

## **Firestop Contractors International Association – FM 4991 & Firestop Industry “Manual of Practice”**

### **What is an FM Approved Contractor?**

The FCIA Accreditation Committee hired FM Approvals, a subsidiary of FM Global, to write the “FM Firestop Contractor Approval Standard, Class 4991” that set quantifiable standards for a Firestop Contractor to be measured. FM Approvals, a national leader in building loss reduction and quality programs, assembled the following requirements to become an FM 4991 Approved Contractor:

- Contractor Stability - Candidates must be in business for at least two years.
- Insured - Workers Compensation and Liability Insurance requirements must be met.
- Tested - Contractor personnel responsible for Firestop Contracting Operations must pass a test on Firestop Protocol scoring over 80%. They become FM Tested “Designated Responsible Individuals” (DRI)
- DRI - The firm must employ one Designated Responsible Individual.
- Quality Manual - FM 4991 firms must have a Quality Manual outlining procedures and personnel used to install firestop materials to their tested and listed systems from various 3<sup>rd</sup> party testing laboratories.
- Continual Audit Testing - FM 4991 Approved Firestop Contractors are “audited” by FM Research at their facility and jobsite to verify compliance with firm Quality Manuals to be approved. Audits are required annually to maintain FM 4991 Approval.
- CEU’s - FM 4991 Approved Contractor DRI’s must obtain CEU’s to maintain their Designated Responsible Individual status.
- Record keeping - FM 4991 Approved Firestop Contractors maintain “As Built Documentation” records for all parties benefit.
- “Satisfactory Performance” - FM 4991 Approved Contractors must maintain satisfactory performance to keep their FM Approval valid.

### **What’s a DRI?**

The FM 4991 Firestop Contractor Approval Standard contains a requirement for the approved Firestop Contractor Firm to employ Designated Responsible Individuals (DRI). DRI’s implement the FM 4991 Approved Firestop Firm’s quality program. This person must attain a grade of 80% or better on a rigorous test on the Firestop industry protocol, systems selection and general knowledge. The FM 4991 DRI test is based on information in the FCIA “Manual of Practice”. To maintain DRI status, the person must earn CEU Credits through attending industry educational seminars or teaching.

### **Why hire an FM Approved Contractor?**

FM 4991 Approved Contractors are the best value for the money in the construction industry. These contractors have invested resources to quantify their knowledge and expertise through an audit tested quality process, similar to ISO 9000, that is used in the manufacturing environment.

- Knowledge - FM 4991 Approved Contractors demonstrate a test proven level of knowledge about Firestop Systems Installation quality procedure.
- Value - FM 4991 Approved Firestop Contractors quality process results in a highly efficient operation resulting in lower installed costs and higher quality.
- Expertise - FM 4991 Approved Firestop Contractors expertise is documented through Audit testing at the contractor’s facility and jobsite.
- Continual Improvement - FM 4991 Firestop Contractors are challenged to improve operations through competition and yearly audits by FM Approvals.

FM 4991 provides many benefits to the life safety industry in addition to those listed. Contractors who become FM Approved become more efficient through consistent operations to a specific standard. Secondly, the contractor firm reduces its business risk through effective use of the procedures used in FM 4991 approval.

To become approved requires much commitment. Listed below is the procedure to become an "FM 4991 Approved Contractor."

1. Contact FCIA to express interest in FM 4991 Approval, and order an FCIA "Manual of Practice".
2. FCIA forwards interest to FM Approvals for proposal writing.
3. Receive "proposal" and estimated cost to become FM Approved from FM Approvals, Norwood, MA.
4. Study the FCIA Manual of Practice and the FM 4991 Standard to prepare for the Designated Responsible Individual", or DRI Test.
5. Review Your Firm's procedures used in the "Firestopping Process".
6. Write a "Quality Manual". An outline is in the FCIA Manual of Practice and the FM 4991 Standard.
7. Pass the "DRI" Test. FM offers the DRI Test at FCIA Meetings, twice annually. The test can be taken during the contractor firm site audit as well.
8. Have your Quality Manual, firm and jobsite Audited by FM Approvals.
9. Receive response from FM Approvals regarding your Approval!
10. Start one year cycle of audits to maintain continued approval. (About \$1200/year)

The process to become an FM 4991 Approved Contractor is not a one or two day task! FM 4991 approval is a long process with many important steps to take along the way. Estimated time from signing a contract to FM 4991 approval is at least 4-6 months, depending on success with DRI Testing, Quality Manual Production and other items required by the FM 4991 Applicant. The cost can vary from \$4000 - \$7000. This investment in the efficiency and effectiveness of the contracting organization is about the cost of an advertising program such as the "Blue Book".

**FM 4991 Approved Contractors** - Know them for their commitment to the Specialty Firestop Trade, hire them for their high standards of quality. For more information contact the Firestop Contractors International Association at 630.690.0682 or email us, [info@fcia.org](mailto:info@fcia.org).

#### **FCIA "Manual Of Practice"**

FCIA Members have committed to educating the Specialty Firestop Contractor, and the construction industry, to a high level of understanding of Firestop Systems. In addition to providing the industry with a document that outlines the industry, it's installation requirements and protocol, the FCIA "Manual of Practice" is an assemblage of industry Firestop Information containing information Firestop Contractors and other interested parties should know. For Firestop Contractors, Architects, Engineers, Building Officials and Fire Marshal's, General Contractors or anyone interested in the Firestop Industry Trade, this book is a must read. Order your copy today from FCIA. Call us at 630.690.0682, or email us, [info@fcia.org](mailto:info@fcia.org).

**For further information, Contact Bill McHugh, Executive Director:**

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