

Top 12 Myths and Facts About Third-party Inspection



Capital projects in energy and other sectors use third-party inspection (inspection) to ensure suppliers' equipment and materials are delivered complete, correct, and on-time (also referred to as source surveillance, vendor surveillance and visual inspection). Inspection is a misunderstood function because of hidden knowledge gaps: there are many pervasive myths about its methods, objectives, and strategies. This fact sheet dispels third-party inspection myths with facts.

No.	Myths	Facts
1.	Inspection is a quality assurance/quality control (QA/QC) function.	False. Inspection provides a risk management function, not a quality management function (e.g., it is not an ISO 9001, <i>Quality Management Systems — Requirements</i> program). Project risk tolerances vary, and the appropriate amount of inspection depends on the cost, project type, and other factors (e.g., product complexity and criticality).
2.	Inspection removes liability.	Wrong. Inspection selectively determines compliance during production; it does not ensure supplier deliverables are perfect or duplicate or perform QC.
3.	Inspection can be set-up ad hoc or as-needed.	It can be; however, properly-planned inspection is far more effective and value-added because it permits a project to identify and correct challenges before significant related deleterious consequences can occur (e.g., challenges occur early or on paper instead of later during production or construction).
4.	Inspection resources are available whenever and wherever required.	This is unlikely. Inspection resources may or may not be available when and where needed. A smart project plans inspection activities and contingencies during detailed engineering – <i>not</i> when services are needed.
5.	Inspectors are immediately available for a project.	This is unlikely. Like other busy professionals, inspectors keep carefully-planned and demanding schedules. Inspectors may be inflexible or unavailable on short notice.
6.	Inspection expertise is always readily available.	Probably not. A smart project uses strategies and teamwork to manage inspection activities cost-effectively, especially if available resources are less experienced or no resources are available locally (e.g., significant travel expenses would be required), and when assigning a resource for more than one discipline (e.g., coating, electrical, mechanical, welding, or a combination).
7.	Inspectors have immediate access to all the procurement and supplier documents.	Not true. Inspectors have access to select digital and hard copy documentation for inspection that is issued by the SQS coordinator, supplier, or a combination. Remember: inspection is a risk management function – not a quality management function. See Myth 1.
8.	An inspector's acceptance of documentation or inspection results is final.	False. The responsible engineer or receiver at-site is responsible for final acceptance of documentation and product, regardless of previous acceptance by others.
9.	Inspection activities are limited to requirements in the inspection requirements document or inspection and test plan.	Not true. There are several sources of guidance for inspection activities. These include the inspection assignment, other instructions (e.g., by email or phone call), inspector knowledge and leadership, and the inspector's ability to act as the project's eyes and ears.
10.	Inspection is a one-size-fits-all solution.	Never! Inspection requirements may be similar for a new project; however, a smart project assesses and documents important differences, and monitors and adjusts plans as-needed throughout all project phases.
11.	Project managers are knowledgeable about inspection.	Not necessarily. Inspection myths originate from a gap in the engineering educational curriculum and project management body of knowledge (e.g., Project Management Institute, Inc. <i>A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge, 6th Edition</i>) – no detailed information or how-to guidelines are provided for inspection.
12.	Supply chain managers and procurement managers are knowledgeable about inspection.	Not necessarily. Inspection myths originate from a gap in the business educational curriculum and supply chain management body of knowledge (e.g., Supply Chain Canada. <i>The Competencies of Canadian Supply Chain Professionals, 1st Edition</i>) – no detailed information or how-to guidelines are provided for inspection.

[Top Ten Myths of Third-party Inspection](#) expands on this fact sheet.