

Construction Specifications Writing Principles And Procedures Practical Construction Guides

Construction Specifications Writing Principles And Procedures Practical Construction Guides Construction Specifications Writing Principles Procedures and Practical Guides Construction specifications are the heart of any successful building project They serve as the blueprint for construction detailing the materials workmanship and quality standards required to achieve a desired outcome Effective specifications writing goes beyond simply listing materials and techniques it requires a deep understanding of the projects requirements adherence to established principles and the ability to communicate those details in a clear concise and legally sound manner This article will delve into the key principles and procedures of writing construction specifications offering practical guides for creating comprehensive and effective documents

Part 1 Fundamental Principles

1 Clear and Concise Language

Specificity Avoid vague language Use precise terms and descriptions to eliminate ambiguity Instead of good quality specify the exact grade of material performance standards or industry certifications

Active Voice Active voice makes the writing more direct and engaging Instead of The foundation should be inspected use Inspect the foundation

Consistency Maintain a consistent writing style and terminology throughout the document Use a standardized format for headings numbering and referencing

Avoid Jargon While technical terms are necessary overuse of industry jargon can hinder understanding If specialized terminology is unavoidable define it clearly

2 Comprehensive Scope and Detail

Complete Coverage Specifications should encompass all aspects of the construction project from site preparation to final finishes

Hierarchical Organize information logically using headings and subheadings to create a clear hierarchy This improves readability and allows for quick reference

Adequate Detail Provide sufficient information to ensure contractors can understand and 2 meet the project requirements This includes specifying materials dimensions tolerances installation methods and testing procedures

3 Legal and Contractual Considerations

Contractual Language Specifications form part of the contract between the owner and contractor Ensure language is precise and legally sound to avoid disputes

Standard Practices Refer to relevant building codes standards and industry best practices This helps ensure compliance and avoids unnecessary litigation

Insurance and Warranties Specify any insurance requirements warranty provisions or performance guarantees that apply to specific materials or workmanship

Part 2 Essential Procedures

1 Project Planning and Information Gathering

Project Scope Understand the

projects overall goals budget timeline and design intent This provides context for writing specifications

Site Analysis Conduct a thorough site survey to identify existing conditions soil types utilities and potential environmental concerns

Design Review Collaborate with architects engineers and other design professionals to understand the design intent and clarify any technical details

Material Research Research and select appropriate materials based on performance requirements cost availability and sustainability considerations

2 Specification Writing Process Template and Format Utilize a standardized specification format and template to ensure consistency and organization Consider using industryrecognized formats like CSI MasterFormat or UniFormat

Divisions and Sections Organize specifications into divisions eg site work concrete etc and sections eg concrete foundations concrete walls etc

Performance Specifications Focus on specifying the desired outcome or performance of the construction element rather than dictating specific materials or methods This provides flexibility and encourages innovative solutions

Reference Standards Clearly reference relevant building codes standards and testing procedures This ensures compliance and reduces ambiguity

3 Quality Control and Review

Internal Review Have the specifications reviewed by internal team members and subject matter experts to ensure accuracy clarity and completeness

External Review Consider seeking feedback from contractors material suppliers and other stakeholders to identify potential issues and ensure practicality

Revisions and Updates Continuously revise and update specifications based on feedback changes to project requirements or advancements in technology and building practices

Part 3 Practical Guides for Effective Specifications Writing

1 Using Visual Aids

Drawings and Diagrams Include relevant drawings diagrams and illustrations to clarify complex details and enhance understanding

Photographs Use photographs of desired materials finishes or installation techniques to provide visual examples and avoid misinterpretation

2 Incorporating Performance Criteria

Testing Requirements Specify testing procedures and acceptance criteria to ensure materials and workmanship meet established standards

Performance Standards Define performance criteria based on durability strength fire resistance energy efficiency or other relevant factors

Quality Control Methods Outline quality control procedures and inspection requirements to ensure compliance throughout the construction process

3 Addressing Sustainability

Energy Efficiency Specify energyefficient materials building systems and practices to reduce environmental impact

Sustainable Materials Encourage the use of recycled renewable or locally sourced materials

Waste Management Outline guidelines for waste management and recycling during construction

4 Managing Complexity

Modular Specifications Break down complex specifications into smaller modules to improve readability and simplify referencing

CrossReferencing Use crossreferencing to connect related sections and avoid repetition

Index and Glossary Include a comprehensive index and glossary to provide easy access to specific terms and information

Conclusion

Effective construction specifications writing is a critical skill for ensuring successful building projects. By adhering to the principles and procedures outlined in this article and by utilizing practical guides for enhancing clarity, detail, and compliance, specifiers can create comprehensive and effective documents that streamline communication, facilitate efficient construction, and ultimately lead to quality outcomes. It is crucial to remember that writing specifications is an iterative process; continuous review, feedback, and refinement are essential for ensuring the final document reflects the project's unique requirements and contributes to its overall success.

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The Specification Writer's Handbook
NHI Training Catalog
NHI Catalog
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Memoranda ; Estimating and Calculating Quantities ; Contracts ; Permits
Resources in Education
Contracts, Specifications and Engineering Relations
The Architect's Handbook of Professional Practice
Notes on Contracts, Specifications and Engineering Relations
English Patents of Inventions, Specifications
Sources of Construction Information: Books
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updated edition of the comprehensive rulebook to the specifier's craft with this latest update construction specifications writing sixth edition continues to claim distinction as the foremost text on construction specifications this mainstay in the field offers comprehensive practical and professional guidance to understanding the purposes and processes for preparation of construction specifications this new edition uses real world document examples that reflect current writing practices shaped by the well established principles and requirements of major professional associations including the american institute of architects aia the engineers joint contract documents committee ejcdc and the construction specifications institute csi also included are guidelines for correct terminology product selection organization of specifications according to recognized csi formats and practical techniques for document production fully revised throughout this sixth edition includes updates to masterformat 2004 as well as sectionformat pageformat 2007 and uniformat end of chapter questions and specification writing exercises samples of the newly updated construction documents from the aia new chapter on sustainable design and specifications for leed projects updated information on the role of specifications in building information modeling bim

this third edition of the standard construction specifications writing guide has been updated to include new information on linking specifications to computer databases and to other parts of the design process construction specifications writing shows how to organize documents consolidate the federal government systems generate well researched mastertexts automate specifications write more condensed text use full time specifications consultants and use the new knowledge based specifying systems

covers the basic steps involved in preparing construction specifications shows practitioners how to set up specifications writing departments within an architecture or engineering office and how to handle the day to day problems associated with writing specifications describes necessary office equipment emphasizing computers and word processors

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