



## **SYSTEM FOR PROVISIONAL APPROVAL OF FIRE SAFETY INSPECTION AGENCIES UNDER IFE-AHPI INITIATIVE**

### **0. INTRODUCTION**

**0.1** The **Institution of Fire Engineers (IFE)** and the **Association of Healthcare Providers (India) (AHPI)** have joined hands to develop a **system of fire safety inspections**, initially in hospitals given the spate of fire incidents which have been happening in hospitals of late. These are aimed at providing competent **Fire Safety Inspection Agencies (FSIAs)** to the **hospital units (HUs)** to enable them to periodically get themselves inspected for compliance to the local regulations and/or provisions of the National Building Code, 2016 or any other recognized standard(s).

**0.2** The **Fire Safety Inspection Scheme**, hereafter referred to as '**Scheme**', would be later extended to cover other institutional buildings like hotels, commercial buildings, offices etc.

**0.3** The FSIAs, in order to operate under the system, shall need to primarily comply with the requirements specified in international standard, ISO/IEC 17020:2012, and the additional requirements prescribed by IFE-AHPI, as scheme owners.

**0.4** The FSIAs would not get a client and would not be able to offer their process for witnessing as part of the accreditation process to the accreditation body to get accreditation or to get the relevant scope added in their accreditation if already accredited for ISO/IEC 17020 unless they are approved under the Scheme.

**0.4** Therefore, it is necessary to establish a procedure for provisional approval of FSIAs under the Scheme till such time they can get the scope added in their accreditation or get formally accredited from the **National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies (NABCB)** or any other accreditation body recognized by IFE-AHPI as per ISO/IEC 17020:2012 and get approved by IFE-AHPI.

**0.6** This document sets out the requirements to be fulfilled by FSIAs desirous of operating under the Scheme pending formal accreditation and approval.

### **1. SCOPE**

**1.1** This document defines the criteria and process for FSIAs to obtain provisional approval to operate under the Scheme, pending formal accreditation for the Scheme by



NABCB or any other accreditation body recognized by IFE-AHPI as per the prescribed international standard(s) and approval by IFE-AHPI.

**1.2** This approval shall be valid for two year within which the approved FSIA's would have to obtain formal accreditation from NABCB or any other accreditation body recognized by IFE-AHPI and approval of IFE-AHPI. This period shall be one year for those inspection bodies who already hold accreditation to ISO 17020 and only need to add scope of Fire Safety Inspection Scheme.

## **2. CRITERIA FOR APPROVAL**

The FSIA's desirous of undertaking fire safety inspections under this Scheme shall meet the criteria as prescribed in clauses 3 and 4 of this document.

## **3. ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS**

**3.1 Legal entity:** The FSIA shall be a legal entity in the economy in which it is located, or shall be a defined part of a legal entity, such that it can be held legally responsible for all its inspection activities. A governmental body is deemed to be a legal entity based on its governmental status. An FSIA, that is part of an organization involved in functions other than inspection, shall be separate and identifiable within that organization.

**3.2 Organizational structure:** The FSIA shall define and document the duties, responsibilities and reporting structure of its personnel and any committee(s) and its place within the organization. When the FSIA is a defined part of a legal entity, the documentation of the organizational structure shall include the line of authority and the relationship with other parts within the same legal entity.

**3.3 Integrity:** The FSIA and its personnel shall maintain integrity at all times. The FSIA shall implement appropriate measures to ensure integrity.

### **3.4 Impartiality:**

**3.4.1** The FSIA shall be impartial.

**3.4.2** The FSIA shall be so structured and managed so as to safeguard impartiality.

**3.4.3** The FSIA and its staff shall not engage in any activity that may conflict with its impartiality. Specifically the FSIA shall not engage in any activity related to fire safety which may amount to design or implementation or maintenance of fire safety systems.

**3.4.4** The Scheme has provision for two types of inspection bodies:



- a) Type A inspection bodies as per ISO 17020 which are third party bodies and allowed to issue Certificate of Compliance after resolving non conformities observed by the HU or just provide a report for action by the HU, and,
- b) Type C inspection bodies which are allowed to provide solutions to the findings and can only issue a report indicating findings and not Certificate of Compliance.

**3.4.5** The FSIA shall act impartially in relation to its clients.

**3.4.6** The FSIA shall have a process to identify, analyze, evaluate, monitor and document the threats to impartiality arising from its activities including any conflicts arising from its relationships on an ongoing basis.

- a) This shall include those threats that may arise from its activities or its relationships or the relationships of its personnel. Where there are any threats to impartiality, the FSIA shall document and demonstrate how it eliminates or minimizes such threats and document any residual risk. The demonstration shall cover all potential threats that are identified, whether they arise from within the FSIA or from the activities of other persons, bodies or organizations.
- b) Top management of the FSIA shall review any residual risk to determine if it is within the level of acceptable risk. When a relationship poses an unacceptable threat to impartiality, then certification shall not be provided.
- c) The risk assessment process shall include identification of and consultation with appropriate interested parties to advice on matters affecting impartiality including openness and public perception.

