

# Online Tool Makes WTCA QC Inspectors More Efficient



by Libby Maurer

A recent poll of component manufacturers revealed interesting statistics about the quality control habits and views of production personnel. The respondents, from plants both certified and not certified in WTCA QC, reported that on average, they spend 23 man hours per week on quality control which mostly consists of inspecting trusses. When you combine that with the time it takes to get your team trained and on board with the inspection process, you've invested a lot of man hours. Until now.



About 29.6 percent of surveyed plants said they haven't pursued In-Plant WTCA QC certification due to lack of time, space or manpower. But shortage of time doesn't have to be an excuse anymore. A new online resource developed for In-Plant WTCA QC users makes it easier to become trained and certified. Online Inspector Training contains 35 bite-sized modules developed to fill users in on details about the quality control inspection—before they hit the plant. With this new tool, quality control inspectors, management and other employees can access answers to questions that used to be a phone call away.

For manufacturers like John Hayes, QC manager at 84 Components, and Jeff Jones at Northeast Panel & Truss, this new resource has enhanced their ability to conduct sound truss inspections while cutting down on time spent learning the process.

## A Tool for Everyone

In addition to his plant in Coal Center, PA, Hayes has helped other 84 locations become oriented with In-Plant WTCA QC. Hayes knows the value and importance of quality assurance processes well. This is because of his background in food service quality control—a highly regulated and standardized industry. In the future, he says, he will encourage plants new to the program to use the online modules as a training resource. "Especially someone who is new to the industry like I was. For someone that doesn't have the knowledge and background, it's a very thorough training tool," he notes.

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## at a glance

- ❑ A new online resource for quality control inspectors makes learning the inspection process convenient and more efficient.
- ❑ Quality control teams get more out of in-person training sessions when they've pre-viewed the training modules.
- ❑ Online Inspector Training is included in the cost of In-Plant WTCA QC certification.

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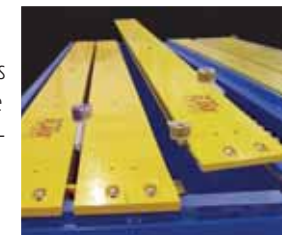
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### Online Tool...

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For Jones, online inspector training provided the fast track for him to get up to speed on inspection—without a catastrophic disruption. “The former inspector gave notice that he would be leaving in three days. So I needed a quick way to get trained!” says the self-proclaimed jack of all trades at his operation. Jones, who took over the truss inspection duties in August, says the best part about the new training resource is the length of the modules. “There are a bunch (of modules), but they’re short. If you only have five minutes here or there you can polish off one or two.”

Sometimes one of the biggest challenges quality control inspection trainers like Hayes face is getting production

employees to accept and buy into the process. There are certain people, Hayes says, who are “hard core” about the way they’ve always done things in the plant—sometimes introducing new procedures is difficult to embrace. Online Inspector Training helps put In-Plant WTCA QC into perspective by addressing the “why” of the program just as much as the “how to.” “It’s important to get [users] to see the big picture,” Hayes comments.

