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Sustaining the Built Environment

September 2012

## SEPTEMBER 27ST MEETING

**PLACE:** H.E.S.S. Building  
5430 Westheimer

### TIME:

5:30 P.M. (Registration and  
mixer)

6:00 P.M. (Evening Meal  
and Meeting)

### COST:

\$35.00 Per Person; Free to  
CSI members.

**RESERVATIONS:** Please go  
to: <http://www.csihouston.org>

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CSI Houston Website:  
<http://www.csihouston.org>

## September CSI Houston Chapter Program

### “NFPA 99 Changes Effecting Healthcare”

Presented by

### Randy Tucker with CCRD

Randy Tucker with CCRD, (Tel) 713-213-7355, [randyt@ccrd.com](mailto:randyt@ccrd.com), will present “A Round Table Discussion - NFPA 99 Change Effecting Healthcare” at the September 24th CSI Houston Chapter dinner meeting.

AIA CEU and HSW credits will be available for program attendees. Certificates of attendance may be requested for non-AIA members attending the presentation.

CCRD is a consulting engineering firm committed to sustainable systems design solutions for its clients. Since our founding in 1980 as Texas Energy Engineers, Inc., we have grown to 10 offices throughout the United States in Austin, Dallas, Denver, Houston, Kansas City, Miami, Nashville, Richmond, Phoenix and Washington D.C. CCRD employs more than 150 highly-skilled professionals and support staff.

Cost is \$35.00 per person, gratis to CSI Houston Chapter members.

## October Meeting Program

### “A Round Table Discussion - Building Envelope Construction”

“A Round Table Discussion - Building Envelope Construction” at the October 15th CSI Houston Chapter dinner meeting.

AIA CEU and HSW credits will be available for program attendees. Certificates of attendance may be requested for non-AIA members attending the presentation.

**CSI HOUSTON CHAPTER  
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Treasurer, 3 Years Brett Wilbur, CSI, CCS, RA

Position 1, 1 Year Tom Atwell, CSI CDT, AIA

Position 2, 3 Years Al Pasek, CSI, CCPR

Position 3, 3 Years Don Ude, CSI

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## September 2012

### President's Message

by Holly Jordan, CSI, CCS, SCIP, LEED AP BD+C

I hope that everyone has been enjoying the Summer Olympics. While watching the events, the first thing that comes to mind is the commitment that every person on the team has to have to win an event. With that being said, the commitment to CSI, our Chapter, and all of our CSI events is no different.



It is important for every member of our Chapter to work toward making our Chapter strong and encouraging new membership. Our Board and Committee Chairs are working on and trying new ideas to My fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country. – JFK

Following that quote, and changing the context to answer the question "What does the Region do for us?"

"My fellow Chapter Members, ask not what your Region can do for you, as what you can do for your Region." With that being said, I am listing the following items from the current Region Administrative Guide with my personal italicized/red comments stating what I think that our Chapter can do for our Region and how we can benefit in return:

The purpose of Fall Conference is to:


1. Serve as the first formal meeting of the region. *Everyone can have a say and learn about what goes on in the Region. Questions are answered, decisions are made, future plans for the Region are made. If our Chapter is not well represented, then we will not have a say in what role the Region will play in the future for our Chapter.*
2. Serve as the counter part to the Region conference by providing Strategic Planning or Leadership Orientation. *If our members do not go, they will not have a say in what goes on in the Region. Participation is the key to the future of our Region. Although Board Members and Committee Chairs took office in July, sometimes it takes a few months to figure out exactly what you don't know, and what questions could be answered by participating in a Planning/Leadership Orientation meeting.*
3. Provide a forum for discussion of the improvement and development of the chapters. *This is a place where our Board and Committee Chairs can find out what is being done in other Chapters, get ideas for what works and what does not work, etc.*
4. Provide an opportunity for chapter officers and committee chairpersons to become personally acquainted with each other and the Institute directors, region officers and region committee chairpersons and to establish a relationship for communication on an inter-chapter basis. *Remember, it is not what you know, but who you know! When Officers and Committee Chairs have met and become acquainted with each other it is so much easier to pick up the phone or email questions or*

