



Ontario Association of Architects



Joint Best Practice Statement Questions during the Bid Period and Requests for Information (RFIs) during Construction

Issued June 27, 2011

This document is issued jointly by the Ontario Association of Architects and the Ontario General Contractors Association and provides information relative to best practices in regard to dealing with Questions during the Bid Period and Requests for Information (RFIs) during Construction.

When drawings and specifications are ready for bids, accurate and complete information is vital to allowing for the submission of complete bids as well as the subsequent construction.

Questions during the Bid Period

Questions during the bid period and RFIs during construction serve a major purpose in addressing missing or incomplete information vital to a successful project. It is in everyone's best interest to ensure that all information for bids and construction is complete.

Architects should clearly identify to their clients that the quality and completeness of documents is key to avoiding RFIs, change orders, disputes, and to obtaining an accurate bid.

A clear process for the submission and response to questions during the bid period should be specified in the bid documents. This should include submission procedure and format, time of response and a cut off date prior to the bid closing.

For example, in the Instruction to Bidders, questions should be required to be posed in writing and answered through addenda to all bidders.

Bidders should review documents in their entirety to determine areas of concern, and provide the consultants with a comprehensive list of questions instead of submitting large numbers of individual questions.

Contractors should advise subtrades to follow the same practice by including a statement in request for their bids.

RFIs During Construction

To achieve fewer RFIs and change orders during the construction period, it is strongly recommended that owners place sufficient resource time and finance towards providing complete and accurate design documents and specifications.

During construction, contractors must avoid submitting RFIs on information readily available within the documents.

Prior to starting construction, once again review documents in their entirety to determine areas of concern. A standard format should be agreed to for submission of RFIs as well as response time.

General contractors should reinforce the same practice with the trades by including a statement in purchase orders or subtrade contracts and also review RFIs from the trades before sending them on to the consultant.

During construction, it is recognized that there may be a need for RFIs as issues become apparent. There is more need to provide clarity on an isolated issue. During construction, these practices will help avoid delays in obtaining a response.

It is recommended that during the weekly site meetings, RFIs be reviewed to determine if there is any redundancy within them and record receipt of RFIs by recording them within the minutes or in an RFI "Log".

By following these simple recommendations, consultants, general contractors and subtrades can avoid lost time due to redundant or unnecessary questions.

Both organizations wish to avoid the inclusion of clauses that allow an owner to charge contractors for asking unnecessary questions that cost the consultant and owner time and money.

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