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Does Your Mechanical Contractor Have What It Takes?

*Your guide to qualifying the right
Mechanical Contractor to fit your needs.*



3 Things to Consider When Choosing Your Next Mechanical Contractor

At Bassett Mechanical we strive to take great care of our customers. To better serve you, we have created this list of essential qualifications to assist you with choosing the right Mechanical Contractor to fit your needs.

There are three things to consider when choosing a Mechanical Contractor: safety, qualifications, and capabilities.

Does your Mechanical Contractor have what it takes?

1 SAFETY

- **Dedicated safety professionals**, written safety programs and **EMR rate of .85 or better (industry average is 1.0)**.
- **Training programs** for employees covering safety, risk, first aid, PPE, and responder training for the unique aspects of ammonia and other natural refrigerants.
- **Employees equipped with all required PPE**, including ammonia monitors.
- **Ammonia Emergency Response Team** with members trained in Hazmat Technician and Incident Command roles.



2 QUALIFICATIONS

- **Licensed to perform industrial refrigeration work** in the state your work is being done.
- **IIAR membership**, representation within IIAR committees and engineers who are IIAR-2 (Safe Design Standard) Certificate holders.
- **RETA CARO & CIRO certification** and RETA certified technicians.
- **Multiple in-house Professional Engineers (P.E.)** ensuring depth of technical support.
- **Sufficient general and professional liability insurance coverage** for design services.



3 CAPABILITIES

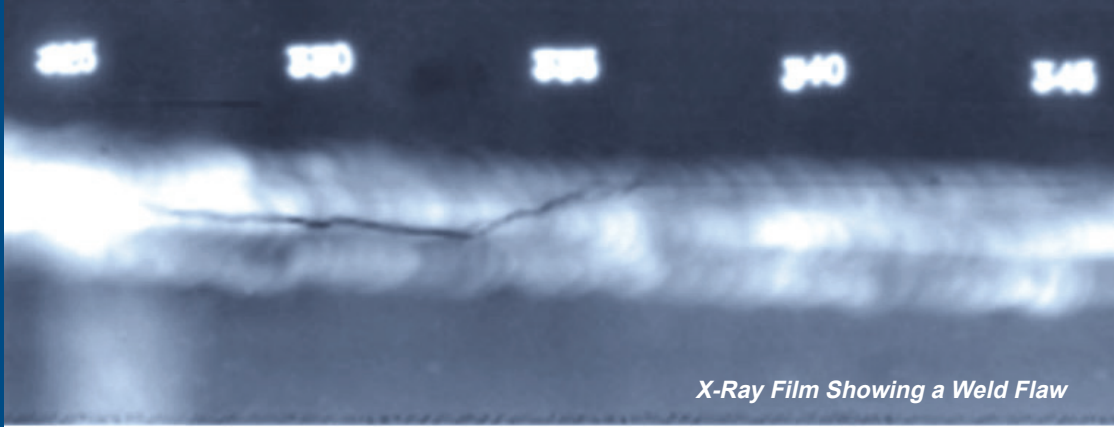
- **Certified and qualified welders** and ASME compliant procedures.
- **Industrial refrigeration design/build** capabilities; ability to self-perform ammonia services.
- **In-house PSM** capabilities including writing operating procedures, leading PHA's, and availability of PSM compliance management software.
- **Shop pre-fabrication** capabilities including designing and manufacturing vessels and skids.





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X-Ray Film Showing a Weld Flaw

QUALIFICATION #1

Does Your Mechanical Contractor Have Certified Welders, AWS, and ASME Compliant Procedures?

*By Dan Buechler, Manufacturing Superintendent and
Tim Driscoll, Quality Control Manager*

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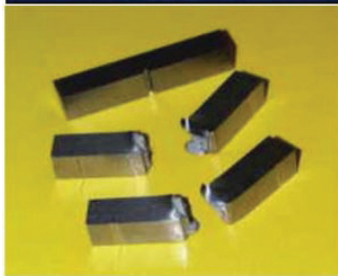
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All welds are not created equal...and neither are Mechanical Contractors. It is important to make sure that your Mechanical Contractor performs their welding processes within engineered parameters. Welding codes provide guidelines and procedures used for certifying welders and measuring and testing welds to get your job done right. Doing so guarantees that there is a system in place to control the specific welds needed for your fabrication. **You might be surprised to know that it's not always the base metal that fails. Failure can also be due to poor weld quality making it very important that processes and rigor are followed to protect your people, your facility, and your investment.**

The importance of welding codes.

