



disguised substitutions

BASIS OF DESIGN PRODUCTS

In our specifications, we document products for the project typically as “BASIS OF DESIGN PRODUCT”, because of these reasons:

- We have had good experience with the product that in some cases goes back years.
- We researched the product carefully, and in doing so, we spend our fee, so it makes good sense to reuse the information we already have.
- We have a good relationship with the manufacturer through the representative, and their representatives are well trained. In most cases, the manufacturer’s technical department is excellent and has rapid response.
- The warranty or other characteristic of the product is what the owner requires.
- It has properties desirable for the project, such as cost, easy application, good sustainability properties, availability, etc.

Whichever is the reason, by sticking with certain products and manufacturers as BASIS OF DESIGN PRODUCTS, we:

- Reduce the firm’s liability by managing the risk,
- Increase the quality of the project,
- Reduce time and resources waste by not having to draw the same details again for similar products, or re-write the product’s specification section.

THE SUBSTITUTION REQUEST FORM

- RMW uses a Substitution Request Form **which we must provide to the CONTRACTOR in electronic format**, so the contractor can use it. This form requires the contractor to research the product proposed for substitution and give us enough information so that we can make an informed decision.
- The form also requires the Contractor to sign it. By doing this, the contractor certifies the information recorded in the request is truthful.

SUBMITTALS that aren’t

- When the contractor sends submittals for a product which is neither the “basis of design” or a “comparable product” (comparable products are only those listed in the specs as such), what is being sent is really a SUBSTITUTION.
- When this happens and we review and send back the submittal as “no exceptions taken” or with “notations”, we are doing to two things: Reducing the fee since we are duplicating the task of researching a product, and increasing the risk to the firm if we are not familiar with the proposed product and we miss something in the research.

What to do?

- Send the submittal back and explain in writing why it is being return. Explain again how it is done by referencing the “Substitution Procedures” section in Division 01 of the Specifications.
- If time is short, not your fault. Talk to a principal or senior member in the firm and explain what the submittal is and if you are or are not familiar with the proposed product.