

APWA “Specs in Motion” Training – FAQ

General Specifications & Updates

Q: Is the requirement to use the 2026 Standard Specifications for all projects or only Federal-aid projects?

A: The April 1, 2026 advertisement deadline applies to **FHWA-funded projects**. It may also apply to other projects depending on grant or agency requirements—confirm with your funding source and contracting agency.

Q: Why were changes made in the 2026 Standard Specifications?

A: WSDOT reorganized content by moving temporary construction items into a new division and relocating items with bid prices out of Division 1 for clarity and consistency.

Q: Will a new Standard Specifications book be released every year?

A: Yes, annual updates are anticipated.

Q: When were the 2026 APWA GSPs released?

A: February 17, 2026.

Q: Will the Spec Check-in Form be updated with 2026 GSP changes?

A: Yes, updates were completed (dated March 2026).

Local Programs (LP) Review & PSE Submittals

Q: How should agencies account for additional review time with Divisions 1–9 required for LP review?

A:

- Submit **Divisions 1–9 as a single document**.
- LP’s role is **compliance (not QA/QC)** with FHWA requirements.
- Providing complete specs upfront can reduce follow-up requests.
- More project-specific specifications may increase review time—use APWA/WSDOT GSPs when possible.

Q: For WSDOT review, should all specifications be in track changes or just Divisions 1–2?

A: For FHWA-funded projects, submit **Divisions 1–9 in track changes**.

Q: When submitting for PS&E approval, should all agency-specific specs be highlighted?

A: Highlight **Divisions 1 and 2**.

Q: Do Spec Check-in Forms change regularly?

A: Yes, they are updated as federal and state requirements change.

Q: How can we ensure we have the most current Check-in Form?

A: Current version is available on WSDOT Local Agency GSP website. Clear your browser history and redownload.

GSPs & Specification Structure

Q: Why can't utility work be included in Divisions 10 or 11 or as an appendix?

A: For FHWA-funded (tied) projects, all specifications must be incorporated into Divisions 1–9.

Q: Is there a logic to not being able to add Division 10? Because if we have a clear set of specials that have been developed it's frustrating that we'd have to keep checking to make sure that they aren't accidentally overriding WSDOT/APWA sections.

A: The Standard Specifications has vacant Sections that may be used for Non-Standard items. There is also no limit to adding additional Sections to any existing Divisions. Anything being achieved by adding a Division 10 can be achieved by replacing a vacant Section or creating a new one.

The goal is to provide consistent formatted project specifications for our Administrators and Contractor's aligning with the foundation being the Spec Book. Creating additional Divisions is creating a non-standard format that has a higher risk of errors due to cross referencing and has historically been misused to avoid regulatory review. To maintain a positive relationship with WSDOT HQ Local Programs, we respect their request to not allow any new Divisions.

Q: Why did WSDOT move bases out to GSP?

A: WSDOT does not use bases on their typical projects, it is used more by local agencies. They removed it from the SS book but kept it as a GSP so agencies (and WSDOT on needed occasions) would have the spec available for use.

Q: Can APWA consider additional GSPs or revisions?

A: Yes. Submit suggestions with proposed language to:
specifications.apwa.wa@gmail.com

Q: What changes are included in the updated Record Drawings GSP?

A:

- Removed references to a field office
 - Added project-specific fill-in sections
 - Added submittal instruction requirements
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Federal Requirements & Compliance

Q: Does CFR override RCW for subcontractor requirements?

A: Yes, CFR requirements apply only to federally funded projects.

Q: Why is DBE included on the Bidder Questionnaire?

A: The FSBE program is part of the DBE program.

Q: How do DBE requirements apply to projects already in construction?

A: Projects executed prior to October 3, 2025 are **not required to zero out DBE goals**.

Refer to [Local Programs Bulletin 2026-01-R0](#).

Q: Are apprenticeship goals required on federally funded projects?

A: No for FHWA funded projects, but other funding sources may require them. Confirm early with LP and your funding coordinator.

Q: Which BABA material certification forms are needed for projects in construction phase?

A: Follow the WSDOT 1-06 GSP in your contract provisions. It currently references two forms:

Certification of Materials Origin (Required for Acceptance of Manufactured Products and Construction Materials) 350-108

<https://wsdot.wa.gov/publications/fulltext/forms/350-108.PDF>

Certification of Materials Origin (Required for Steel or Iron Materials) 350-111

<https://wsdot.wa.gov/publications/fulltext/forms/350-111.PDF>

Utilities & Potholing

Q: What is the basis for utilities being responsible for locating their facilities?

A: The 18th Amendment of Washington State Constitution prohibits use of gas tax and vehicle license fee of the motor vehicle fund to pay for relocation of utilities within agencies right of way. Often a portion of federal funds includes these fees. Work with your Program Management team to determine if your project includes these fees.

See [23CFR645.107\(B\)](#) Prohibits eligibility for participation when using MVET/License fees are included. Work with the Program Management team to determine if these fees are included.

Q: Can FHWA funds be used for potholing?

A: Potholing is not eligible for FHWA reimbursement if use of gas tax and vehicle license fees from the motor vehicle fund are included. Work with your Project Management team to determine if these fees are included. Agencies may use non MVET local funds.

Q: What if utilities only provide approximate locations?

A:

- Engage utilities early in design.
- Reinforce franchise agreement responsibilities for relocation/adjustment.
- Agencies may perform potholing at their own expense if needed.

Q: Does FHWA cover potholing during construction?

A: No. The same policy applies—**not eligible for reimbursement.**

Licensing & Contractor Requirements

Q: How long does contractor licensing take?

A: Approximately **8-10 weeks** after receipt of a complete application ([per WA L&I](#)).

General / Miscellaneous

Q: Is there a limit on agency “self-help” (self-performed work)?

A: Yes. Limits are based on “**Prudent Utility Management**” per [RCW 35.23.352](#).

Q: How are proprietary items approved for Federal-aid projects?

A: Approval must follow **FHWA requirements** (e.g., public interest findings or approved equals). Coordinate with Local Programs.

Q: Any guidance on estimating traffic control overruns?

A: Methods vary—agencies should use historical data, project complexity, and peer input to improve estimates.

Q: Who can I reach out to if I have questions about using the PSE Word spec software?

A: Contact you Local Programs staff for a resource

Q: Why has the liquidated damages calculation changed from the formula to calculation?

A: The LDs were revised in 2021 after collaboration between WSDOT and the AGC through the [WSDOT/AGC Administration Team](#). The formula provided in the WSDOT/APWA Specifications that had been used for a long time, using contract time and cost, was no longer compliant with 23 CFR §635.127. As an example, the formula provides for a disproportionate amount of LDs for high cost, short duration projects, like Asphalt Overlays.

LDs are not a penalty, but a recovery by the contracting agency for damages caused by the delay. Damages, as in actual costs that the contracting agency has due to the delay in contract completion. Common costs are estimated agency staff and consultant costs for the additional time required to manage the contract beyond the time established.

At first FHWA allowed the use of the LD formula for local agencies, as the formula seemed suitable for the typical local agency project, though no longer the case. Local Programs has since developed a [spreadsheet](#) to assist local agencies in calculating LDs.

For more details on this, see [LP Bulletin 2024-02 RS](#) – April 10, 2025
