



GENUINE STONE



August 21, 2014

“Stone Idea Questions/Answers – Peter Becker/NSC”:

Q.\* The certification is based on a system of 41 points in 9 facets (plus one not mandatory). How do I earn these points: do I simply fill in a form or does someone visit my company?

A. The ANSI/NSC 373 certification process is a two-step process. First there’s an offsite documentation review of information supporting the prerequisites and selected optional credits. Second: an onsite audit of the quarry, processing or fabrication facilities. Certification is granted once these steps are complete.

The certification is valid for 3 years during which two yearly surveillance audits will typically be conducted through an offsite document review. Upon expiration of the certification, a company may apply for recertification by completing the necessary certification steps described above.

Q.\* One of the facets deals with “energy consumption“: are there given limits e.g. for my energy consumption of machinery?

A. No, the standard does not establish limits on energy consumption. Instead, the ANSI/NSC 373 standard requires that an operator establish a facility specific baseline for energy use, and an energy management plan that will lead to improvement. The baseline is typically based on the energy use of the facility in the current year, but a previous year may be selected to capture recent improvements a manufacturer has already achieved. Energy use is measured and tracked through the creation of a yearly inventory, and performance gains measured against the baseline.

Additional points may be earned for the demonstrated reduction of energy against the baseline, over time.

A similar approach is used in sections of the standard addressing water consumption and solid waste, as well as others.

Q. How does the certification compare the energy consumption e.g. of an underground quarry in Vermont with an open air extraction in Alabama?

A. ANSI/NSC 373 does not compare energy among different facilities, locations, quarries, etc. As described in the previous question, the standard emphasizes facility-specific measurement, planning, and improvement over time.

Q. \* what are the aspects in the facets called "human and health considerations": will a company have to prove that there is no child labor? As to working conditions - do they have to comply with ILO standards? But how about developing countries which are starting from a low level?

A. ANSI/NSC 373 standard covers forced labor, child labor, discrimination, employee participation and social accountability, all of which are included under the Corporate Governance section of the standard.

The prohibition of forced labor and child labor are included in the standard as "required" and organizations seeking certification must comply with ILO Convention 29, 105 and 182. The standard also covers a human health and safety section that addresses occupational safety, improved workplace safety and air emissions. These credits address the working conditions for companies seeking certification. All countries will still have to meet the required credits of this standard (see response to next question for more)

Q. \* How about „Corporate Governance“: if I am from Asia or Africa and I never heard that word, does it mean that I can't get certification points in that field? So the standards are US-standards - if brought to other countries they will need some adaptation?

A. The ANSI/NSC 373 standard is comprised of a comprehensive set of criteria that cumulatively define a threshold for evaluating the sustainability of dimension stone products. It was developed to reflect and align with the expectations of the green building market in North America, setting requirements that will be credible with North American purchasers (e.g. no child labor). However, the standard was developed through ANSI, an organization recognized as an international standard setting body under ISO specifically to allow the certification of entities outside of North America. Therefore, any organization, regardless of geographic location world wide, may certify to the standard if they can demonstrate conformance to the required criteria. In areas where criteria are expected to reasonably differ, the standard cites international references such as the citing of International Labor Organization standards.

Q. \* How about the transportation problem: can companies from distant countries compensate their negative performance in this facet?

A. Transportation in ANSI/NSC 373 only requires a transportation management program. This program requires measurement, tracking, establishing goals, methods and etc. In the process of developing ANSI/NSC 373 standard, there was discussion about transportation and how can it be evaluated fairly keeping international companies in mind as well. The group decided that a program will be more efficient because it will require companies to compile, identify and evaluate their internal processes for transportation.

Q. \* So all in all, if willing or not, the standards favor the national natural stone, correct?

A. As an ANSI standard ANSI/NSC 373 can be applied to US and non-US companies. The standard does not intentionally establish criteria that would preclude certification by international based companies, though it does establish a threshold that is consistent with the expectations of the NA market. As a practical manner, US Owners and Specifiers of projects in the US will potentially favor a domestic quarrier or fabricator at least initially but only if the Owner requires and only if there are no non-US companies who are certified. .

Q. \* Do you expect a decline in stone imports to the US?

A. Imports are not expected to decline as the belief is there are many projects where ANSI/NSC 373 will not be specified and in any event non-US companies also have the ability to gain certification.

Q. \* How much time does the certification process take?

A. A typical certification will take 3-4 months to complete from the time that NSF receives information for the desk audit/document review. Following the document review, NSF will request all additional information needed prior to the onsite audit. Once NSF has completed the document review the onsite audit will be scheduled. Any additional info needed to complete the certification will be requested following the onsite audit. Once the company has achieved the minimum number of points for the level of certification they are seeking, certification will be granted.

Q. \* How much does it cost?

A. Costs to complete certification vary based on a number of factors such as:

- scope of operations; are you a processor or quarry or both
- size of your operations meaning the number of quarries or facilities to be included
- level of certification you are pursuing.