ASME (American Society of Mechanical Engineers) outlines design and welding requirements for products such as power boilers, pressure vessels, and piping systems. AWS (American Welding Society) outlines design and welding requirements for structural components, frames for skids and supporting structures, and more. These codes provide guidelines for amps, volts (heat), travel speed (duration), pre-heat requirements, and filler metals to be used, in order to achieve the appropriate mechanical properties in a weld.



Charpy Impact Specimens

Charpy impact is a test which determines the amount of energy absorbed by a material during fracture at a pre-determined temperature.

As part of the ASME code, many products (depending on the size and the scope) are also hydro tested. Pressure vessels carry a unique concern due to their ability to contain toxic substances or contents under very high pressure. Therefore, pressure vessels must earn their ASME mark by first passing pressure testing (generally 1.3 times the operating pressure). This process includes hold points at different stages throughout fabrication to confirm compliance with each code and WPS (welding procedures specifications). AWS also maintains a list of design requirements, as defined by the engineer of notary, which need to be followed to ensure compliance.

The importance of welder qualifications.

Not only are the processes and products rigorously tested, but so are the welders. ASME certified and qualified welders are physically tested through hands-on-welding. They are visually critiqued and their welds are mechanically tested for soundness. While visual and mechanical testing can be done in-house at many facilities, a third party source is often required for x-ray (radiography) testing and to provide a final volumetric interpretation of pass/fail.

Welder qualification for ASME is based on the type of application for the product being built. This means that there is a variety of unique testing and procedures for products being used for things such as human occupancy, high purity, nuclear, high pressures, low temperatures etc. There is a common minimum standard requirement which is always tested, however, based on the type of process additional testing and criteria are added in order to pass qualification.

AWS has a similar process for qualification based on the use of the product. In this case, the criteria for testing is based on the potential for the product to encounter things like earthquakes (seismic), wind shear, load bearing, etc.

These codes are put into place to make sure you aren't putting your operators, end users, or companies at risk.

How serious can a weld break really be?

Failures can be as minute as a small crack or drip, or as catastrophic as an explosion or toxic leak. These codes are put into place to make sure you aren't putting your operators, end users, or companies at risk. Even if a failure is small, it will directly affect the people on your facility floors exposing them to unsafe conditions and potential for bodily harm.

At their core, ASME and AWS focus on the quality of the product. By choosing a Mechanical Contractor who has these certifications and processes in place, you receive the best overall value and longevity of your investment and are providing your people with the safest possible working environment.

These codes are put into place to make sure you aren't putting your operators, end users, or companies at risk.

Choosing not to use a contractor that uses engineered codes such as ASME and AWS can have disastrous consequences. Without specific procedures, you increase your risk of variability in the weld, and therefore also increase the risk of failure. ASME and AWS procedures have been engineered and proven and give you peace of mind knowing that you are putting your product and your people in the safest possible environment.



Longitudinal Weld Bends



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QUALIFICATION #2

Does your Mechanical Contractor Have In-House PSM Capabilities

By Ryan Murphy, PSM Services Manager

Have you considered the integrity of your PSM program and where you may potentially have gaps in compliance? The task to bring your facility into compliance can seem daunting. Fortunately, by choosing a Mechanical Contractor with PSM capabilities on the forefront, you can save yourself the hardship, time, and costs involved in implementing compliance after the completion of your project.

What are the benefits of choosing a contractor with in-house PSM capabilities?

PSM requirements continue to evolve and it is the responsibility of each facility to ensure it remains in compliance. Facility managers often reach out to third-party PSM specialists for help, but it can be difficult to find a qualified third party to implement and maintain an effective PSM program. Hiring a mechanical contractor with an in-house PSM team to assist with your program can alleviate the burden on your facility. By involving a contractor's PSM personnel during the engineering and installation phases you have greater certainty that your program can prevent and mitigate the release of hazardous chemicals. The collaboration of PSM personnel throughout all phases of the project is key.