*ideas.*

5. Discuss region policies and procedures, including the schedule of host chapters for the region conference. *Hosting a Region Conference can be a daunting task, but if you have met people from other Chapters who have already done a Region Conference, and know what the policies are procedures are, it becomes so much less daunting.*
6. Review proposed nominees for Institute director. *This is a very important role. This person represents every member in our Chapter as well as every Chapter in the Region. If members of our Chapter do not attend the Fall Conference then we will not have a say in who will represent us.*
7. Begin Region Officer nomination search. *Members who attend Region Meetings and Conferences will have knowledge and a say in what Offices are available who will represent them in the next year.*
8. Inform chapter leaders of Institute activities. *There is so much information available. Many times, as information is shared, it is edited and watered down by the time it gets to the Chapter Level. What is important to one person, could be different to what is important to another. If our Chapter is well represented, it would seem that better coordination of information would be possible.*

In conclusion, in order to make our Chapter stronger, we *must* participate on a Region level. The exchange of ideas and networking is important to all of us.

Holly A. Jordan, CSI, CCS, LEED AP BD+C, SCIP  
President, CSI Houston Chapter  
President-Elect, CSI South Central Region

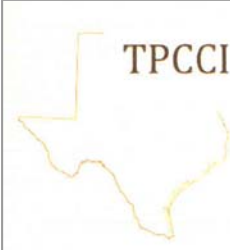


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## 2012 CSI Houston Chapter Brian Harrington Golf Classic

By Thomas L. Atwood, CSI ,CDT

CSI Houston Chapter is proud to once again extend an invitation to play as a special guest in our 23rd Annual Golf Tournament. The first 36 architects or engineers that confirm their attendance will be our special guest for a fun filled afternoon of golf including a light lunch before tee off and a BBQ dinner and awards presentation following the tournament. As always, we will have lots of door prizes and raffle items.

Please note our new location this year, **The Club at Falcon Point in Katy**, <http://www.clubcorp.com/Clubs/The-Club-at-Falcon-Point>

Don't miss this opportunity for a relaxing afternoon in the company of old friends and new acquaintances in the construction industry.

Date: Monday, October 22, 2012

Place: The Club at Falcon Point, 24503 Falcon Point Drive, Katy, TX 77494

Sign In: 10:30 am

Lunch Buffet: 11:30 am

Shotgun Start: 12:30 am

Awards 5:30 am

For a spot in our tournament, please complete the attached form and FAX your reply to Tom Atwell (713) 331.1822, or E-mail to [tom.atwell@cushwake.com](mailto:tom.atwell@cushwake.com)

Don't delay; remember the first 36 architects/engineers to respond will play free. If you're unable to play or know of other golfing architects that might be interested, please pass a copy of this along. And, if you miss this special opportunity, you can still play, space permitting, for an entry fee of \$125.00.

Visit our website for more information:

[www.csihouston.org](http://www.csihouston.org)

## Houston Code News and Events

By Di Ann Hassloch, CSI ,CCS, CCCA, LEED AP

### New Electrical Code - Effective 09/01/2011.

On August 10, City Council approved the adoption of the 2011 National Electrical Code and local amendments.

### New Commercial Energy Codes - Effective 09/02/2011.

September 2, 2011, commercial buildings and structures shall comply with the 2009 IECC or 2007 ASHRAE 90.1, pursuant to Section 19.53 of Chapter 34, Texas Administrative Code.

In accordance with this provision and the rules thereto, the City has reviewed the codes and has proposed amendments for review by the Energy Systems Laboratory.

Please visit the City of Houston Form & Publications Page at <http://www.houstonpermittingcenter.org/code-enforcement/code-updates.html> to access the new Commercial Energy Codes

### New Construction Codes—Effective 12/31/10.

On November 3rd, City Council approved the 2006 Code Package to adopt updated Construction Codes. The new amendments are available at our Forms & Publications page.

