

About MasterFormat™ 2004 Edition

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A Little Background

- Commercial and institutional building design and construction is a \$190 billion industry in the U.S. – (FMI Corporation, January 2004)
- Because so many participants interact on a building project its details must be carefully delineated and communicated. The process begins with the owner's needs, which the architect gives shape. The architect in turn engages specifiers and other consultants to develop the project's particulars.
- Specifications are the detailed written data about a structure's materials, products and systems, ranging from the details of the HVAC system, to the kind of window glass, to the type of doorknobs. A building's specifications are contained in its project manual, developed by architects, specifiers, and engineers. Contractors use the project manual to bid on the project, and the winning bidder uses the manual to construct the building.
- Before the 1960s, standard specifications formats didn't exist. Each architectural, engineering, and contracting firm, as well as every government agency, had its own organizational system. That resulted in confusion and miscommunication among everyone involved in delivering construction projects, which led to costly delays, errors, and omissions.
- In 1962, CSI developed the concept of divisions, and sections within each division, to standardize information in construction project manuals. One year later the 16-division "CSI Format for Building Specifications" was announced. It eventually evolved to become *MasterFormat*™.
- *MasterFormat*™ functions as the "Dewey Decimal System" for organizing specifications and other data for the vast majority of commercial and institutional construction projects in the U.S. and Canada.

The 2004 Edition

- *MasterFormat* 2004 Edition is the most significant revision in the product's 40-year history. As buildings become more complex, the new edition enables specifications writers to cover far more information about a construction project, in much more detail, and in a systematic way. Because the new *MasterFormat* enables more things to be addressed in a project's specifications, there should be fewer delays and changes during construction, which take time and money to address.
- New divisions are added in the 2004 edition for addressing buildings' rapidly developing areas such as telecommunications networks, integrated automation systems, and electronic safety and security systems. New sections have been created to provide room for such things as more safety and security technology for buildings.

(Note: see also "What's Different about MasterFormat 2004 Edition")