Your facility is one of a kind, so shouldn't your PSM program be too? Choosing an independent third party at the completion of your project to implement your PSM

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program can accompany some risks. Many third-party PSM companies have general compliance programs that do not fit the individual needs of your facility and if they were not engaged at the onset of the project they are likely to miss important gaps in the compliance requirements specific to your facility. Those gaps leave you at greater risk for safety hazards, equipment failures, and OSHA fines for noncompliance. You should expect a program that incorporates your organization's culture and addresses your unique needs, equipment, and processes. A tailored program is essential to ensure the safety of your employees, community, and brand.

What makes a PSM program effective?

An effective PSM program requires a methodical approach to developing and evaluating the following:

- **Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's):** SOP's provide instructions for all phases of operation and for each piece of equipment but should also include technical operating specifications, operating limits, consequences of deviation, safety and health considerations, personal protective equipment, and first aid measures. Maintaining and storing this documentation is also important, so ensuring your contractor can provide a PSM compliance management software is also a key to maintaining appropriate documentation.
- **Process Hazard Analysis (PHA):** An initial PHA is required prior to system startup and the PHA revalidated every 5 years (or sooner based on major process changes). This is an onsite study which analyzes the chemical process for potential release hazards, documents existing safety systems in place, and recommends improvement where deemed necessary.
- **Training Programs:** Your contractor should offer comprehensive and detailed PSM and RMP training that is specifically tailored to your employees and managers. It's crucial that training emphasizes the successful management and implementation of the PSM standards to those in your facility who play a role in your compliance.
- **Compliance Audits:** Audits are required every 3 years. Compliance audits are required by the OSHA Process Safety Management regulation 29 CFR 1910.119 paragraph (o), as well as the EPA Clean Air Act Risk Management Program 40 CFR Part 68. This should include the development and delivery of a detailed compliance audit report.
- **Risk Management Plan (RMP):** While PSM compliance is required by OSHA, RMP compliance is required by EPA in order to protect the environment and community, resulting from the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990. RMP and PSM are meant to go hand in hand so you will notice they share many of

the same requirements. However, there is not a complete overlap, so compliance with both PSM and RMP is mandatory and it is essential that your contractor can identify the gaps between the two to ensure your program is meeting the requirements of both. An essential RMP program should address the following:

- Create a hazard assessment that details the potential effects of an accidental release, an accident history of the last five years, and an evaluation of worst-case and alternative accidental releases including identification of public receptors, mapping and residential population estimation based on inventory calculations.
- Prevention Program that includes safety precautions and maintenance, monitoring, and employee training measures (most of these programs overlap with the PSM required programs); and
- Emergency response program that spells out emergency health care, employee training measures and procedures for informing the public and response agencies (e.g the fire department) should an accident occur

RMP plans are required to be revised and resubmitted to EPA at least every five years.

- **Emergency Preparedness:** Requires facilities to have a written plan to respond to emergencies involving applicable processes. The essential elements of an emergency action plan will cover evacuation and the degree of involvement of facility employees. OSHA specifies strict training requirements based on the degree of involvement of on-site personnel, whether the facility decides not to get involved in an incident and let local emergency response personnel handle it or participate in a response. Coordination with local emergency responders should be part of an effective program.
- **Process Safety Information:** Facilities are required to compile written process safety information (PSI) about highly hazardous chemicals and process equipment for all PSM covered processes. Complete and accurate compilation of PSI is critical to the effective implementation of all other aspects of the PSM standard and will help employers and employees involved in operating the process identify and understand the hazards involved in their processes. PSI must include information concerning the hazards of the covered process chemical, the technology of the process, and all the equipment used in the process. PSI examples include: P&ID's, Safety Data Sheets, maximum intended inventory calculations.

Choosing an independent third party at the completion of your project to implement your PSM program can accompany some risks.

You know how important the safety of your people, plant, and product are. We know how devastating it could be if compliance is not followed. For the safety of your facility and your community, don't take a risk on a contractor who can't provide PSM guidance from the very beginning of your next project.



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QUALIFICATION #3

Does Your Mechanical Contractor Have RETA Certified Technicians?