Texas Adopts New Energy Code 2009 IECC effective April 1st, 2011. The major points to be guided by for the building envelope are:

- All commercial projects will need insulated glass. No more monolithic exceptions for small window to wall ratios.
- All commercial projects will need to exhibit an SHGC (Solar Heat Gain Coefficient) of .25 or less. This is a major revision and improvement to save energy for our building owners. There are exceptions for projection factors i.e. shading.

As published in the Texas Register today: ADOPTED RULES June 4, 2010 35 TexReg 4727

### Current codes in the City of Houston include:

- Building Code: 2006 IBC with Houston Amendments.
- Residential Code: 2006 IRC with Houston Amendments.
- Electrical Code: 2011 NEC with Houston Amendments—1st Printing.
- Mechanical Code: 2006 UMC with Houston Amendments.
- Plumbing Code: 2006 UPC with Houston Amendments.



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### FEATURE YOUR PRODUCTS WITH A TABLE TOP DISPLAY

At each monthly meeting, the Chapter encourages Industry Members to provide a table top display of their products and services for the inspection and education of those attending the meeting.

The table top display is also encouraged to be presented during the social hour and after the program for any questions by attendees.

The presentation fee for this time is \$200 for members and \$250 for non-members, or free with a Golf Sponsor-

### WHERE IS YOUR BUSINESS ADVERTISEMENT?

A quarter page ad is only \$250 for 12 issues

A half page ad is only \$500 for 12 issues

A business card ad is only \$225 for 12 issues

Contact Don Smith at  
(713) 688-0092 or [don.smith315@sbdglobal.net](mailto:don.smith315@sbdglobal.net)  
for more information.

## CSI BOARD MEETING MINUTES

### Houston Chapter CSI

**Location: HESS Building - 5430 Westheimer Rd., Houston, TX**  
**July 23, 2012**

Present: Amy Peevey, Amy Salmeron, Betsy Finch, Bill Fairbanks, Chuck Vojtech, Di Ann Reid, Don Smith, Don Vernon, Doug Frank, Grant Groeschel, Holly Jordan, J. Peter Jordan, Joey Penna, Logan Vits, Mark Koehler, Neil Byrne, Tim Wilson, Tom Atwell

President Holly Jordan called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. The June 2012 Board Meeting Minutes were approved.

### REPORTS

#### Member Services: Mark Koehler:

Programs - J. Peter Jordan: J. Peter reported John Douglass with Wasco Products would be the presenter at the August chapter meeting. The presentation will be "Using Skylights to Daylight Commercial Buildings."

Membership - Joey Peena: Joey reported the chapter has one new member. Holly discussed CSI pins and stated that she would like the members to wear their pins.

Awards - Amy Salmeron: No report.

#### Finance/Administration - Neil Byrne:

Treasurer's Report - Chuck Vojtech: Chuck reported that he made some minor changes to the budget. The Board discussed the situation of having to pay for no-shows at the chapter meetings. Holly will include a phone number on the RSVP for cancellations. The Board decided to track the number of no-shows and alert members that the chapter has to pay for no-shows. Neil Byrne moved to "Approve the 2012 -2013 Budget." The motion was seconded and approved. Neil reported that the chapter insurance policy expires in December and he will review the policy.

Table Top Display - Amy Peevey: Amy reported Coastal Metal would have a table top display at the chapter meeting.

#### Public Services - Don Smith:

Golf Tournament - Tom Atwell: Tom reported that he met with the food director and golf pro at Falcon Point and that a few items still need to be finalized. Joey Penna will work with Tom on the golf committee. Tom has received several responses from Architects.

SPEC.tectonics - Don Smith: Don reported the July issue

has been posted to the website.

Electronic Communications - Lisa Murray: No report.

Public Relations - Don Vernon: No report.

