July 31, 2025

Specifications Section

Telephone 515.239.1742

Requirements for Preparing and Submitting Special Provisions

Special Provisions (SP) are defined in the Standard Specifications as “additions and modifications to the Standard, General Supplemental, Developmental, and Supplemental Specifications covering conditions peculiar to an individual project.” Special Provisions are required whenever the work intended cannot be covered by the Standard or Supplemental Specifications. Sometimes the work is generally covered by the existing specifications, but the bid items are not exactly as needed. In these situations, all that are needed is a Method of Measurement and Basis of Payment; however, it must be clear to the bidder what specifications cover the type of work being anticipated. This white paper describes the expectations of Special Provisions. In the event there are any questions please contact the Specifications Section.

All Projects

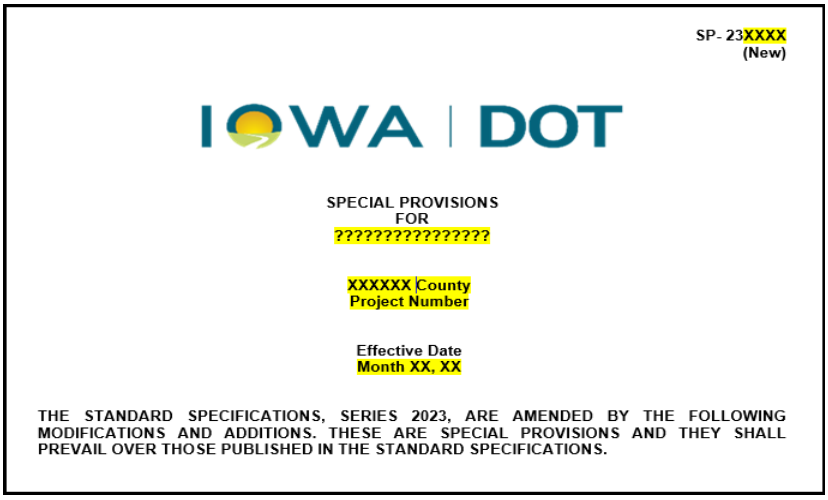
All information for a particular SP shall be in one file with consistent formatting and Arial font, size 10 (use <Ctrl> A to select all the text before changing to Arial 10 font).

Each SP shall include only one area of work.

All SPs shall be reviewed for contradictions to and duplication of the Standard Specifications prior to submittal. The SP shall support the plans and shall be consistent and accurate. It shall meet all of the requirements and areas of concentration in this document. Drawings, figures, pictures, etc. shall be placed in the plans and not in the SP. If there are less than 1 1/2 pages of typed text, the information could be added to the plans and not placed in an SP.

Each SP shall begin with the following information, with the information highlighted completed for each specific project. Use the following template: **SP_Cover_Format.doc**, a Word document with minimal information completed. Highlighted information in sample below shall be typed in by the designer.

Also, a header shall be placed on each page, except the first page, with the SP number and Page X of Y.



SP- 23XXXX
(New)

SPECIAL PROVISIONS
FOR
????????????????

XXXXXX County
Project Number

Effective Date
Month XX, XX

THE STANDARD SPECIFICATIONS, SERIES 2023, ARE AMENDED BY THE FOLLOWING MODIFICATIONS AND ADDITIONS. THESE ARE SPECIAL PROVISIONS AND THEY SHALL PREVAIL OVER THOSE PUBLISHED IN THE STANDARD SPECIFICATIONS.

Projects with State Route Project Numbers - additional requirements

On or before "Plan Turn-in" day, SPs for projects shall be entered into Masterworks. City names, street addresses, and measurements should not be included in the titles of SP's. That information is in the project number and elsewhere in the contract documents.

A Word document (.doc) file of the SP(s) shall be submitted in Masterworks when the SP title is entered. The file name shall be as follows:

ccrrrppp.doc
cc: two digit county number
rrr: three digit route number
ppp: three digit paren number
NOTE: if more than one SP is submitted for a project, a short but clear title of the SP shall be added after the ppp number and before the period.

Please confirm that you are entering the SP in the appropriate folder in Masterworks.

A training video named "Phase turn-in.mp4" is available on ProjectWise which demonstrates submitting special provisions:
pw:\\NTPwint1.dot.int.lan:PWMain\Documents\Highway\ProjectManagement\Masterworks Training\

When entering an SP into Masterworks, please fill out the following fields (at a minimum):
- Title
- Document Type (Specifications)
- Specification Type
- Phase Number
- Effective Date
- SP Title

The Workflow field should already be pre-filled with "Specifications Engineer Approval".

Masterworks will automatically assign an SP number once the Specifications Section has reviewed and approved the SP.

The Specifications Section will update the SP number, including header information on each sheet, and develop an Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) file for use on the proposal and contract. On or around the advertisement date, SP's will be posted to the webpage: https://iowadot.gov/specifications/Special-Provisions-SP/2023 for future reference by the designers.