*By Scott Nehls, Regional Refrigeration Operations Manager
and Brian Pigeon, Refrigeration Supervisor*



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You are faced with decisions every day. Some have very minimal consequences and others have enormous and perhaps even fatal life-threatening consequences. Choosing a Mechanical Contractor is not an easy choice and there are many important factors to consider. You know the impact that a Mechanical Contractor can have on your entire business. So, when it comes to the care of your industrial refrigeration system, are you sure your Contractor is right for the job?

When choosing a Mechanical Contractor, one qualification to consider is the certification of their service technicians. You may not consider this factor on the onset of your project, but when your refrigeration project is complete you will need technicians to service and maintain your system and it is important to ensure they have the qualifications necessary to provide safe and efficient operation of your investment. As a result, you should expect your Mechanical Contractor to provide RETA certified technicians to service your equipment.

What is RETA?

The Refrigerating Engineers & Technicians Association (RETA) is a society of both companies and individuals whose mission to enhance the professional development of industrial refrigeration operating and technical engineers (www.reta.com).

What sets RETA Certification apart?

The certification that RETA provides is not only widely recognized throughout the industry but the exams are accredited by ANSI (American National Standards Institute). ANSI is recognized and often highly regarded by regulatory agencies such as EPA and OSHA in the establishment and maintenance of the highest industrial and safety benchmarks. ANSI also ensures that the RETA certification standards are being met, tested, and validated to continually guard the integrity of the certification. As an ANSI accredited organization, RETA testing and programs will remain meaningful and protected.

To become certified, technicians are required to demonstrate the meaning of the principals of ammonia refrigeration as well show a conceptual understanding of RETA materials and standards. RETA testing focuses on both practice and knowledge including real-world scenarios to allow technicians to not only troubleshoot and verify operation of systems, but also to demonstrate knowledge of applicable codes and standards. "When a person passes this test," says Harold Streicher, past RETA National President and current RETA Chicago chapter member, "it really means something. The exam questions are routinely validated through an independent review process and the results are measured through advanced psychometrics to ensure that the certification is truly representative of the person's understanding. That's why this certification carries so much weight." Continuing education is also required in order to maintain certification ensuring the most up-to-date and in-depth knowledge are being passed to certified technicians on an ongoing basis.

RETA is the only ANSI accredited certification for industrial refrigeration in the world. "If two guys are walking up to a building, one with a CARO patch and the other without...I would be more likely to invite the guy with the CARO patch in. The knowledge they acquire through the certification is that important" says Streicher.

OSHA and EPA require contractors to prove that the technicians working on their equipment are knowledgeable and capable of safely maintaining their system. OSHA and EPA recognize RETA certification as a valid and best practice certification.

What certification should I be checking for?

Technicians can either be CARO (Certified Assistant Refrigeration Operator) or CIRO (Certified Industrial Refrigeration Operator) Certified. CARO is the level one program that allows the certified technician to operate under guidance in industrial refrigeration. This test alone is 110 questions and estimates 3 hours to complete. CIRO is the level two certification which assures expertise in applied refrigeration systems including more advanced operations and troubleshooting. CIRO certification also requires at least two years of industrial refrigeration operator experience. This test also takes approximately 3 hours to complete and has 135 questions.

What if my technicians aren't certified?

"Safety is the core issue here," says Mark Stencil, Director of Business Development at Bassett Mechanical, "you don't want someone untrained misinterpreting a machine interface or turning valves on your ammonia refrigeration system." Ammonia can be safely operated, but does require a technician who has advanced ammonia refrigeration knowledge. Eric Girven, current RETA National President and NEPA Chapter officer, says as a manager it's important that his employees and service technicians are RETA certified to ensure the safest operation of the system. "Some technicians don't have the skillset or experience to safely operate an ammonia, CO2 or combination system," says Girven. He also indicates "The risk is unknown.

You may have two technicians with very similar experiences and skills, but a RETA certified technician has demonstrated the understanding and proven that he or she has the knowledge and background to make safe decisions".

While safe operation of your system and documented proof of technician knowledge for your PSM program as required by OSHA and EPA are top priorities, investing in certified technicians will also help you gain operating efficiencies. Trained technicians know what to look for in your system and can suggest potential improvements that can reduce the risk of a breakdown and minimize downtime.