#### Professional Development - Logan Vits:

Continuing Education - Mark Koehler: Mark reported that he would continue to chair Continuing Education until the position is filled.

Academic Affairs - Al Pasek: No report.

Certification - Tim Wilson: Tim reported that seven students are attending the CDT prep classes being held at the BES office..

Technical Committee - J. Peter Jordan: J. Peter discussed the possibility of the Program presenter writing technical articles to be published in the chapter newsletter. Holly will ask James Sandoz if he would be interested in writing articles as well.

Scholarship - Frank Bain: No report.

#### Institute/SC Region Reports - Dorothy Dennison/

**Holly Jordan:** Holly reported the October 2012 Region Planning Meeting was moved to Austin. She also discussed what agenda items members would like discussed at the region meetings.

#### New Business:

Open Positions:

Bill Fairbanks "moved to appoint Doug Frank to the Board Advisory position. Motion was seconded and approved.

Don Smith "moved to appoint Don Ude to the Board of Directors position through 2013." Motion was seconded and approved.

Don Smith "moved to appoint Tim Wilson to the Board of Directors position through 2013." Motion was seconded and approved.

Chapter Directory - Tom Atwell: Grant Groeschel suggested the possibility of membership using LinkedIn. The Board decided the subject needed more discussion.

Meeting adjourned at 5:24 p.m.

**Betsy Finch, CSI**  
**Chapter Secretary**

## CSI Certification Exams

by Holly Jordan, CSI, CCS, SCIP, LEED AP  
BD+C

**Registration Dates:** 5/30/2012 - 8/31/2012

The CDT, CCS, CCCA and CCPR are computer-based exams administered at Prometric test centers throughout the US and Canada. The exams will be offered during a window (October 1 - 27, 2012). Candidates will receive a separate email notification with instructions on how to schedule their exam at a Prometric test center using their individual authorization number. To view the available Prometric test centers, please visit the Prometric website: <http://www.prometric.com/CSI/default.htm>. Then, select "Start" button to proceed.

Registration includes the exam application fee and CDT Candidate Handbook; it does not include the Project Delivery Practice Guide, Project Resource Manual - CSI Manual of Practice 5th Edition, AIA or EJCDC exam source materials.

### CSI Certificate/Certification Policies:

CSI exam application fees are non-transferable. Candidates who are unable to sit for a scheduled exam may request a cancellation and refund of the application fee. Cancellation requests must be submitted to the Institute in writing using the appropriate request form available on CSINet. A scheduled appointment with Prometric must also be cancelled through Prometric via [www.prometric.com/csi](http://www.prometric.com/csi) or 1-800-503-8991. Candidates who do not request a cancellation and do not sit for the exam forfeit all fees. Application fees may not be transferred to another individual. Candidates who wish to sit for the next exam must submit a new application and fee.

- Cancellation requests received by **September 17, 2012** (14 days prior to the first day of the test window) will be refunded 100% of the exam fee.
- Cancellation requests received on and after **September 18, 2012** (less than 14 days prior to the first day of the test window) will be refunded 50% of the exam fee.
- Cancellation requests received after **September 26, 2012** (less than 5 calendar days before the first day of the test window) will not be refunded the exam fee.

Those who are not successful in passing an exam may retest after 30 days but may not take the test more than two times in 12 months. Retests require a new application and registration fee. The CDT certifi-

cate is a lifetime achievement. The CCS, CCCA, and CCPR certifications are valid for three years. Renewal may be achieved by earning 24 learning hours of continuing education and paying the renewal fee. CSI's Certificate/Certification program is a rigorous test of knowledge, but is not a guarantee of future performance quality or capabilities of a certified individual.

**CDT exam** - lasts 2 hours and contains 120 multiple-choice questions.

**Student CDT exam** - lasts 2 hours and contains 120 multiple-choice questions. Full time students can register for the CDT exam at a reduced rate of \$105. Student candidates must fax a copy of their student ID to CSI for verification at 703-236-4600, Attn: Member Services.

