



TITLE: Policy on the Use of the National Master Specification (NMS)

1. Effective Date: May 9, 2011

2. Cancellation

This policy supersedes the Public Works and Government Services Canada Departmental Policy 039, *Use of the National Master Specification (NMS)*, dated September 27, 2005.

3. Authority

This policy is issued under the authority of the Assistant Deputy Minister, Real Property Branch (RPB), Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC).

4. Context

The National Master Specification (NMS) is a reference document containing approximately 750 master specifications in both English and French. Each section of the NMS is designed so it can be edited from the original master to produce a project-specific document. The NMS began in 1972 in the (then called) Department of Public Works Canada and was adopted the following year, 1973, by other government departments: the Department of National Defence (DND), the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs (INAC), and the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce (IC).

In September 1974 Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) approved its continued development. This policy is issued pursuant to Article 10 of the Department of Public Works and Government Services Canada Act (1996, c.16), which gives the Minister of PWGSC administrative power over all federal real property not situated in any of the Territories, except those under the administration of any other minister, board or agency of the Government of Canada, or any corporation.

5. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the use of the NMS by construction specification writers, design professionals, architectural and engineering consultants, construction project managers, and RPB Alternative Forms of Delivery (AFD) service providers involved in works completed on federal government facilities.

6. Policy Details

6.1 RPB shall use the most current version of the NMS in the preparation of specifications for the new RPB construction, renovation, restoration, and repair of federal government facilities (i.e. architectural, landscape, marine, structural, and heavy civil engineering facilities). The use of the NMS is obligatory whether the specifications are prepared and written in-house, by private consultants, or as projects done through the department's AFD service provider.

6.2 Materials and Methods

For all projects, due consideration must be given to the appropriateness of materials and methods for the intended uses. Reference to materials and methods in the NMS does not necessarily represent a departmental standard for any particular project, or preclude the use of other materials or methods. The NMS is a guide for end-user specification writers and must be edited to suit project-specific criteria.

6.3 Contract Documents

The NMS will be used as the base document for the production of the construction specifications component of the project manuals, which function as project contract documents, for all new construction and renovation work done for or by RPB.

7. Scope

This policy applies to PWGSC staff delivering the RPB Business Line services, and to members of other federal government departments, public organizations and the private sector that are involved in the preparation of construction and renovation contractual documents for RPB.

8. Definitions

NMS Secretariat: is an administrative arm within PWGSC whose mandate is the management of the National Master Specification Program. It is headed by a Chief who reports to the Director of Advisory and Practices (Project Delivery) in the Professional and Technical Service Management (PTSM) Sector within the Real Property Branch (RPB). The NMS Secretariat is tasked with providing a federal government master construction specification for use by the public and private sectors. As a center of expertise it offers advice and technical interpretation on specifications including mechanical, electrical and architectural for the construction industry in Canada and abroad.

NMS National Advisory Board: is comprised of senior management members from the centres of expertise and client service integration teams of PWGSC/RPB, DND/Directorate Corporate Architecture and Engineering Direction (DCAE), and private sector organizations including, but not limited to, the Association of Canadian Engineering Companies, the Canadian Construction Association (CCA), Construction Specifications Canada (CSC) Executive members, the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (RAIC), and the Interior Designers of Canada (IDC). The publishers of the NMS are non-voting member of the NMS Advisory Board.

NMS National Technical Committee: include senior specification writers and representatives from the centres of expertise and client service integration teams of PWGSC/RPB, PWGSC regional offices, DND/DCAE, CSC Technical Studies Committee, other DND senior specification writers and specification writers representing the private sector.

NMS Technical Review Groups: include specialists from PWGSC/RPB client service integration teams and centres of expertise, DND/DCAE, and private sector professional, trade and manufacturer associations.

9. Responsibilities

9.1 The Director General, Professional and Technical Service Management is responsible for:

- monitoring the continued relevancy and applicability of this policy;
- overseeing the updating of this policy as necessary; and
- providing functional direction and guidance to the regions and national Real Property Teams on the application of this policy.

9.2 The National Master Specification Secretariat is responsible for:

9.2.1 Managing the NMS by:

- developing and implementing work plans for the maintenance of the NMS;
- providing co-ordination of the technical review process;
- facilitating NMS National Technical Committee information workshops for PWGSC and Department of National Defence delegates;
- preparing reports and submissions for PWGSC/RPB management;
- arranging and implementing publishing contract agreements; and
- coordinating national use of the most current version of NMS within PWGSC/RPB.

9.2.2 Maintaining the NMS by:

- adhering to the style and format as recommended by Construction Specifications Canada (CSC) Manual of Practice.
- ensuring quality control of the document; and
- developing new sections for the NMS as required.

9.2.3 Promoting the NMS by:

- providing training on the use of the NMS;
- giving promotional and marketing support to the NMS publishers; and
- promoting the use of the NMS to educational institutions.

9.3 The NMS National Advisory Board is responsible for setting overall direction with respect to the NMS by

- advising the NMS Secretariat on industry trends;
- suggesting goals and direction for the NMS; and
- reviewing and approving work plans for the NMS Secretariat.

9.4 The NMS National Technical Committee is responsible for:

- providing representation from PWGSC/RPB six Regions, DND and the private sector,
- monitoring the implementation of this policy;
- reviewing new specification sections; and
- providing feedback from both public and private sector users of the NMS to the NMS Secretariat.

9.5 The NMS Technical Review Groups and ad hoc committees are responsible for the technical integrity and content of the sections that they review with respect to the discipline that each group represents.

10. References

[Department of Public Works and Government Services Act](#)

NMS Users Guide

National Project Management System *[Specification Brief](#)*

Construction Specifications Canada (CSC) *Manual of Practice*

11. Enquiries

Please direct all enquiries about this policy to the Director General, Professional and Technical Services Management Sector.