"The vast majority of large companies make sure that their service techs are RETA Certified. They've grown and learned the value of having knowledgeable people working on their systems. They know through experience that it's worth investing in their system" says Stencil.

Beyond certification

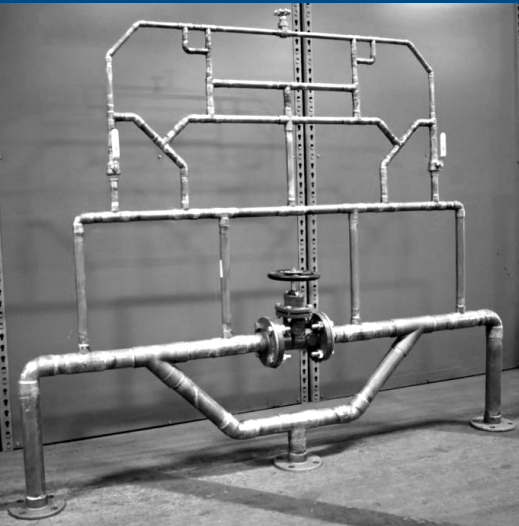
Beyond ensuring your Mechanical Contractor has RETA certified technicians, a Mechanical Contractor should also be able to provide training for the operators at your facility. Operators should have an in-depth knowledge of your system and know when to call a contractor to help prevent any accidents or leaks. As a benefit to our customers, Bassett not only provides training but can also provide a level of training that can be counted for personal development hours for those operators at your facilities who are CIRO certified. Choosing a Mechanical Contractor who can provide this type of training for your facility is an invaluable resource.

"As a customer, you can feel confident knowing that your technician has a true understanding of the concepts and will help make you aware of safety opportunities in the context of the refrigeration world," says Streicher, "It's powerful to know that those concepts are covered in the certification program". The power is yours to ensure your industrial refrigeration system is getting the best care possible. Can your Mechanical Contractor provide this type of safe operation and knowledge to your facility?



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QUALIFICATION #4

Does Your Mechanical Contractor Have In-House Prefabrication Capabilities?

By Mark Stencel, Director of Business Development, Chairman, IIAR Education Committee and Dan Buechler, Manufacturing Superintendent

Asking the right questions is important. Would you buy a car without first asking about the gas mileage and features? Would you buy a house without questioning when it was built and how recently any updates had been made? For businesses especially, knowledge is powerful and seeking to understand your Mechanical Contractor's capabilities before your project begins can help eliminate miscommunication, stress, and financial worry during the most pivotal part of your project.

Have you asked your Mechanical Contractor about their prefabrication capabilities? You may already know your contractor can complete the project; they may have already quoted it for you. But whether they plan to prefabricate significant portions of the job in their own facility or to fit all the pieces together on-site can have a significant effect on the final result of your project and its date of completion. We list below a few of the risks you are exposed to by not asking your Mechanical Contractor this simple question.

Risk #1: Weather-related issues

Imagine the difficulties that snow, rain, and wind can cause as your components are spread out on a job site. By having parts staged around the area you run the risk of each integral part of your assembly being exposed to elements that cannot only

be dirty but corrosive. Weather and site-related variables impact the quality of the welds and also the integrity of the constructed piece overall.

TIG welding can be required onsite when multiple pieces of equipment need to be fitted and have not been prefabricated before arriving on the job. If the weld is exposed to wind during the welding phase it can blow away the shielding gas and cause porosity in the weld. Although windshields and other forms of blocking may be put into place, lack of a clean, dry environment is still of great concern here and can have a significant impact on the integrity of your system overall.

Risk #2: Uncontrolled environment

On the job site, you not only have the elements to contend with but also any particles or debris that might be generated by other contractors, machinery, or operators. Components especially recommended for prefabrication include those that are of a hygienic nature or need to be clean. It is especially crucial for these pieces to stay free of the contaminants, grit, and dirt that they can be regularly exposed to while being staged at a job site. Contaminants collected inside of piping and valves on site plug the system filters and impact system operation. When equipment is prefabricated in a clean Lean manufacturing space there are controls already in place to minimize this risk including dust collection, fume mitigation, and temperature controls.