**CCS exam** - lasts 4 hours and contains 200 multiple-choice questions.

**CCS Prerequisites:** Candidate must have passed the CDT exam. Candidate must have prepared or coordinated either Division 00 – Procurement and Contracting Requirements or Division 01 - General Requirements, and have directly prepared specification sections actually used in construction. Candidate must provide reference contact information for two professionals who will attest to candidate's experience within the last five years in the preparation of specifications actually used in construction.

**CCCA exam** - lasts 4 hours and contains 200 multiple-choice questions.

**CCCA Prerequisites:** Candidate must have passed the CDT exam. A minimum of 2 years of experience in the construction administration process, attested to by two people experienced in the field. .

**CCPR exam** - lasts 4 hours and contains 200 multiple-choice questions.

**CCPR Prerequisites:** Candidate must have passed the CDT exam. Candidate must have a minimum of two years experience in the representation of construction product(s) exclusive of academic preparation. Candidate must provide reference contact information from a manufacturer attested to on company letterhead by two manufacturers and/or employers.).



## **Construction Documents Technology Classes by Holly Jordan, CSI, CCS, SCIP, LEED AP BD+C**

The Construction Documents Technology (CDT) classes will be held at a location TBD. Classes will be once a week on Thursday evenings from July 12<sup>th</sup> through September 20<sup>th</sup> (6-8 PM). The cost for the class is \$75.00 for CSI members and \$100.00 for non-members to cover materials and incidentals. RSVP to Tim Wilson, CSI at [twilson@weatherizationpartners.com](mailto:twilson@weatherizationpartners.com), (Tel) (832) 289-6765 if you would like to attend or if you have any questions.

This is a great opportunity to absorb the necessary background and information to pass the CDT exam given by CSI. It also dovetails nicely with the CD portion of the ARE exam subject matter. In addition, the following was taken from the NCARB ARE e-News (<http://www.ncarb.org/idp/enews/2009/may/index.html>):

**Interns in the NCARB IDP must acquire 700 training units to satisfy the IDP Training Requirement. One training unit equals eight hours of acceptable training in an acceptable work setting.**

- **CSI Construction Documents Technologist (CDT) Certification** Maximum Training Units Allowed: 5 A copy of your certificate must be submitted to NCARB to receive credit.
- **CSI Construction Specifier (CCS) Certification** Training Category A - Specifications and Materials Research Maximum Training Units Allowed: 5 A copy of your certificate must be submitted to NCARB to receive credit. (Note: this cannot be combined with EPC activities for satisfaction of minimum training units in this area.)

**CSI Construction Contract Administrator (CCCA) Certification** Training Category B - Construction Phase—Office Maximum Training Units Allowed: 5 A copy of your certificate must be submitted to NCARB to receive credit. (Note: this cannot be combined with EPC activities for satisfaction of minimum training units in this area.)

The following information will be covered in the classes:

### **The Construction Documents Technology (CDT) Program**

The Construction Documents Technology (CDT) Program provides a comprehensive overview for anyone

who writes, interprets, enforces, or manages construction documents. Project architects, contractors, contract administrators, material suppliers, and manufacturers' representatives are all realizing the advantages of being Construction Documents Technologists.

By being able to understand and interpret written construction documents, CDTs perform their jobs more effectively. By understanding the roles and relationships of all participants, CDTs improve communication among all members of the construction team.

### **CDT Exam Overview**

CDT candidates must demonstrate their knowledge of CSI's recommended practices in the following subject areas:

- The construction process.
  - o Construction contract types.
  - o Modifications and substitution procedures.
- Contractual relationships.
  - o Rights, duties, and responsibilities.
  - o Contract provisions.
  - o Relationship and organization of construction documents.
- Use of construction documents.
  - o Organizational formats.
  - o Interpreting construction documents.



