

## **CSI Master Format Changes Review**

### **REVIEW:**

Contractors need written specifications that explain every detail of a project before construction can begin. They need bidding requirements, contract requirements, and written specifications for every detail of the project. For over 40 years CSI has aided the non-residential building industry with guidelines for the design, construction and specifications of most projects in North America. By standardizing such information CSI's MasterFormat facilitates communication between architects, specifiers, contractors and suppliers about construction projects, which helps them meet building owners requirements, timelines and budgets. It is revised every 5-7 years to keep pace with changing times and technologies. The latest version was released to the public in April 2004. Transition materials will become available throughout the year and the construction industry will adopt it over the following 24 months.

### **THE NATURE OF A CONTRACT DEFINES THE CONTRACTOR.**

The type of contract that it fulfills defines any contractor. Since electrical contractors bid and fulfill electrical portions of projects they have had to respond to all portions of work contained within division 16. This up until now has typically contained every electrical circuit whether it is for power or signal. Data communications contractors have proliferated since the mid 1980's as their need arose. They get their work either from the owner directly, outside of the MasterFormat, or as a subcontractor to the Div. 16 electrical contractor. This new document will segment the scope of work into several new divisions each made up of specific sections. It will also give owners, architects and engineers the confidence to allow sensitive data and security work to coexist in a construction setting, under the contract of the general contractor.

### **WHAT IS NEW ABOUT CSI's MASTERFORMAT 04?**

This latest revision contains the most changes ever. The previous 16 divisions have been expanded to 49. Not all are populated. Many numbers are reserved for future use. Divisions 1-14 that deal with business issues, structural, and architectural aspects of building construction remain nearly unchanged. The new version contains new divisions to address rapidly advancing technologies such as computer and telecommunications networks, integrated building automation systems and electronic safety and security.

### **WHAT ABOUT DIVISION 17?**

In recent years telecommunications groups have called for adding a 17th division. It was proposed to encompass computer technology, communications and other low voltage systems that are rapidly increasing in scope, diversity, and complexity. Masterformat 04 addresses these in new divisions. For example division 27 deals with communications, 26 addresses electronic safety and security.

### **WHERE WILL ELECTRICAL AND DATACOM SPECIFICS APPEAR IN THE NEW MASTERFORMAT 04?**

A new grouping of trades will be labeled the Facility Services Group. It will be labeled with division numbers between 20-29. *Specifically:*

Division 21 - Fire Suppression (formerly in division 13)

Division 22 - Plumbing (formerly division 15)

Division 23 - HVAC (formerly division 15)

Division 25 - Integrated Automation (formerly found in division 13)

Division 26 - Electrical (formerly division 16)

Division 27 - Communication (formerly found within division 16)

Division 28 - Electronic Safety & Security (formerly found within division 13) New division numbers 30-39 will be specific to Site and Infrastructure work.

New division numbers 40-49 will be specific to Process Equipment required for the purpose of the project.

### **WHAT DOES THE NEW MASTERFORMAT 04 MEAN TO YOU AND YOUR COMPANY?**

General contractors will have a vehicle to award direct contracts to specialist contractors.

If you previously quoted sub-bid packages to a primary division vendor you may now become a prime for your specialty. If you previously required sub-bids from others in order to fulfill a division your new scope of work will be more limited to your specialty.

In order to bid the new divisions you will need the particular competency required within your firm, as competition from specialists will increase.

Owners will be less likely to contract directly with specialist contractors. They will have more confidence that the most qualified vendors will respond to their needs.

### **HOW CAN YOU CAPITALIZE ON THESE CHANCES FOR YOUR COMPANY?**

Become knowledgeable on the subject. Be aware that these changes are in the works and devise a plan.

If you are an electrical contractor many areas outside of your core competency will be removed from your contracts. If you have already invested in self-performing datacom, fire alarm, IBS or CCTV/security work you will bid each separately but give your general contractor the benefits of a single vendor. If you are a data communications or other specialist contractor you will need to establish relationships with general contractors and be prepared to do business directly with them. You may internally organize your company's talents and procedures to follow these new divisions. You might launch a marketing campaign that follows the new divisions.