

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions About *MasterFormat*[™] 2004 Edition November 2004

1. What is *MasterFormat*[™]?

MasterFormat is the most widely used standard for organizing specifications and other written information for commercial and institutional building projects in the U.S. and Canada. It provides a master list of divisions, and section numbers and titles within each division, to follow in organizing information about a facility's construction requirements and associated activities. Standardizing the presentation of such information improves communication among all parties involved in construction projects. That helps the project team deliver structures to owners according to their requirements, timelines, and budgets. *MasterFormat* is a product of the Construction Specifications Institute (CSI) and Construction Specifications Canada.

2. Why was *MasterFormat* revised?

Construction methods and materials constantly evolve. Accordingly, CSI revises *MasterFormat* every five to seven years. Prior to the 2004 edition, the last update was in 1995.

The 2004 edition of *MasterFormat* is so significant because of the leap in construction technology advances that has occurred since the last edition. For example, the scope and complexity of computer systems used in offices and the systems that operate and secure buildings have grown dramatically since 1995. The new edition also provides specification locations for subjects unique to heavy civil engineering projects (roads, bridges, etc.) and industrial construction (factories and power plants) that were not offered before.

3. What process was used to revise and expand *MasterFormat*?

A task team that included architects, specifiers, engineers, contractors, and owners was formed in 2001. Relying heavily on broad-based industry input, the task team identified what *MasterFormat* users wanted and needed in a new edition. As various drafts of the new version were created, the task team sought feedback through direct contact with major organizations and companies, workshops, meetings, and Internet message boards.

4. When is the new *MasterFormat* due out?

The complete *MasterFormat* 2004 edition is scheduled for release in late 2004. Its section numbers and their titles were posted on CSI's website (www.csinet.org) in June 2004. They can be downloaded in Adobe PDF format at no charge.

5. How is *MasterFormat*'s 2004 edition different from the 1995 edition?

- Many new topics are addressed and many new sections have been added.
- The divisions have been reorganized and their number increased. The first 16 divisions (00-15) cover general construction subjects and are similar to those in the 1995 edition.
- There are separate divisions for plumbing, fire suppression, electrical, communications, integrated building systems, safety and security systems, and heating, ventilating and air conditioning. They are in a new subgroup of divisions called Facility Services.
- There are new divisions for subjects unique to heavy civil construction (roads, bridges, dams, tunnels, utilities, etc.) in the new Site and Infrastructure subgroup.
- New divisions for subjects unique to industrial construction (power plants and factories) have been created. They are in the new Process Equipment subgroup.
- Throughout the new edition, some division numbers are reserved as placeholders, to be used for new topics as they develop in future years.
- A new six-digit section numbering system replaces the five-digit format for the sections within the divisions. The new system creates room for adding many additional sections as needed.

6. How will new divisions affect current *MasterFormat* users?

A top priority in revising *MasterFormat* was to make it as easy as possible for current users to adopt the new edition. For some time, specifiers have had to make do with *MasterFormat*'s 40-year-old 16-division structure. They have put new information not accommodated by the 16-division structure in project manuals using their own logic and creativity. *MasterFormat* 2004 Edition's new divisions and sections make it easier to organize and locate this critical information by providing a uniform structure. Additionally, the new edition's reserved division numbers provide room and flexibility for *MasterFormat* to accommodate future growth in materials and technology without upsetting the overall structure established by the 2004 edition.

7. How did CSI gather input from the industry as *MasterFormat* 2004 Edition's numbers and titles were developed?

A key objective of the *MasterFormat* Expansion Task Team was to get input and participation from as many segments of the commercial/industrial design and construction industry as possible. More than 500 A/E/C organizations were asked to provide information. Task team members were interviewed for dozens of construction trade press articles that publicized the *MasterFormat* expansion project. Input and assistance was received from professionals at large A/E/C firms, construction product representatives, construction managers, and civil engineering and process engineering experts. The task team also heard presentations from various industry groups with concerns the 1995 *MasterFormat* didn't address. Every draft of the new

MasterFormat was posted on CSI's website for comment. The result of those collaborative efforts is *MasterFormat* 2004 Edition.

8. How can I discuss implementation issues concerning *MasterFormat* 2004 or provide input for future enhancements?

Interested parties are encouraged to provide input to CSI so *MasterFormat* can evolve as the built environment evolves. Go to www.csinet.org/masterformat. There you will find information on *MasterFormat* 2004 Edition and also a discussion area. If you have any difficulty, contact CSI's Member Service Center at (800) 689-2900 or at csi@csinet.org.

9. How will CSI help *MasterFormat* users transition to the new edition?

CSI is developing an industry-wide education initiative for *MasterFormat* users and instructors to support the transition to the new edition. For users, CSI will provide education for groups at architectural, engineering and construction firms, government agencies, corporations, and national conferences. Sessions will address the differences between the 1995 and 2004 editions, best-practice concepts, and implementation and transition strategies. Education sessions also will be held at The 49th Annual CSI Show & Convention in Chicago April 20-23, 2005. Also to be launched at that event will be The *MasterFormat* Accredited Instructor Program. It will prepare people from various segments of the industry to teach their colleagues about the new edition, bringing everyone up to speed as quickly as possible.

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