Risk #3: Efficiency concerns and unexpected delays

Mechanical Contractors who have the ability to prefabricate their equipment are set up for optimal efficiency, especially when compared to the challenges of fabricating in the field.

Materials and parts that are delivered loose to a job site require a much longer set up process from start to finish. Even prior to the fabricating itself, pieces need to be shipped to the job site, have packing materials removed, and be sorted and staged for assembly. At which point the production site needs to be set with the right welding tools, equipment, lighting, and electrical power supply before the fabricating process can even begin. This same process, when completed in a controlled assembly environment, can take a fraction of the time (as well as a proven way to decrease field installation expenses) because many of the aforementioned steps can be skipped entirely. Facilities with this offering are prepared with the space, tools, and cranes available to efficiently prefabricate the

Mechanical Contractors who have the ability to prefabricate their equipment are set up for optimal efficiency, especially when compared to the challenges of fabricating in the field.

job with a streamlined approach.

Some systems require radiographic (x-ray) testing to ensure the integrity of the structure is sound. During this testing, facilities are required to isolate an area and ensure vacancy prior to performing this test. Mechanical Contractors who offer prefabrication services can perform this test in their facility before shipping the equipment to the job site. This means the work on your job site can continue during this phase as opposed to testing onsite and requiring all contractors and occupants to halt their work and vacate the premises until this testing is complete. A detail like this, if overlooked, can derail the entire project timeline.

Risk #4: Weld Quality

Your system deserves precise workmanship to ensure its integrity. Leaks in ammonia refrigeration systems, for example, are unacceptable. Beveling and prep work on piping assemblies in the field can be a manual, slow, and inaccurate process. Completing this process at the prefabricating facility is more precise and prevents rework onsite during installation. A Mechanical Contractor who can prefabricate your job can and should have a quality CNC pipe cutter and automated beveling capabilities in-house to be sure that welding begins on the best-prepared surfaces possible. Precise cuts and quality welds are a must-have. As stated in our previous article, quality cuts and welds are crucial for the life of your investment.

Risk #5: Safety

When welding takes place on the job site, the contractor is required to have a hot work permit in order to protect contractors, vendors, and visitors from any fire that may be caused by welding activities. The process that follows this permit often includes the addition of “fire watch personnel” who are required to observe the hot work and surrounding areas during the welding/cutting process and typically for an additional 30 minutes or longer after completion in order to ensure there are no stray embers or sparks that may result in a flare-up. By decreasing the amount of fabrication onsite you are also reducing the risk of any fire hazards and minimizing costs needed for “fire watch personnel” to monitor the area.

Asking this simple question can spare you countless performance, quality, and safety risks facing your system and facility. Ask your Mechanical Contractor if they can perform in-house prefabrication and what portions of your project they plan to construct in their facility – the answer might surprise you.



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QUALIFICATION #5

Does Your Mechanical Contractor Have In-House Professional Engineers?

*By Dave Schaefer, Chief Engineer; Jeff Vissers, Engineering Manager;
and Mark Stencel, Director of Business Development*



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Codes, standards, and best practices are used by Professional Engineers to ensure buildings and manufacturing processes are made for safe and efficient operation and the production of high-quality consumer products. We have peace of mind knowing that the persons defining these best practices are not only qualified but licensed to make the most optimal and educated decisions. The National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying (NCEES) says “professional licensure protects the public by enforcing standards that restrict practice to qualified individuals who have met specific qualification in education, work experience, and exams.”

Does your Mechanical Contractor have in-house Professional Engineers upholding the highest standard in engineering practices and requiring appropriate specifications for supports, ventilation, controls, and structural considerations for your next project?

What is a Professional Engineer?

Wisconsin State Statute Chapter 443.01(7) defines Professional Engineer as “a person who by reason of his or her knowledge of mathematics, the physical sciences and the principles of engineering, acquired by professional education and

practical experience, is qualified to engage in engineering practice”. This statute acts as a “good housekeeping seal of approval” for the examining board of professional engineers. It means you have proof that the person working on your project is dedicated to their craft, has been tested, and has measurable experience and competence to ensure your system is not only effective but safe.