NSF can provide a quote based on this information and help you determine how to proceed.

Q. \* Is there a waiting list expected at least at the beginning right now?

A. No, we do not anticipate there will be a waiting list for certification to ANSI/NSC 373, but only the market will dictate that.

Q. I do not understand this part of the pdf you had sent:

„There is also an important supporting standard to NSC373 which tracks the Chain of Custody of the stones as the material moves from the quarry through manufacturing and through the supply chain to the ultimate destination, including the job site or the end user.“ > Does it mean: in addition to the nine facets (plus one) there is one more which deals with the transportation of the stone? But transportation already appears as the second of the facets...

A. ANSI/NSC 373 applies to any operator in the dimension stone supply chain with operations that physically alter the stone. Typically this includes quarries, processors, and fabricators. However, the supply chain also involves a number of entities that take ownership of the stone but who do not physically process the stone, such as distributors, installers, and retailers. For these organizations, the NSC Chain of Custody standard establishes criteria that ensure that the stone is inventoried, managed and tracked in a manner that safeguards and guarantees any sustainability claims on the stone remain intact.

Together, the two standards work to ensure that every organization in the supply chain of dimension natural stone can document through certification that their practices are consistent with

the expectations of sustainability driven purchasers. Companies certified to ANSI/NSC 373 are not required to certify to the NSC Chain of Custody standard.

To facilitate the identification of sustainably produced stone, the NSC has developed the Genuine Stone label. The label denotes that a piece of stone has been produced in sustainable manner, and can be affixed to any piece of stone that can demonstrate unbroken chain of custody from the original quarry through the point of sale. Stone that has been handled only by companies that are certified to either the ANSI/NSC 373 or the NSC Chain of Custody standards can be awarded the Genuine Stone label.

Q. Also is not clear „Each company's facility is certified on a site-specific basis, Pointer explained. „For instance, if a company has a dozen quarries, it can obtain certification on a site specific basis, one or all twelve. The same goes for fabrication plants.” > Does that mean that, if only one of my quarries is checked, I may get a certification for all twelve?

A. A company may receive ANSI/NSC 373 certification for one site or many. Certification is on a site specific basis, however, if a company has a large number of quarries or fabrication facilities not on the same site, an appropriate audit sampling plan could be created for that company in order to certify a large volume of quarries or fabrication facilities. To be clear though, certification of a single site does not automatically warrant certification for multiple sites.

Q. How is the certification done for non-US companies? You mention NSF International \* is it <http://www.nsf.com> ?

A. NSF International will grant certification to ANSI/NSC 373 for US and non-US companies. Yes, the website is [www.nsf.org](http://www.nsf.org).

NSF International is a global organization that focuses on protecting public health and the environment. NSF International was founded in 1944 as the National Sanitation Foundation but today we go by NSF International. NSF International's sustainability division focuses on standards development, product assurance and certification, advisory services and quality management systems to help companies create more sustainable products, operations, systems and supply chains. Additional information can be found at [www.nsf.org](http://www.nsf.org).

Q. \* how is the process for an international certification and how much does it cost?

A. The certification process for ANSI/NSC 373 includes both a desk audit (offsite review of documentation submitted by the company supporting the credits applied for) and an onsite audit. The certification is valid for 3 years and includes 2 surveillance audits which are typically conducted through an offsite document review. The following recertification audit includes a desk audit and an onsite audit.

NSC 373 was developed as an American National Standard but it can be applied internationally. NSF is an international company with a global auditing team with the capabilities to train auditors throughout the world to perform the onsite audits for NSC 373.

Costs to complete certification vary based on a number of factors such as:

- scope of operations; are you a processor or quarry or both
- size of your operations meaning the number of quarries or facilities to be included
- level of certification you are pursuing.

NSF can provide a quote based on this information and help you determine how to proceed.

Q. \* may only NSF International do the certification?

- A. NSF International is the only certification body authorized to grant the NSC Genuine Stone® seal following certification to ANSI/NSC 373.

Q. Finally: If my company has been certified, I may use the Genuine Stone seal.

\* How much does that cost?

A. There will be no additional charges from NSC to the company for use of the Genuine Stone® seal. The Natural Stone Council developed the Genuine Stone® logo and seal as a way to encourage the use of natural dimension stone and ANSI/NSC 373 supports that endeavor. In order to create a competitive driver and enhance accountability in the marketplace, NSC felt it should develop a sustainability standard as other building materials had successfully done. This would showcase the qualities that make natural stone a sustainable choice for building materials. Sustainability assessment standards have been requested by the design community for years and the standard will provide architects and other specifier communities' resources for designing greener projects for their clients

Q. \* After 4 years there must be a new certification, correct?

A. No. The certification is valid for 3 years. Upon expiration of the certification, a company may apply for recertification by completing the necessary certification steps described previously.