

# What's in a Name? NDT Training and Levels of Qualification

Over the years, ASNT has received many questions regarding personnel who claim to be "ASNT certified" and about training courses that advertise that they provide "ASNT training." Because of the evident confusion over the use of the ASNT name, this article will attempt to clarify who may be called what with regard to NDT certification and what courses may be claimed as providing "ASNT training."

To set the stage for these differentiations, a bit of historical background will be helpful. In 1968, the Society published the first edition of the *Recommended Practice No. SNT-TC-1A*. This document was developed to provide guidelines for employers to use to set up their own NDT certification programs and listed three levels of qualification: Level I, Level II and Level III. (As an historical sidebar, the document name, which is now a household word among NDT personnel, derives from the fact that ASNT was then "SNT," and the number of the Technical Committee (TC) that developed the document was "1A" — hence the name *SNT-TC-1A*.)

In the initial document, personnel wishing to certify to Levels I or II were required to satisfy three recommended requirements: a number of training hours in the applicable test method; an amount of experience time using that method; and having passed certain written and practical examinations related to the test method. Personnel so certified are said to be certified in accordance with *Recommended Practice No. SNT-TC-1A*.

For Level III status, personnel had to have documented a certain amount of time as a Level II (that varied depending on the amount of formal education the candidate

had) and they also had to pass certain written examinations. These Level III personnel are commonly called "NDT Level IIIs," and have been certified in accordance with *Recommended Practice No. SNT-TC-1A*.

**Only those who have passed examinations administered by ASNT may be considered ASNT certified.**

However, an alternate method of qualification was permitted in paragraph 8.3.4, which allowed an employer to appoint a person as a Level III based on documentation of that person's demonstrated ability, achievement, experience and education. While this paragraph was dropped from *SNT-TC-1A* in the 1988 and all subsequent editions, there are still personnel in industry who were appointed to Level III without examination; under the guidelines of *SNT-TC-1A* editions prior to 1988, this was permitted.

In 1977, ASNT inaugurated the ASNT NDT Level III program, for which ASNT developed and administered its own written Level III examinations and began issuing an ASNT certificate upon successful completion of those exams. Personnel

holding those certificates are called "ASNT NDT Level IIIs" to differentiate them from those personnel who took and passed employer examinations.

What, then, is the problem? It is simple: since ASNT publishes *Recommended Practice No. SNT-TC-1A*, many employers mistakenly assume that personnel whom they have certified under *SNT-TC-1A* are "ASNT certified," when in fact they have been certified "in accordance with *SNT-TC-1A*." Only personnel who have sat for and passed the examinations developed and administered by ASNT and have received ASNT certificates may call themselves "ASNT certified." This is a point of contention for ASNT because the use of the letters "ASNT" by non-ASNT certified personnel is not only a misrepresentation of how that person was certified, but is also a violation of ASNT's trademark. Because ASNT examinations exceed the minimum recommended guidelines for examinations as listed in *SNT-TC-1A*, ASNT is very particular about this issue.

To summarize, personnel certified by their employer are said to be certified "in accordance with *Recommended Practice No. SNT-TC-1A*." Being employer based, these personnel are NDT Level Is, IIs and IIIs and have often been called "corporate" Level Is, IIs or IIIs. If the Level III did not examine to that Level, they are commonly called "appointed" Level IIIs to distinguish that they have not gained certification through examination. However, this is not a derogatory term, as appointment was permitted prior to 1988.

Personnel who have taken and passed the ASNT NDT Level III examinations are called "ASNT NDT Level IIIs," and those who hold ASNT Central Certification Program (ACCP) certificates are called "ACCP Level IIs" or "ACCP Professional Level IIIs," depending on the level in question. Only those who have passed examinations administered by ASNT may be considered ASNT certified.

With regard to NDT training, only courses that have been developed by ASNT and are administered by ASNT or an authorized representative may be called "ASNT training." Courses by providers other than ASNT that have followed the recommended training course outlines found in the back of *Recommended Practice No. SNT-TC-1A* may advertise that the training is "in accordance with *Recommended Practice No. SNT-TC-1A*," but may not advertise it as "ASNT training."

## What's in a Name?

To ensure proper usage of NDT terminology, ASNT would like to remind readers that the following terms should be used when referring to the certification status of NDT personnel.

- Personnel certified by examination by their employer (or through contracted examination agencies or training facilities other than ASNT) should be listed as being "certified in accordance with *Recommended Practice No. SNT-TC-1A*." In addition, employer certified Level IIIs may be called "Level IIIs."
- Personnel certified by ASNT examination may be referred to as being "ASNT certified" and may be called by the proper name "ASNT NDT Level III."
- Personnel certified through the ASNT Central Certification Program (ACCP) may be said to be "ASNT certified" or, more properly, to have been certified as an "ACCP Level II" or "ACCP Professional Level III."

Adherence to these simple distinctions will reduce confusion in the industry.