If a project moves to another letting without changes to the SP, no action is needed. If a project moves to another letting with changes to the SP, the following steps shall be followed:

1. The changes should be made using gray shading (for new language) and gray shading and strikethrough (for deleted language).
2. The SP should be re-entered in Masterworks to receive a new SP number. If it is after turn-in, contact Eric Johnsen (eric.johnsen@iowadot.us or 515-239-1662) to enter into Masterworks.
3. The "(New)" under the SP Number shall be changed to "(Replaces SP-23XXXX)".
4. Effective Date changed to the new letting date.

Local Systems and Systems Planning Projects - additional requirements

SPs for local projects shall be submitted to the Local Systems Bureau for review prior to plan turn-in. The cover page of the document shall include the proposed SP title, project number, and effective date. The Local Systems Bureau will submit the SP in Masterworks for the designer following review.

Masterworks will automatically assign an SP number once the Specifications Section has reviewed and approved the SP.

The Specifications Section will update the SP number, including header information on each sheet, and develop an Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) file for use on the proposal and contract. On or around the advertisement date, SP's will be posted to the webpage: https://iowadot.gov/specifications/Special-Provisions-SP/2023 for future reference by the designers.

Areas of concentration for SP review:

1. Non-Standard Bid Items

- Bid Items not covered by the Standard Specifications, but the work description, materials, and construction details are already covered; only need a Method of Measurement and Basis of Payment and a reference to the Standard Specifications.
- Work not similar to existing specification language requires that a Special Provision be written to cover the work requirements; refer to Item 2, Five-Part Specification Format, for proper format.

2. The Five-Part Specification Format should be used as a general practice.

A three-part format is often used which is usually General, Procedure, and Measurement and Payment. It is crucial that the five areas listed below be addressed no matter what the format is.

- Description
- Material
- Construction
- Method of Measurement
- Basis of Payment

3. Acceptable entities and references.

These are crucial because they are defined in the Standard Specifications and are consistently used.

- Contracting Authority* – not Owner
- Engineer* – not Owner, Architect, or Inspector
- Contractor* - not Prime or subcontractor.
- Professional Engineer licensed in the State of Iowa* - when referencing a licensed engineer.
- plans – not drawings unless referring to shop drawings
- contract documents – not plans and specifications
  * always capitalize as shown.

4. Never use gender references. Self-explanatory.

- never use his or he - Use they, their, the Contractor, etc., or reword the sentence.
- quality - not workmanship
- flaggers - not flagmen

5. Correct Specification designations.

These shall be used for consistency. Also, every reference should be checked to verify their existence and accuracy.

Section 2601
Article 2601.05
Article 2601.05, A
Article 2601.05, A, 4
Article 2601.05, A, 4, b
All designations shall be followed by “of the Standard Specifications”.

6. Numbers

- Numerals are always used if designating a technical measurement (i.e. 5 feet, 20 pounds).
- Write out the number if designating a quantity (i.e. five containers, four copies of the manual) unless the number is greater than ten.
- Do not use hyphens between a whole number and a fraction (i.e. 8 3/4 inches).
- Do use hyphens between a quantity number and the number for the unit (i.e. 16-1 inch valves).
- Use only English units, unless a test or situation requires referencing the metric system.
- Symbols are not used (i.e. feet, not ‘; 2 inches by 4 inches, not 2”x4”) unless in a table because of problems with electronic file conversions and should be checked in the pdf file that is to be submitted to the Office of Contracts.

7. Index and Titles (if applicable).

- The index entry and the titles of the sections must be identical.
- Always write out "and" - never use "&" as it is considered unprofessional and may not convert accurately.

8. Abbreviations

The first time an abbreviation is used for the title of a book, agency, organization, etc., the full title or name should be used with the abbreviation in parentheses following unless included in Article 1101.02 of the Standard Specifications then the abbreviation is all that is required.

9. Manufacturers/Products.

End result specifications are most desirable, but if a product or manufacturer must be used, a minimum of three products shall be listed. Proprietary products may only be specified in certain cases. Such cases typically include:

- A particular product is required to match an existing system. For example, when expanding or upgrading an existing traffic signalization system, a particular product may be necessary for the system to function effectively.
- No suitable alternative products are available. Only one product will adequately satisfy the needs of the project.
- A new product that is part of a research and evaluation program sponsored by the Iowa DOT. If part of such a program, new and innovative products may be tested by use in highway construction projects.

Approval of the use of proprietary products require a Public Interest Finding (PIF) to be submitted to the Contracts and Specifications Bureau for approval.

10. Referencing.

- When referencing work the Contractor is responsible for always use the verb “shall”.
- When referencing work the Engineer (Contracting Authority) is responsible for always use the verb “will”.
- Do not use a number when referencing a SP in the plans. Use the exact title as listed in the PSS. If an appropriate title is not found in the PSS, contact the Specifications Section.
- All references shall be included in the documentation, or be to known publications.
- ASTM references should be in this format: ASTM C 103.
- SUDAS is not an acceptable reference document.