Code of Ethics and Continuing Education.

Besides rigorous testing, proven experience, and continuing education, Professional Engineers are required to uphold the code of ethics. A code which if broken can result in license revocation. Professional Engineers are held to a high standard of integrity and there are consequences if that integrity is breached. This gives you confidence that highly qualified people are working on your project.

Professional Engineers interpret, understand, and administer codes of standard practice but as these standards evolve, they also spend time keeping up with code changes. Your Mechanical Contractor should be integrated with the IIR Academy of Natural Refrigeration’s Certificate Program. This long-term education program was created to address the need for highly trained professionals in natural refrigeration system design, safety, and maintenance. This program sets high standards for

the industry and continuous development among engineers. It is considered the industry standard for design and safety. Have you also considered your Mechanical Contractor’s number of participants in this program?

Shortcuts cannot be taken.

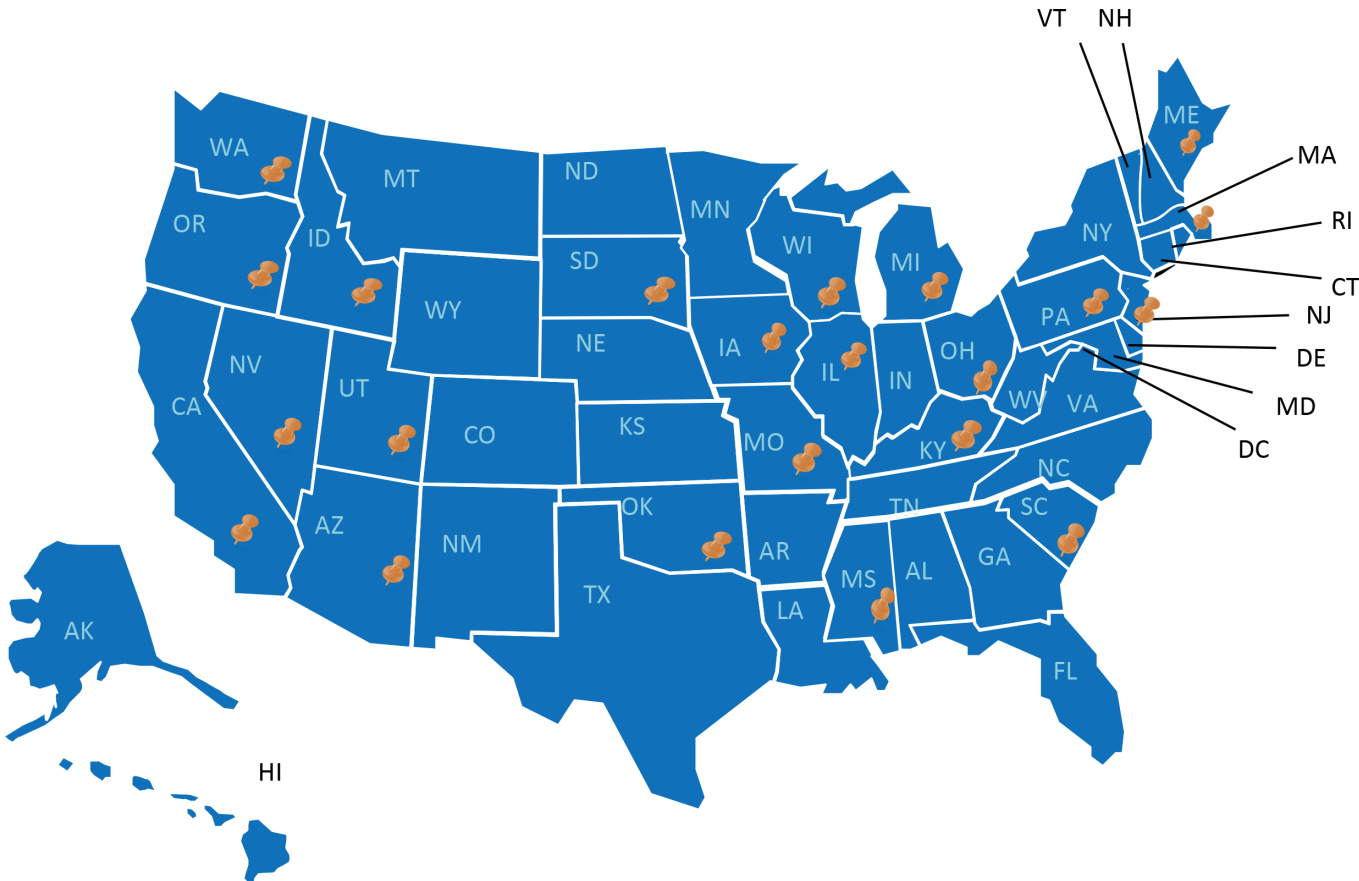
There are responsibilities associated with being a Professional Engineer. Details

