Structural Fabrication Request for Information Process

Description

The purpose of this document is to provide the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) with statewide consistency managing and responding to a structural fabrication request for information (RFI). MDOT's Structural Fabrication Unit is responsible for implementing the Department's quality assurance program for structural elements that are required to be accepted based on "Fabrication Inspection" per MDOT's Materials Quality Assurance Procedures (MQAP) manual. MDOT utilizes vendor inspectors to provide shop inspection for these structural elements. When information is requested, it is important for MDOT to quickly respond to a RFI submittal in order to keep the project moving forward. This document is broken down into the following sections:

1. Request for Information
2. RFI Report
3. RFI Submittal Process
4. Innovative Contracting

1. Request for Information

Request for information is defined to be a request by the Fabricator seeking additional information or proposing an alternate design, material, fabrication method, or inspection method for the structural element. The Fabricator typically generates RFI submittals before shop drawings are produced, but they are sometimes submitted after fabrication has begun. A RFI submittal is not to be confused with a nonconformance report (NCR) that is defined to be an alteration in the work or a fabrication error that results in the element not meeting project specifications. Each unique request should be submitted on a separate RFI for housekeeping purposes.

The Structural Fabrication Unit is responsible for coordinating the RFI review process and should provide a timely response or acknowledgement (explanation, decision, request for additional information, or estimate of time needed to evaluate) **within three business days** after receiving the RFI submittal. The Structural Fabrication Unit will distribute all RFIs that are design related to the Design PM for their disposition and then the Design PM is responsible for engaging other MDOT areas, as applicable (Roadside Development, Geometrics, etc.). MDOT will consider alternate fabrication methods or configurations, materials, or inspection procedures proposed by the Fabricator provided the alternative will result in improving or equaling the expected performance, maintenance, and longevity of the structure; however, approval of a RFI may be contingent on a reduction in the contract unit price. Contract modification due to approval of a RFI by the Fabricator requesting alternate material, fabrication method, inspection method, or anything else that is not determined by the Engineer to be an extra will be at no additional cost or time extension to MDOT. RFIs are resolved by providing an appropriated response on the RFI form.

2. RFI Report

A RFI is generated by the Fabricator. The Fabricator is required to submit the RFI to MDOT as discussed in Section 3 of this document.

MDOT has developed a standard *Request for Information (Form 0558)* form that should be used by the Fabricator. Use of the form is recommended to facilitate a faster review process. RFIs submitted for review are required to include, at a minimum, the following information:

- Follow MDOT's file naming convention as shown on the RFI form;
- MDOT project information (structure number, control section, job number, project location, and element mark);
- RFI number in ascending order for each project (resubmittals use a different RFI number);
- Clearly state what information is being requested or what is being proposed;
- Clearly state the required specifications if an alternate is being proposed;
- Include drawings (contract plan, sketches, etc.), numerous high resolution photos, product data sheets, etc.;
- Indicate the urgency of a reply.

Approval of a RFI does not waive the contractual requirement to provide shop drawings prior to the start of fabrication, nor is it sufficient information to allow MDOT's quality assurance inspector (QAI) to stamp elements approved for use. If the Fabricator elects to use an approved RFI then they need to incorporate the RFI into the shop drawings for MDOT's review and approval prior to the start of fabrication. MDOT's QAI is instructed to inspect using approved shop drawings and approved NCRs only. The Fabricator is also required to obtain the Contractor's acceptance of any contract modifications that alter the finished product.

3. RFI Submittal Process

Listed below is MDOT's structural fabrication RFI submittal process:

1. Fabricator names RFI file per MDOT's file naming convention shown on Form 0558.
2. Fabricator must send RFI to Structural Fabrication Unit and carbon copy the Engineer and Contractor. All correspondence to the Structural Fabrication Unit must be sent using the following email resource:

   MDOT-StructuralFabrication@michigan.gov

3. Structural Fabrication Unit distributes RFI to QAI and Design PM (if applicable) and begins reviewing.
4. Design PM distributes RFI to other areas (e.g. Geometrics, Load Rating, Roadside Development), as applicable, and provides all comments to Structural Fabrication Unit.
5. Structural Fabrication Unit provides response on RFI form via email to Fabricator and carbon copies the Engineer, Contractor, Design PM, and QAI.

6. QAI places final RFI form and correspondence in the fabrication inspection file that will be stored in ProjectWise.

4. Innovative Contracting

The request for information process described above applies to Design-Bid-Build projects. This section will discuss subtle changes required to successfully submit RFIs for innovative contracting such as Design-Build projects. Design-Build is an innovative construction method that pairs the Engineer of Record (EOR) with the Contractor. The main difference between a Design-Build and a Design-Bid-Build project is that the EOR on the Design-Build team is required to completely review and approve the RFI submittal prior to MDOT's review. Once the Design-Build team is satisfied with the submittal, the MDOT Design-Build Project Manager (Design Build PM) acts as the MDOT RFI coordinator and distributes the submittal to the Structural Fabrication Unit for review. The Structural Fabrication Unit returns any comments to the Design Build PM. Once satisfied, the Structural Fabrication Unit stamps **"Approved"** on the RFI form. The Design Build PM must be included on all correspondence related to a RFI, therefore Section 3 (RFI Submittal Process) must be revised to reflect this for Design-Build projects.