**INSTITUTE & REGION NEWS:**  
**By Dorothy Gumm Denison, CSI Director**

**INSTITUTE NEWS:**

Last month, we discussed the Institute's brand revitalization initiative. For progress, go to this link:  
<http://www.csinet.org/brand>

At this link you will find key points of the research, the Institute's strategic plan, and other resources to help you understand the need to revitalize CSI's brand. If you did not add your input last month, you can still add your input at [www.brandrevitalization@csinet.org](mailto:www.brandrevitalization@csinet.org). Your input is needed and critical to the process. Findings will be discussed further at Construct 2012 in September in Phoenix. You will have more opportunities there to participate in the process.

**REGION NEWS:** Region President Rick Lueb and Tulsa Chapter President Bruce Stone and Institute Director Dorothy Denison and others around the nation will be attending the Institute's leader training gathering June 21 in Denver. Institute Board Members and Region presidents and presidents-elect from across the nation will gather in Denver Colorado for a weekend of training on ways to better serve the membership, review and gain a fuller understanding of CSI's mission, and review CSI's strategic plan for the future guiding it in its mission. Attendees will also be able to attend the Institute Board meeting as observers. Region President Rick Lueb attended the last Institute Board meeting and was invited to speak to the Board on membership issues pertaining to our Region. If you have any input you would like Rick to convey to the Board, please pass a note on to him at [rlueb@taparchitecture.com](mailto:rlueb@taparchitecture.com) by June 18.

Planning has begun for the next Region meeting.

The Fall Conference will be held in Austin Texas for the convenience of all those who may be attending the Texas Society of Architects Conference there in October. Though South Central Region will not sponsor a booth at the show this year, the membership voted in April to hold the meeting in Austin to give Fort Worth and Dallas chapters a break from hosting the annual event which typically rotates between Dallas and Fort Worth. These chapters recently hosted special conferences so the Region voted to approve Austin Chapter's offer to hold the conference in Austin so Dallas and Fort Worth chapters can have a year break before we return to normal rotation in 2013.

**IN MEMORAM**



We mourn the passing of longtime CSI Houston Chapter member, Lawrence K. Adams, DAHC, CSI.

Larry was a distinguished architectural hardware consultant. He began his career at Peden Iron and Steel. In the early 70's he joined S.H. Kemp Co., and then D.L. Collins as a manufacturer's representative. Larry then joined Essex Industries/ASSA Abloy as a hardware specification consultant.

As an active member of the Builders Hardware Association (BHMA) and Door and Hardware Institute (DHI), he formed great friendships with hardware distributors. Larry was a charter member of the Lone Star South Chapter of the DHI for over five decades.

Larry was an active member of the Houston Chapter of CSI, serving many years as Director, CSI Foundation, golf tournament supporter and worker, Larry worked to educate the architectural community on Life Safety Codes; Electronic Hardware, and ADA Codes to incorporate a safe environment into building construction.

Larry leaves a legacy of over six decades of buildings built on Larry's hardware specifications, including hospitals, schools, churches, and office buildings.

Larry, you will be missed.

  
**BETSY FINCH & ASSOCIATES**

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Division 07 - Thermal and Moisture Protection

## Are Specifiers Weak in Faith?

By Sheldon Wolfe, RA, FCSI, CCS, CCA, CSC ©

Because of a CSI Specifiers Practice Group discussion in a couple of weeks, I'm moving this subject forward; we'll get back to changes in contract documents later.

About a hundred years ago, when AIA produced the document that eventually would become the familiar A201, much more work was done in the field. Reference standards had yet to be developed, and industry organizations did not yet offer the industry standards that are common today. And, because the architect was in control of the project, specifications were required to tell the contractor all that had to be done.

Since then, a lot has changed. We now have countless codes, industry standards, and references standards, which, together, set minimum requirements for just about everything. Much more work is fabricated off site, in controlled factory conditions, making today's materials and products far more reliable and consistent than they were a century ago. We often hear about the great quality of bygone days, and there is some truth to that, but the reality is that today's work is generally superior.