such as documentation required for regulatory compliance, safety requirements and other recognized and generally accepted best practices should be taken very seriously. If these practices are overlooked, both company and engineer would be liable for any harm that is caused by negligence.

There are many benefits to working with a mechanical contractor with in-house professional engineers, but the safety of your people, product, and community is paramount.

Continued on next page...

Professional Engineering Licenses Held in 22 States and Growing!



While it may take time and effort to ensure the project is fully code compliant and aligned with industry accepted best engineering practices, if properly designed and installed your system can be safe and effective with less risk to your people, your community, and your product.

Safety in numbers.

Working with a Mechanical Contractor who has a large team of professional engineers means as a customer you can take advantage of the company's internal high quality peer review process. Instead of one Professional Engineer, you can have many engaged in the process with top level people exchanging ideas for optimal refrigeration design. Customers can find benefit in the collection of professional

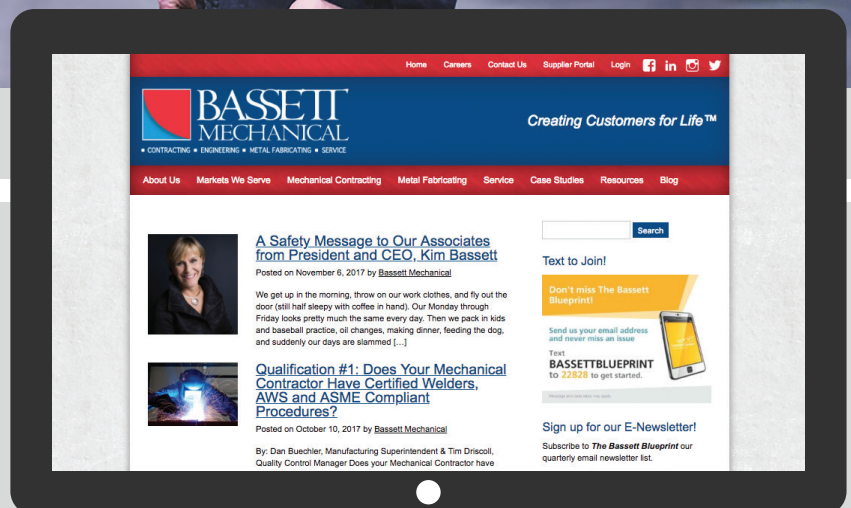
engineers with different areas of expertise working on behalf of the customer. Poor humidity control, heat loss, uneven temperatures, and food safety concerns are a few examples of the many things that can go wrong if your Mechanical Contractor does not consider your unique process design needs. Today we have 8 Professional Engineers on staff, whose collective experience helps to ensure the best process related solutions for our customers.

There are many benefits to working with a mechanical contractor with in-house professional engineers, but the safety of your people, product, and community is paramount. Check with your Mechanical Contractor to see if they have these qualifications. You will be thankful you did.



**For more information,
check out our website!**

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to receive our quarterly e-newsletter*





Bassett Mechanical has what it takes.

When you hire Bassett to do the job, you are hiring decades of unmatched experience – experts who cost effectively address your mechanical needs today, while keeping future needs in mind.

We are your full service provider for your industrial refrigeration, HVAC, plumbing, metal fabricating, and service needs. From initial design, building and integrated controls solutions, design and creation of vessels and skids, process safety management, and service maintenance needs, we have what it takes to make your project a success.

At Bassett Mechanical we are Creating Customers for Life®



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