North Western Steel - Quality Manual

# 1. Company Profile & Scope

North Western Steel is a Nevada-based steel fabrication and welding company serving mining, agriculture, construction, municipal, and industrial clients across the Carlin Trend and surrounding regions. As a locally owned business headquartered in Lovelock, we provide critical support to industries that depend on reliable structural steel, equipment repair, and custom fabrication. Our team brings decades of combined experience in welding, fabrication, and field service.

The scope of our Quality Management System (QMS) includes all processes that affect the quality of our deliverables: job planning, drawing review, material procurement and control, welding and fabrication, inspection and testing, delivery, and installation. The QMS applies to both shop and field operations. Exclusions are limited to subcontracted services outside of our direct control (e.g., machining, coatings, or specialized engineering calculations).

# 2. Quality Policy & Creed

Our quality policy is built on four commitments: safety, compliance, customer satisfaction, and continuous improvement. North Western Steel pledges to meet or exceed customer requirements on every project while complying with industry standards including AWS, ASME, OSHA, MSHA, and ASTM.

We achieve this by maintaining documented procedures, ensuring employee competence, and enforcing strict material traceability. Quality is not just an inspection step — it is built into planning, fabrication, and delivery.

Our creed reflects this philosophy:
“Quality, Speed, and Value — All From One Place.”

This creed demonstrates to our clients that they can rely on us for dependable service, rapid response, and cost-effective results without sacrificing compliance or safety.

# 3. Organization & Responsibilities

North Western Steel uses a lean but effective structure:

- Owner/Manager: Has full authority over the QMS. Approves all procedures, manages vendor qualification, signs off NCRs, and conducts annual reviews. The Owner/Manager also represents the company in all quality-related client discussions.

- Supervisors: Translate project requirements into shop and field execution. They review drawings, approve fit-ups, oversee inspections, and sign off on weld acceptance. Supervisors are the link between welders and management.

- Welders/Fabricators: Must follow approved WPS, complete self-inspections, and maintain traceability of materials (heat numbers). Welders are responsible for reporting issues immediately.

- Support Staff: Handle documentation, filing of MTRs, vendor records, and digital archiving of inspection forms.

This structure ensures accountability is clear, and every position contributes to quality outcomes.

# 4. Document & Process Control

All documents are controlled under a standardized numbering system (QM, PR, WI, FR). Documents are approved by the Owner/Manager before release, and obsolete documents are removed from circulation.

The digital master file is the official record; printed copies are marked “Controlled Copy.” Retention requirements are set at 5 years digital-only, ensuring compliance and audit readiness while avoiding excess paperwork.

Processes covered under QMS include welding, material control, procurement, inspection, delivery, and installation. Each process is linked to procedures (PR-series) and forms (FR-series). Flowcharts in the appendices provide visual guidance for employees.

# 5. Standards & Compliance

North Western Steel’s QMS is grounded in recognized industry standards. Welding is performed in accordance with AWS D1.1 (structural), D14.1 (machinery), and D1.6 (stainless). Piping projects follow ASME Section IX and B31.3. All operations comply with OSHA workplace safety regulations and MSHA requirements for mining environments. Materials are purchased with ASTM compliance and heat number traceability.

Compliance is verified through inspections, welder qualifications, WPS/PQR records, and documented test results. When client specifications exceed industry codes, the stricter requirements take precedence. Standards are reviewed annually to ensure continued compliance.

# 6. Quality Procedures

The following procedures govern work at North Western Steel:

- PR-001 Job Planning & Contract Review: Verifies drawings, materials, scope, and safety requirements before work starts.
- PR-002 Material Control & Traceability: Requires MTRs, assigns heat numbers, and maintains traceability throughout fabrication.
- PR-003 Welding & Fabrication: Ensures welders follow approved WPS, log work, and meet code requirements.
- PR-004 Inspection & Testing: Defines inspection hold points, self-inspections, supervisor sign-offs, and NDT.
- PR-005 Procurement & Vendor Control: Requires vendor qualification and ongoing supplier performance monitoring.
- PR-006 Nonconformance & Corrective Action: Ensures NCRs are documented, investigated, and resolved.
- PR-007 Delivery & Installation: Governs final verification, packaging, transport, and installation at client sites.

These procedures are intentionally high-level, with detailed work instructions and FR-forms provided in appendices.

# 7. Inspection, Testing & Nonconformance

Inspection is central to NWS operations. Welders perform self-inspections, supervisors complete final inspections, and independent inspectors provide NDT as required. Dimensional checks verify assemblies against drawings, and piping projects undergo hydrostatic/pneumatic testing per ASME B31.3.

All materials must have MTRs, and heat numbers are tracked on every job. Records are maintained on Material Receipt Forms and Weld Maps.

Nonconformance Reporting (NCRs) ensures defects are tagged, segregated, and documented. The Owner/Manager makes final disposition decisions (repair, rework, scrap, or client-approved use-as-is). CAPA procedures drive root cause analysis and preventive action, reviewed quarterly.

# 8. Training & Competence

All employees must demonstrate competence. Welders are qualified to AWS and ASME standards and requalified as needed. Supervisors and inspectors must show competence in inspections, drawings, and applicable codes. Support staff are trained in documentation and traceability practices.

Training records are maintained for 5 years and reviewed annually by management. Employees are encouraged to suggest training needs and participate in ongoing development. NCR/CAPA reviews may trigger targeted retraining.

# 9. Continuous Improvement

Continuous improvement is achieved by measuring results and acting on findings. Key performance indicators (KPIs) include:
- Rework rate (defects per job)
- On-time delivery percentage
- Inspection pass rate
- Client satisfaction feedback

The Owner/Manager holds an annual management review to evaluate the QMS, including audits, NCR trends, training needs, and KPI results. Improvement actions are documented in a Management Review Report and assigned for follow-up.

# 10. Manual Control & Approval

This Quality Manual is a controlled document. Only the Owner/Manager may approve revisions, and a revision history log is maintained. The digital master copy is the authoritative version; all printed versions must be marked “Controlled Copy.”

Approved By:
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Owner/Manager
North Western Steel

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_