All of these things suggest specifications should be shorter, and I believe that to be true. However, specifications are longer than ever, and seem to grow with each new version. The main reason is redundancy, a result of the specifier's lack of faith in the documents we use.

Let's start with the conditions of the contract, specifically the AIA documents, probably the most commonly used. Other general conditions are used, but they often are similar to those published by AIA.

Read what is said about the responsibilities of the architect and of the contractor. In essence, the architect is responsible for showing what the building should look like, and what materials should be used where, and the contractor is responsible for pretty much everything else. Note there is nothing that requires the architect to tell the contractor, or manufacturer, or installer how to do their jobs. In fact, it states "The contractor shall be solely responsible for and have control over construction means, methods, techniques, sequences, and procedures and for coordinating all portions of the Work..."

This makes sense; the contractor knows more about how to run a job, the manufacturers know more about their products, and the installers know more about their work than the architect can possibly understand. So why do specifications delve so deeply into these matters? Why do they tell the contractor how to schedule, how to install, and how to coordinate?

There are good reasons for some of this. For example, it may be that part of a project has to be done first, to allow the owner to move from one area to another, but beyond that, it is the contractor's job to figure out what gets done

when.

In addition to the conditions of the contract, we have Division 01, which, properly used, can eliminate many of the requirements commonly found in specifications. In Division 01, we specify those things that apply to everything: selection of materials, storage, handling, installation, following manufacturers' instructions, compliance with standards, acceptance of conditions, and so on.

With just those basic requirements, we're well on the way to reducing the length of specifications. It requires faith, but it is logical, defensible, and enforceable. The basic rule is, if it's in the conditions or Division 01, take it out of the section. Think of it as "specification by exception." Rely on the documents, and all you need to worry about is how what you want differs from the standards or the manufacturers' instructions.

Part 1: Use "related work" as intended, a way to help the reader find something that normally would be expected in this section but is not.

Part 2: Remove substitution requirements. If you have specific products in mind, state what they are. If you're open to competitive products, specify the performance. Don't specify those things that are not essential, and may not be the same for all products.

Part 3: Unless you know more about installation than the manufacturer and the installer, there isn't much to say, except for quality control requirements.

Know your reference standards. If you specify insulation as ASTM C578, Type IV, there is no need to go on and specify the thermal resistance, compressive strength, water absorption, or vapor permeance. On the other hand, if the standard you are using has options, be sure to indicate which are required.

When you specify more than necessary, you enter into the "means and methods" area, and, in so doing, you assume the contractor's responsibility. If something goes wrong, the contractor can say, "I did what I was told" and you're on the hook.

With faith in the documents, it should be possible to specify almost anything in half a page (at least for architectural products, though I suspect mechanical and electrical specifications also can be reduced). Using roofing as an example, if I state the wind loads, the required fire-resistive rating, the type of membrane, applicable standards, required options, warranty, and field quality control requirements, what else do I have to say? The manufacturer's instructions cover all the related materials, and how it gets installed. Here's where the exception part comes in; if the manufacturer's standard flashing height is four inches, but I want eight, I say that.

The result? Easy to write, easy to bid, easy to enforce.

## “Strictly SMITH-ly”

### Where do Your Specs Come From?

by J. Peter Jordan, FCSI, CCS, AIA, LEED AP and Donald F. Smith, Jr., CSI CCS RA LEED AP

Do your specifications come from similar projects? Manufacturer's guide spec? In-house master? Commercial master? Write your own section for the project? All the above? Each of these approaches can work depending on the quality of the source, and your willingness to spend a few minutes working it over, making sure it really applies to your project. Critical to the process is your understanding of what it is you want and your knowledge of the product itself.

Do you grab the section from the last similar project (which was grabbed from the last similar project that was grabbed ...). The problem that is most often encountered with "recycled" specs is that they have become stale; sometimes they are in an advanced state of decay. What is the Contractor to do when you have specified obsolete performance requirements and include two manufacturers who are no longer in business, one who has changed names, and one whose product line has morphed into something totally different. It may be time to simply start over. Remember that Contractors are creatures of habit and competition; they go with what works at the competitive price they have quoted.

