Specifications for Contractors, Estimators and Suppliers  

This session approaches the topic from the point of view that the contractor, estimator and supplier, recognizing that these participants are the knowledge keepers responsible for delivery of means and methods required to complete the project.

Starting off with a brief history of specifications and introduction to UniFormat and MasterFormat, and the relationship that these documents have to cost estimating, project planning and assigning trade responsibility. The session will identify how using the different specification formats are used during pre-construction, construction and completion. Size matters, and can be used to ‘right-size’ the written information to suit the technical needs of the project. There will be an open and frank discussion on why contractors and estimators find the specification troublesome using examples illustrating well-crafted and defective specifications.

Aspects of legal liability with regards to interpretation of the document will also be covered, including dispelling myths such as ‘specifications overrule drawings’ (they take precedence – and there is a big difference)… Other topics include how the document needs to change to match the form of contract; collaborative opportunities based on the form of contract delivery and conclude with a guide to reading specifications at each phase of project delivery to glean essential information needed to prepare bids and administer the contract

Keith Robinson has worked as a specifications writer since 1981, joining Cohos Evamy in December 1997 and which became DIALOG in September of 2010. DIALOG provides fully integrated, all discipline architectural, engineering, interior design and urban planning services from four studios located in Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary and Toronto.

Keith has provided technical solutions to a variety of major architectural projects across Canada and overseas and is currently responsible for preparing specifications and contract documents, providing technical support and design assistance for DIALOG’s most complex projects.

Outside of DIALOG, Keith instructs several courses for the University of Alberta Extension in their Construction Administration program ranging from sustainable material selection, understanding specifications and blueprint reading. He is an active member on several international committees including OmniClass and the MasterFormat Maintenance Task Team. Keith currently sits on several standards review committees for CSA, ASTM and NFPA and provides commentary relating to performance issues affecting architectural elements. He is also a member of CSC’s Executive Council as Registrar.

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