

How to Make a Submittal – Check, Check, Check!

Executive Summary. Making submittals on a construction project is art and science. Increase your success rate on submittals using this method! Check, check, check!

What's a submittal in construction? Buildings, dams, roads, et cetera, are all built using materials like concrete, aggregate, tile, paint, overhead cranes, toilets, and electrical wire. But, it's not as simple as just ordering the material and installing it. Many owners, especially public owners, require that each of these materials be approved via a "submittal" before it is put in place on the project.

A submittal is a document package which explains on paper (or digitally) what is going to be installed. The engineer or architect can then see in this submittal package from the Contractor whether or not the material proposed satisfies the design intent and the Contract Documents.

Be the engineer. The submittal you're making has to satisfy the specification. And, here's news – the review of a submittal is not rocket science. Engineers are busy people and all they're going to do when you make a submittal is open up the specification and make sure the material meets or exceeds what's required of the project. They will take the specification and check each paragraph to ensure that the material is good. Although some contracts require it, you might as well simply take out the specification yourself and do the Engineer's work: check each paragraph in the specification that is met and those that aren't met, simply state the deviation. The engineer is likely going to check your work to keep you honest, but if you can assist with this review it can take days off the return time and it can build up credibility between Contractor and Engineer.



Check, check, check from Rounders.

Give me an example. As an example, let's take a bike rack and shelter submittal. In paragraph 1.04 of the Project Specification 02870 from our job, there are two submittals required: product data and shop drawings. We're going to make the product data submittal.

There will be three main parts of the submittal: the cover sheet, the specification accompaniment, and the actual product data. The cover sheet is something you will make from your computer with your company's logo on it. The product data is

the actual manufacturer's or supplier's literature explaining their product. The specification accompaniment is the new trick you're learning today.

The specification accompaniment is the excerpt from the specification which lists the product requirements. You as the submittal preparer simply markup with simple checkmarks and notes of deviation what your proposed product complies with, or doesn't.

So, here we go with an example. This would be the "checked off" specification accompaniment in your submittal package:

SECTION 02870	BIKE RACK AND SHELTER
PART 1 - GENERAL	
1.01	DESCRIPTION:
A.	This Section includes providing all material, labor, tools, and equipment for installation of a bike rack and shelter as indicated on the Plans and Contract Documents and as specified in this Section.
1.02	SUMMARY:
A.	Section Includes:
	1. Eight (8) stall minimum bike rack.
	2. Bike rack shelter.
1.03	REFERENCES:
A.	ASTM International (ASTM):
	1. ASTM A36: Standard Specification for Carbon Structural Steel
	2. ASTM A53: Standard Specification for Pipe, Steel, Black and Hot-Dipped, Zinc-Coated, Welded and Seamless
	3. ASTM A511: Standard Specification for Seamless Stainless Steel Mechanical Tubing and Hollow Bar
	4. ASTM A1008: Standard Specification for Steel, Sheet, Cold-Rolled, Carbon, Structural, High-Strength Low-Alloy, High-Strength Low-Alloy with Improved Formability, Solution Hardened, and Bake Hardened
1.04	SUBMITTALS:
A.	Submit the following in accordance with Section 01300 Submittals.
	1. Product Data: Physical descriptions of product features, bicycle parking capacity, dimensions, shape, installation hardware requirements, setback requirements and spacing, and finish options for each bicycle dock.
	2. Shop Drawings: For bike rack and bike shelter.
PART 2 - PRODUCTS	
2.01	MANUFACTURER:
A.	Bike Rack:
	1. Ground Control Systems Hoop Runner Bicycle Rack HR100 or approved substitute.

To be presented in a later submittal.

HR200 model to be used because HR100 is no longer made by manufacturer.



B. Bike Shelter:



1. Ground Control Systems Pinnacle Bike Shelter P0912 or approved substitute.

2.02 MATERIALS

A. Bike Rack:



1. Hollow structural section steel

B. Bike Shelter:



1. Roof: Translucent polycarbonate structured sheet.



2. Structure: ASTM 36 Schedule 40 steel framing.

2.03 FINISHES:

A. Bike Rack:

1. ~~Black Duraplas~~ or approved substitute.

Midnight Sky by Kethwait (approved via Substitute Request 002)

2. Galvanized finish

B. Bike Shelter:

1. ~~Black Duraplas~~ or approved substitute.

Midnight Sky by Kethwait (approved via Substitute Request 002)

2. Hot-dipped galvanized.

PART 3 - EXECUTION

3.01 EXAMINATION:

- A. Examine footprint to ensure conditions are adequate for installation. Do not proceed with installation if conditions are not adequate for install. Notify Officer-in-Charge if conditions are unsatisfactory.

3.02 PREPARATION:

- A. The location of the bike shelter shall be flat, level, square, accurate for alignment, and correctly located for the installation of the bike rack and shelter.

3.03 INSTALLATION:

- A. Bicycle rack is embedded into concrete base with anchor rods.

3.04 CLOSEOUT ACTIVITIES:

- A. Provide in accordance with Section 01700 Contract Closeout.

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3.05 MEASUREMENT AND PAYMENT:

- A. Payment for work covered by this Section shall be included in the lump sum cost of the item in the Proposal Schedule "Civil Site Work".

END OF SECTION 02870

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Assume the Engineer knows nothing. You are the Contractor and you know your work. The Engineer knows his or her work. I make these statements because when you markup these specifications, you should assume the Engineer is not up to speed on the construction materials industry and why your submittal is so heavy in deviations:

- Do not assume that he knows that stainless steel isn't available because of a Ukraine conflict and this is why you're submitting on fiberglass.
- Do not assume she knows that Alabama is where ductile iron pipe is made and a hurricane just took out the largest manufacturing plants and this is why you're submitting on PVC pipe.

You have to explain these things and treat them like they know nothing (but, respectfully). If anything, overcommunicate!



My story. A lot of engineers are consultants. This means that they do a lot of jobs at one time. They juggle a lot. And you may be on one project only. My point is that by the time they come up to speed on your job, he or she may have lost an hour or two. The quicker they get up to speed on your submittal, the quicker they can answer. So, if you "do their job for them", it is good for you and your project. If you're of the mindset of "to heck with you Scott, I'm not doing their job", my response is "well, you wanna be right, or you want a submittal back quickly?!"

Check, check, check!

Work safe!