**NOTE 1** Sources of threats to the impartiality of the FSIA can be based on ownership, governance, management, personnel, shared resources, finances, contracts, training, marketing and payment of a sales commission or other inducement for the referral of new clients, etc.

**NOTE 2** One way of fulfilling the consultation with the interested parties is by the use of an impartiality committee set up by the FSIA.

**3.4.7** The FSIA shall not impart education and/or training relating to fire safety within the same legal entity. Conducting generic awareness programmes regarding FSIA scheme is acceptable.

**3.4.8** The FSIA shall have a process to eliminate or minimize risk to impartiality if training/education in fire safety is carried out in a related body which is linked to the FSIA by common ownership etc.





**3.4.9** The FSIA shall have a process to ensure that the inspectors are free of any conflict of interest with the clients being inspected. A separation of minimum 2 years is considered acceptable for the purpose.

**3.5 Confidentiality:** The FSIA shall ensure the confidentiality of information obtained in the course of its inspection activities by having a suitable system. Information gathered shall not be used for any commercial or other purposes other than that to support inspection report to the client.

### **3.6 Liability and financing :**

**3.6.1** The FSIA shall be able to demonstrate that it has evaluated the risks arising from its inspection activities and that it has adequate arrangements (e.g. insurance or reserves) to cover liabilities arising from its operations in each of its fields of activities and the geographic areas in which it operates.

**3.6.2** The FSIA shall evaluate its finances and sources of income and demonstrate that initially, and on an ongoing basis, commercial, financial or other pressures do not compromise its impartiality.

## **4. TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS**

### **4.1 Personnel :**

**4.1.1** The FSIA shall have, as part of its organization, personnel, either employed or on contract, having sufficient competence for managing the fire safety inspection activity.

**4.1.2** The FSIA shall have defined processes for selecting, training, and formally authorizing inspectors and for selecting technical experts, if needed, used in this activity.

**4.1.3** The FSIA shall define and document the competence of all personnel involved in the inspection activities, including requirements for education, training, technical knowledge, skills and experience.

### **4.2 Competence of Inspection Personnel**

**4.2.1** Competence of personnel for performing the inspection activities having significant quality impacts shall be established based on appropriate education, training, skills and experience.



4.2.2 The personnel shall have Basic Educational Qualifications and experience as listed under Clause 4.3.

### **4.3 Basic Educational Qualifications and Experience**

4.3.1 **Fire Safety Inspector:** The Fire Safety Inspector shall have the following Educational Qualification;

- (a) Graduate in Fire/Fire & Safety Engineering and having 5 years post qualification experience in a fire service established under law in a position not less than the rank of a Station Officer or equivalent; or in the field of fire protection engineering including design, installation, commissioning, and maintenance.

OR

- (b) Divisional Officer Course passed from national Fire Service College, Nagpur/Graduate ship/Member ship Examination conducted by IFE (I) or IFE (UK)/Diploma in Engineering from a Technical Board of Engineering and having 7 years experience post qualification in a position not less than the rank of a Station Officer or equivalent; or in the field of fire protection engineering including design, installation, commissioning, and maintenance.

4.3.2 **Fire Technician:** The Fire Technician shall have following qualifications and experience:

- (a) Passed 10+2 examination of a recognized Board of Education;
- (b) Passed Certificate Course in Fire Protection from a recognized Board of Technical Education; and
- (c) Two years post qualification experience in fire protection works in a building/fire service/installation company.

### **4.4 Training**

4.4.1 The inspector should have undergone a training based on ISO 17020 and ISO 19011 relevant to fire safety inspections as detailed under the Scheme.

4.4.2 The inspector shall undergo at least 10 mandays of inspection in at least 5 clients as trainee under the supervision of a qualified fire inspector to be qualified as an



independent inspector. His time as trainee shall not be counted in inspection time for the client. In case he has not been in any inspection of HU, he shall observe at least one inspection of HU before being independently assigned as inspector.

#### **4.5 Personnel records:**

The FSIA shall maintain up-to-date personnel records, as per requirements of the Scheme, for each of its personnel involved in its fire safety inspection activities.

#### **4.6 Inspection process :**

**4.6.1** The FSIA shall manage the process of fire safety inspections as per the documented 'Fire Safety Inspection Process under IFE-AHPI Initiative' prescribed under the Scheme.

**4.6.2** The FSIA shall maintain records to demonstrate that the inspection process is effectively implemented.

**4.6.3** The FSIA shall ensure the requirements of the Scheme are met with at any point in time.

**4.6.4** The FSIA shall inspect for fire safety only under the Scheme and shall issue an inspection report or certificate of compliance, as applicable, to the client inspected following the rules prescribed under the Scheme.

**4.6.5** The FSIA shall have written agreement with the clients for the use of the report/certificate issued to them.

**4.6.6** The FSIA shall have a process to handle appeals by the client against any of its findings/non conformities or conclusions drawn based on the inspection carried out.

