, and if you do not have one of the listed documents provide an explanation as to why not. If there are documents not listed that support your company/business entity's compliance with safety standards, please submit those documents and highlight sections of the documents which demonstrate compliance with the standards.


1. Submit a copy of the safety program, including the safety manual, training curricula, and a list of training meetings conducted in the past 2 years with the log of participants. Highlight the section of the documentation that pertains to crystalline respirable silica.
2. Submit OSHA 300A Summary and 301 Logs for the past 5 years. (Required for more than 11 employees and meets statutory requirements)
 - a) Submit OSHAs final resolution for any violations reported on your Logs.
 - b) Submit the corrective actions the company/business entity is implementing to prevent further safety violations from occurring.
3. Provide a copy of OSHA 10 and OSHA 30 certificates for employees and sub-contractors. Provide other certificates of employees and sub-contractors holding advanced certifications in safety, e.g. rigging, equipment training/certification, etc.
4. Submit a copy of the Employee Manual and reference sections pertaining to safety.
5. Submit any third-party safety awards the company/business entity has received.
6. Submit Experience Modification Rider (EMR) annual rating should be 1.0 or below, if not please explain.

Standard 5: Company/Business Entity shall accurately disclose the qualifications and expertise of Installers and subcontractors providing services.

Submission Guidelines:

Applicant company/business entities shall submit evidence that they accurately disclose the qualifications and expertise of installers and subcontractors providing services. Please submit the following documents, and if you do not have one of the listed documents provide an explanation as to why not. If there are documents not listed that support your company/business entity's compliance with qualifications and expertise of installers, please submit those documents and highlight sections of the documents which demonstrate compliance with the standard.

1. Provide the following information about your qualified labor:
 - a) The number of Certified Tile Installers (CTI's) through the Ceramic Tile Education Foundation (CTEF). Submit the CTI number and name. State the percentage of your qualified labor this represents.
 - b) The number of installers who have completed a three-year Department of Labor (DOL) approved Tile Setter apprenticeship program. Submit the number of installers who have completed the apprenticeship program. State the percentage of your qualified labor this represents.
2. Document how the company/business entity provides qualified labor for installations and how the business structure assures coverage of qualified labor. Note: In general, 30% of the workforce should be qualified labor for residential installations, and 10% of the workforce should be qualified labor for commercial installations.
3. Describe the qualifications or experienced needed for the following positions: (if applicable)
 - a) Project Manger
 - b) Superintendents
 - c) Foreman.




Standard 6: Companies/Business entities shall have sufficient and competent personnel to conduct their business and to manage and deliver client services.

Submission Guidelines:

Applicant company/business entities shall submit evidence that they have sufficient and competent personnel to conduct their business and to manage and deliver client services. Please submit the following documents, and if you do not have one of the listed documents provide an explanation as to why not. If there are documents not listed that support your company/business entity's compliance with the personnel requirements, please submit those documents and highlight sections of the documents which demonstrate compliance with the standard.

1. Submit a resume for the Qualifying Agent(s) and key personnel. Please refer to the terminology section to identify key personnel.
2. Submit the staff orientation and training program.
3. Submit a sample (blank) employee performance review.
4. Submit the Employee Manual or other applicable corporate document and highlight sections pertaining to the competence and training of personnel.
5. State the percentage of in-house labor vs subcontracted labor?
6. If you use Subcontract Labor, submit documentation that explains the processes and procedures implemented to control and deliver a quality Installation(s).



Standard 7: Companies/business entities shall ensure quality service and professional installation of products.

Submission Guidelines:

Applicant company/business entities shall submit evidence that they ensure quality service and professional installation of products. Please submit the following documents, and if you do not have one of the listed documents provide an explanation as to why not. If there are documents not listed that support your company/business entity's provision of quality service and professional installation, please submit those documents and highlight sections of the documents which demonstrate compliance with the standard.

1. Provide a copy of the quality control measures and/or software, e.g., management system, project tracking, check lists, logs, reports, etc. that the company/business entity utilizes.
2. Provide copies of in-house, online, or third-party industry training and completion certificates, e.g., manufacturer product specific training.
3. Submit contact information for 2 architects, 2 general contractors, and 1 tile industry consultant attesting to the quality of services provided by your company. A questionnaire will be electronically sent to them which includes a description of the type of job the company has started, managed, and finished; size of installation; scope of installation and products used.

Standard 8: Companies/Business entities shall accurately represent the services provided.

Submission Guidelines:

Applicant company/business entities shall submit evidence that they accurately represent the services provided. Please submit the following documents, and if you do not have one of the listed documents provide an explanation as to why not. If there are documents not listed that support your company/business entity's accurate representation of services, please submit those documents and highlight sections of the documents which demonstrate compliance with the standard.


1. Submit a copy of all promotional materials, e.g., advertisements, website, brochures.
2. Submit a copy of the information provided by your company regarding the qualifications of contractors and the level of service delivered.

Standard 9: Companies/business entities shall comply with all applicable laws and regulations. Legally enforceable agreements shall be in place for the following, but not limited to: employees; services provided; and contracted and subcontracted work.

Submission Guidelines:

Applicant company/business entities shall submit evidence that they comply with laws and regulations. Please submit the following documents, and if you do not have one of the listed documents provide an explanation as to why not. If there are documents not listed that support your company/business entity's compliance with applicable laws and regulations, please submit those documents and highlight sections of the documents which demonstrate compliance with the standard.

1. Submit a sample contract for services. Financial data and the name and location of the client may be redacted.
2. Submit a sample employee contract. Financial data and personal information about the employee may be redacted.
3. Submit a sample contract for subcontracted services. Financial data and personal information about subcontracted personnel and/or company subcontracting services may be redacted.
4. Submit a Letter on Corporate Letterhead signed by an officer of the company and notarized attesting that in the last five years:
 - a) The company has not filed for Bankruptcy
 - b) There are no federal or state tax liens filed against the company
 - c) The company pays all federal, state and local payroll taxes, workers compensation, unemployment, FICA, etc. for all employees.
 - d) The company has not surrendered a commercial project for bond within the past five years.
5. Submit a letter of explanation if the company has lost a commercial lawsuit or has lost litigation for reasons of non-performance in the past five years.



Standard 10: Companies/business entities honor warranties and comply with the guarantees made to clients.

Submission Guidelines:

Applicant company/business entities shall submit evidence that they comply with the laws and regulations. Please submit the following documents, and if you do not have one of the listed documents provide an explanation as to why not. If there are documents not listed that support your company/business entity's compliance with the honoring its warranties, please submit those documents and highlight sections of the documents which demonstrate compliance with the standard.

1. Submit a copy of the general warranty provided to the client at close-out.
2. Respond to: Has the company/business entity ever had any complaints filed against it with the Better Business Bureau or Contractor State Licensing Board? If yes, provide an explanation and any resolution or redress.



FIVE-STAR

C O N T R A C T O R

THANK YOU FOR
YOUR INTEREST