Do you use a manufacturer's guide spec, throwing it in at the last minute without real review because that is the product you want on the job? These vary greatly in quality, and may be marketing blurbs with a CSI section name and number which may invite more RFIs and substitution requests than you want to deal with. They can, however, be a valuable resource for quickly generating a good spec section. Evaluate the quality of the document to see if it is really going to be useful. If you can use it, make sure you fill in the blanks, and make selections where are indicated. Most manufacturer's specs are proprietary and written to exclude competitors products.

Do you use an in-house master tailored for your practice? These can be less useful than grabbing a spec from the last project, being stale if someone is not charged with maintaining them. These should be reviewed on a regular basis, about every 3 years. Your masters should include options used most often in your practice, but not necessarily every option available. The manufacturers listed should be in business and the products currently offered. After you have made sure your master is current, edit it for your project; not all options will apply. Energy and building code changes, construction practice, design practice are changing more frequently. How do your specifications keep pace with change? Your client

also expects a value; quality at a competitive price. Within the design concept, there has to be provisions for product alternatives.

What about a commercial master specification system? Even the best systems are not "Specs for Dummies." An appropriate product still needs to be selected. The selected product should be vetted against various code and performance requirements as well as aesthetic consideration. Then the master needs to be edited to match the selection. Your favorite manufacturer may not be listed or there may be some special local requirements. Even a comprehensive master may not contain all of the options required for your project so some word-smithing may be required.

Do you write something from scratch using available resources? This is probably the most difficult task any specification writer faces. While an experienced spec writer may edit a master in 15 minutes or less, doing a scratch spec may take much, much longer. The project requirements need to be matched against the product to develop the salient characteristics required, and the product needs to be verified against what these characteristics. What about warranties, submittals, field quality control, and fire resistance? This is not a task for the faint of heart.

The truth is that a good specifier may use all of these approaches in developing specifications for a project. Each incorporates some type of intelligence and corporate memory that may be extremely useful. For some work results, the commercial masters (with editing) work best, for others, a good manufacturer's guide spec is indispensable. If your office masters are well maintained, they contain your firm's memory of what went right, what went wrong, and steps to take to make sure whatever went wrong doesn't happen again. A good office specification master should reflect a pallet of about 80 percent of the products, materials and equipment that are frequently used.

A large or medium architectural or engineering firm with at least 30 architects or engineers should consider having an experienced specification writer trained to maintain the office master based upon office practice and experience, edit the master for project specifications, and advise the design and technical staff as to the merits of proposed materials, systems and equipment for a particular project. This is especially important on additions that must match previous work, but must also comply with current energy and building codes.

**"Good judgment comes from experience, and experience comes from bad judgment."**

Barry LePatner, Esq.

... Just our opinion

J. Peter Jordan, FCSI, CCS, AIA, LEED AP  
Donald F. Smith, Jr., CSI, CCS, RA, LEED™ AP



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## September Through October 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<i>Aug 26</i>	27	28	29	30	31	<i>Sept 1</i>
2	3 <i>Labor Day</i>	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11 <i>CSI National Convention—Phoenix, AZ</i>	12 <i>CSI National Convention—Phoenix, AZ</i>	13 <i>CSI National Convention—Phoenix, AZ</i>	14 <i>CSI National Convention—Phoenix, AZ</i>	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24 <i>CSI Houston Board / Chapter Mtg.—HESS</i>	25	26	27	28	29
30	<i>Oct 1</i>	2	3	4	5	6 <i>SC Region Planning Mtg, Austin TX</i>
7 <i>SC Region-Planning Mtg, Austin, TX</i>	8	9 <i>Planning Mtg—Louscan Library</i>	10	11	12	13
14	15 <i>CSI Houston Board / Chapter Mtg.—HESS</i>	16	17	18	19	20
21/28	22/29	23/30	24/31	25	26	27