**4.6.7** The FSIA shall have a process to handle complaints from any stakeholder.

**4.7 Agreement:** The FSIA shall have a legally enforceable agreement for the provision of inspection services with the clients. The type of service to be offered, the criteria against which the inspection to be carried and the extent and physical boundaries for the inspection shall be clearly stated in the agreement.

#### **4.8 Publicly available information without request**

**4.8.1** The FSIA shall maintain a website for providing information about the Fire Safety Inspection Scheme and the fire safety inspection activities under the Scheme.





**4.8.2** The FSIA shall maintain and make publicly available information describing its inspection processes and geographical areas in which it operates.

**4.8.3** The FSIA shall make publicly available its processes for handling appeals and complaints.

## **5. APPROVAL PROCESS**

### **5.1 Application :**

**5.1.1** Any organization interested in approval as a FSIA for the Scheme may apply to IFE in the prescribed application format along with the prescribed application fee. The applicant shall also enclose the required information and documents as specified in the application form.

**5.1.2** The filled in application form for approval shall be duly signed by the CEO/authorized representative/s of the organization seeking approval.

**5.1.3** On receipt of the application form, it will be scrutinized by the secretariat at IFE and if found complete in all respects, will be processed further.

### **5.2 Assessment process :**

**5.2.1** On review of the application for completeness, an assessment team comprising a team leader and member(s)/technical expert(s), as needed, will be nominated by IFE for assessment at applicant's office and other locations, if required. Under normal circumstances, the assessment at head office will be for a total of two man-days for an assessor and a technical expert. In case the FSIA is already accredited to ISO/IEC 17020:2012, the man-days may be reduced.

**5.2.2** The names of the members of the assessment team along with their CVs will be communicated to the applicant giving it adequate time to raise any objection against the appointment of any of the team members, which will be dealt with by IFE on merits. All assessors/technical experts nominated by IFE shall have signed undertakings regarding confidentiality, impartiality and conflict of interest.

**5.2.3** Generally based on results of office assessment, the decision for granting provisional approval will be taken, IFE may, based on the report of office assessment or otherwise, to undertake witness assessment(s) of actual fire safety inspection by the applicant.

**5.2.4** The assessment team leader shall provide an assessment plan to the applicant in advance of the assessment.



**5.2.5** The date(s) of assessment shall be mutually agreed to between the applicant and IFE/assessment team.

**5.2.6** The Office assessment will begin with an opening meeting for explaining the purpose and scope of assessment and the methodology of the assessment. The actual assessment process shall cover a review of the documented system of the applicant to assess its adequacy in line with the requirements as specified in this document and competence to conduct and report fire safety inspections as per the inspection criteria. It will also involve verification of the implementation of the system including scrutiny of the records of inspectors' competence and other relevant records and demonstration of inspectors' competence through means like interviews, etc. In short, it will be an assessment for verifying technical competence of the applicant FSIA for operating under the Scheme.

**5.2.7** At the end of the office assessment, through a formal closing meeting, all the nonconformities and concerns observed in the applicant's system as per the assessment criteria and the assessment team's recommendation to IFE shall be conveyed to the applicant.

**5.2.8** Based on the report of the assessment, and the action taken by the applicant on the nonconformities/concerns if any, IFE shall decide on granting provisional approval to the applicant as FSIA under the Scheme.

## **6. VALIDITY OF APPROVAL**

**6.1** The approval shall be valid for one/two years for those already accredited to ISO 17020 and those not yet accredited respectively.

**6.2** The FSIA shall obtain formal accreditation as per ISO 17020 from NABCB or any other AB recognized by IFE within one/two year of provisional approval, as applicable, by IFE to formalize its approval.

**6.3** The provisional approval shall be subject to suspension/withdrawal with due notice of 15 days in the event of any noncompliance to the requirements of the Scheme.

**6.4** The approved FSIA shall inform IFE without delay about any changes relevant to its approval, in any aspect of its status or operation relating to:

- a) legal, commercial, ownership or organizational status;
- b) organization's top management and key personnel;
- c) main policies, resources, premises and scope of approval;





**d)** other such matters that may affect the ability of the FSIA to fulfil requirements for approval.

IFE shall examine such information and decide on the issue on merits with or without an on-site verification.

**6.5** The FSIA shall send data on fire safety inspections conducted quarterly in the prescribed format to IFE.

**6.6** The approved FSIA shall be subject to annual surveillance assessment, if applicable.

**6.7** IFE shall witness the fire safety inspections by an approved FSIA at least once annually within the period of validity.

**6.8** Any extension of validity of provisional approval shall be based on a written request for justifiable reasons and shall involve office or witness assessment or both as decided by IFE.

## **7. FEE**

**7.1** The following fee structure shall apply:

- a) Application fee INR 10000/-
- b) Manday Charges INR 15000/-
- c) Annual fee INR 25000/-

**7.2** In addition, the FSIA shall pay to IFE an amount of INR 500 per report/certificate issued by the FSIA.

**7.3** IFE at its discretion may revise/ levy any other fee necessary with due notice to the FSIA's.