



Contracts and Specifications Bureau

Updated 7/30/2025

BidX Questions and Addendums During Advertisement

Purpose of this Document

To convey the expectations for answering BidX questions and requesting addendums once a contract is advertised.

Key Things to Take Away After Reading this Document

1. *Answer BidX questions within 3 days of receiving question*
2. *Reply to all when answering BidX questions or when requesting an addendum*
3. *BidX answers DO NOT change the contract documents. Therefore, if the answer is contrary to the documents, send in an addendum request with your answer.*
4. *Recommendations on whether to do an addendum are found below and depend on critical nature of error or omission and proximity to letting date.*

Period for Receiving BidX Questions

Contracts are advertised for about a month before they let which is about 1.5 months after projects are turned in. During this time the person/persons in charge of the contracts may receive BidX questions from contractor to get clarification, ask for changes, point out errors, etc. These emails are commonly sent to the assistant district engineer and designers for state and federal projects or to the designers and IDOT personnel overseeing the project for local and county projects.

What Should Happen with BidX Questions

Contracts promptly forwards these questions to the appropriate persons as they are received. To answer the question, reply to all on the original email within 3 days of receiving. These answers will then be posted by the Proposal Engineers (Cesar Cintron or Stacy Ryan).

If discussion is needed and is being done by email, please let us know your final response by stating something like: "Please post the following response: *answer to question*." Otherwise, an incomplete/incorrect response may be posted.

Without an addendum, BidX questions can only clarify something that is already in the contract documents. Therefore, a BidX answer should not conflict with the contract documents and instead an addendum should be done, or the answer should be to bid as shown in the contract documents.

If the person to be answering these emails is gone for an extended period during the advertisement, please set up an alternate person to receive and answer these emails and let the Proposal Engineers know.

Answering the BidX Questions

Not Enough Information?

If the question is not clear and cannot be answered: Email back that more clarification is needed. If possible be specific about what is needed such as project paren number, sheet, etc.

How to Answer a BidX Question that Involves a Conflict Between Contract Documents

The following from the Standard Specifications determines what contract document governs.

1105.04 CONFORMITY WITH AND COORDINATION OF THE CONTRACT DOCUMENTS.

A. In case of a discrepancy between contents of the contract documents, the following items listed by descending order shall prevail:

1. Addendum
2. Proposal Form
3. Special Provision
4. Plans
5. Standard Bridge Plans, Standard Culvert Plans, and Standard Road Plans
6. Developmental Specifications
7. Supplemental Specifications
8. General Supplemental Specifications
9. Standard Specifications
10. Materials I.M.
11. Notice to Bidders

If the document that prevails is correct the answer to the question would be to follow that document.

If the document that prevails is incorrect, either an addendum is needed or the question can be answered: bid per the prevailing document and if a change is needed it will be addressed after letting by change/extra work order. If an addendum is desired and time allows (See section Time Frame for Addendums below in this document) follow the addenda part of the instructions at:

https://iowadot.gov/contracts/electronicplansspecs/Plan_Changes_and_Addendums_Contracts.pdf

How to Answer a BidX Question that Involves a Conflict within a Contract Document

Since Iowa is a low bid state the option that is the cheapest would be what the contractor will bid. If that is the option that is desired the BidX question can be answered as such.

If the more expensive option is desired an addendum is needed to correct the documents or the Bidx question can be answered to bid the cheaper option and later the more expensive option can be added by change order. If an addendum is desired and time allows (See section Time Frame for Addendums below in this document) follow the addenda part of the instructions at:

https://iowadot.gov/contracts/electronicplanspecs/Plan_Changes_and_Addendums_Contracts.pdf

How to Answer a BidX Question When the Contract Document is Incorrect

Submit an addendum if time allows (See section Time Frame for Addendums below in this document) and follow the addenda part of the instructions at:

https://iowadot.gov/contracts/electronicplanspecs/Plan_Changes_and_Addendums_Contracts.pdf

Or

If the contract is still biddable, and the change needed isn't large the question can be answered to bid as the documents states and changes may be made after letting by change/ extra work order.

How to Answer a BidX Question When the Contract Document is Missing Information that makes the Contract Unbiddable

Withdraw the contract or submit an addendum if time allows (See section Time Frame for Addendums below in this document) following the addenda part of the instructions at:

https://iowadot.gov/contracts/electronicplanspecs/Plan_Changes_and_Addendums_Contracts.pdf

An example of this would be missing method of measurement or basis of payment information for a 2599 bid item.

Time Frame for Addendums

Addendum submittals are not recommended and are discouraged by FHWA after 10 days prior to the letting date. For example, if letting is on Tuesday, August 17th the date preferred to have addendums submitted would be Friday August 6th. After that Friday, changes to contracts should be limited and answers to question can often be to bid as proposed and changes may be made by extra work order. The following covers some cases where addendums would still be needed, these cover most cases but there can be others:

1. Plans are not biddable without addendum
2. Change in quantity would affect who is awarded the contract (+/- 5% or more change in total contract estimated cost would be a reason to do an addendum late)
3. Change if not made would have a large impact on the final bids and/ or would be difficult to change after letting by change/extra work order

Addendums should not be issued on or after the Thursday before letting. This does not mean we cannot do an addendum, but it should be critical. If an addendum is needed the Monday before letting and is a large in terms of changes or scope the contracts often should be withdrawn. This is addressed on a case by case basis.

Things That are Good to Know

When an addendum is done a new bidding document is put out. If a bidder has already submitted their bid and does not acknowledge the addendum and make required changes their bid will be rejected at letting time.

The AGC has repeatedly asked for more timely answers to their questions on BidX. Please answer as soon as possible and no later than 3 days from when the question was asked.

Please do not wait to do an addendum to see if more questions come in that need an addendum. Large addendums are more difficult to process and increase the chances of errors. Please send addendums as they are ready and needed. Waiting a day to finalize a few different changes is fine but holding off more than that is not advised.