

Facilities Planning

Newsletter 93 – November 2007

Get to Know us Better:

Please welcome Crystal Bridges who joined Facilities Planning in October 2007 as a clerk. She is a 2007 graduate of Columbia High School in East Greenbush and brings with her a fresh new perspective and eagerness to learn about the School Construction Project process.

Crystal's family has resided in the Rensselaer County area for most of her life and includes two sisters, a brother and many pets. She hopes to attend college part-time in the spring to work towards a degree.

2007 Annual Visual Inspection Report:

As stated in the Newsletter last month, the instructions and reporting document for the Annual Visual Inspections are available on our web site.

<https://www.p12.nysed.gov/facplan/BldgCondSurv.htm>

Allowances:

Based on the volume of construction we have experienced at Facilities Planning and through our discussions with Architects, Engineers, Contractors, and School Administrators, we have been asked to provide some background for the use of Allowances.

Allowances are not required to complete a construction project. They are incorporated for the convenience of the owner. On occasion, Facilities Planning has requested architects and engineers to change allowances listed in their specifications. Please be aware that any changes we have requested to specifications have been predicated by complications we are aware of from construction in the past. We have not previously provided any guidelines for the use or reporting of allowances, but their increased use and the difficulties we have seen warrant this guidance to the field.

For the future please follow these minimum requirements when incorporating allowances into construction projects.

- The total value of allowances listed in the specification should be limited to 5% of the estimated costs listed on the FPF form for each trade.
- If a specific item can be bid, an allowance can not be provided to purchase that item.
- The purchase of proprietary items by allowance without the appropriate standardization is not allowed. The installation of a proprietary item by allowance without the appropriate standardization is not allowed.
- All allowances must be clearly identified in the bid documents as a specific dollar amount.
- Use of allowances must be recorded through a change order or similar procedure. Any work performed through a disbursement from an allowance is a change to the contract and must be submitted and approved by Facilities Planning in the same manner as a change order. A Change Order Certification must be provided. The Final Cost Report forms will be updated shortly to reflect the requirement for reporting allowance expenditures.

Agency Inspection Requirements:

Schools are subject to many different inspections by agencies in addition to SED. A few of these agencies (not all) and some of their related concerns are the Department of Labor (asbestos), Local and State Departments of Health (kitchens, pools, & septic systems), Office of Children and Family Services (Day Care), Department of Environmental Conservation (SEQRA, tanks, hazardous materials, erosion control, & wet lands), SHPO (historic buildings). Facilities Planning works closely with these agencies to abide by their design regulations and for coordination when reporting deficiencies found during their inspections of new or existing facilities. It is this cooperation that helps all agencies help the school districts maintain a high degree of regulatory and code compliance for the health and safety of our children and the staff of the public schools and BOCES' of New York State. Similarly as we have requested in Newsletter #38, we would ask the districts, architects, and engineers to work in cooperation with these agencies for the betterment of all.

Counterfeit "Square D" Circuit Breaker Recall:

There has been a recall of Counterfeit "Square D" Circuit Breakers. The recalled circuit breakers labeled "Square D" are counterfeit and could fail to trip when they are required to do so, posing a fire hazard to consumers. For details and models involved, please link to

<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prerel/prhtml08/08054.html>. Please check your facilities and follow the on-line instructions if you have any of these models in your buildings.

An Index of our Newsletters is available on our web site at

<https://www.p12.nysed.gov/facplan/NewsLetters.htm>.

If you would like to have this Newsletter sent directly to you by e-mail, please send your e-mail address to Curt Miller at hmiller2@mail.nysed.gov.

Please continue to send in your comments and requests. If you have a subject you would like addressed, feedback on the material you read, input or general comments we are happy to hear from you.