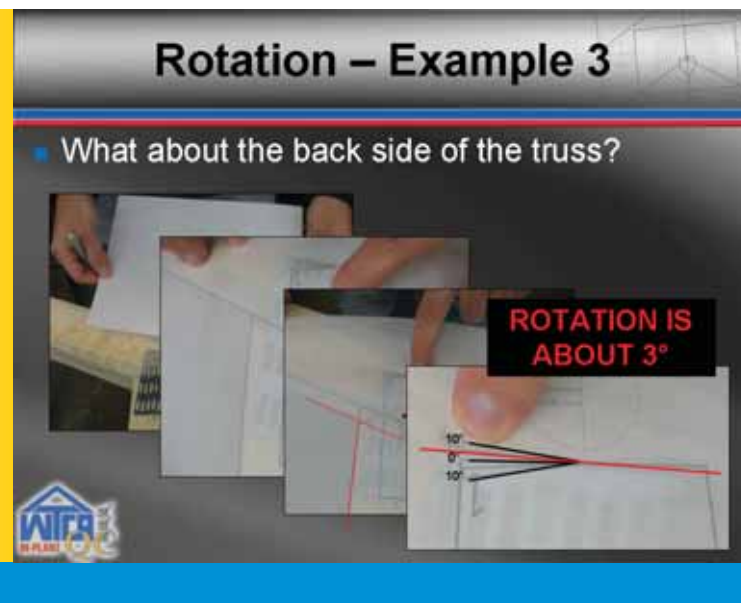
### Time Savings is Key

At roughly three hours total, each module averages just over five minutes. Hayes says he thinks that if viewed in their entirety (but not necessarily in one session), the modules could greatly reduce manufacturers’ training time. When he trains a new inspector, “I usually allot a day and a half for him to review the manual, so I’m sure the modules would

cut down on the amount of time it takes.”

While the online modules are not meant to replace the in-person training conducted by WTCA staff necessary to become certified, being exposed to the content in each of the five topic areas—general program, inspection criteria, inspection procedures, use of database, and inspection best practices—prior to the visit maximizes employees’ retention of the content. “If manufacturers devote a couple hours to looking at the modules on the front end, they have a much better understanding of how to do inspections as well as what the point of the program is when we come to help them train,” says Tony Piek, In-Plant WTCA QC Project Leader. Another benefit to pre-viewing the modules—inspectors develop questions specific to their plant that can be answered in person, he says.

**Online Inspector Training helps put In-Plant WTCA QC into perspective by addressing the “why” of the program just as much as the “how to.”**



**Rotation – Example 3**

What about the back side of the truss?

**ROTATION IS ABOUT 3°**

The web-delivered modules can also be used as a quick refresher for anyone filling in for an inspector. Jones says he hopes to have other crew members use it. “Someone who has limited mobility due to injury could learn how to do inspections based on these modules,” says Jones. “That would certainly keep them on the clock and help alleviate my workload.”

So whether you’re currently certified or thinking about certification, make life easier by taking advantage of the new training modules. The modules that comprise Online Inspector Training are included in the cost of In-Plant WTCA QC certification. For more information on the program, visit [www.sbcindustry.com/wtcaqc.php](http://www.sbcindustry.com/wtcaqc.php). **SBC**



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## Streamlining & Detailed Reporting Key in In-Plant WTCA QC version 4.3

By Tony Piek

Online Inspector Training isn't the only thing that will help manufacturers save time in quality control. The focus of the new In-Plant WTCA QC version 4.3, released in September 2007, is to make reporting and analyzing data more efficient and powerful for your quality control team. Here is a summary of the changes:

- **Software Integration Saves Time.** Shave 15 minutes off each inspection with this new process. The inspector finds a truss they want to inspect and then calls up that truss in the design software and tells it to create a temporary file (stored in a file path selected in the design software). This temporary file has all known information on the truss such as the job number, critical joints, specified plate sizes and gages, member names, and member tooth counts. Then the inspector opens the WTCA QC database and downloads the information into a pre-populated inspection form.
- **Access to More Management Reports.** Not only are there more, the reports are much easier to create. Organize summary reports by crew, line, or shift, a weekly summary, and do more analysis on the joint and member reports and

truss dimensions. For example, find out your average misplacement or rotation, whether you have more problems on the front or back side of the truss, isolate a certain joint type for a specific line or crew, or determine how many plates on average are being upsized on each line or crew. These reports are powerful tools and can help the plant put into place a valuable data management system.

- **Simplified Data Entry.** The QC database is more user-friendly and intelligent, and it better communicates to the user if there is a problem with data entry or what is out of conformance with the inspection.

### What's Next?

With version 4.3 and Online Inspector Training completed, the thrust of our 2008 work will be on developing a QC program for wall panel manufacturers. Also stay tuned for future updates to In-Plant WTCA QC—version 5.0 will be based on the ANSI/TPI 1 – 2007 standard. For more information on version 4.3 or the upcoming 2008 work, contact Tony Piek (tpiek@qualtim.com). **SBC**

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