



Construction Policy Bulletin

CPB 10-4 **Smart Start—Beginning of Work Specification**

References: *Construction Manual* Section 3-805, "Time of Completion"

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Approved: 
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Background

The governor's strategic growth initiative has resulted in the *GoCalifornia* Industry Capacity Expansion action plan. One action of the plan is to implement "smart delivery" practices that maximize resource use, minimize support costs, and ensure that materials and labor are available and used efficiently.

"Smart Start" is a beginning-of-work specification that allows a contractor to choose the first working day based on conditions defined by the district before advertising. The work period could be constrained by funding approval, one construction season, the required completion date, or some other time constraint defined by the district. This specification may be used on highway maintenance and minor A projects with 50 working days or less. All construction work must be completed within the specified number of working days and before the required completion date.

The benefit of this specification is that a contractor can work more efficiently, especially on complex operations requiring a combination of skilled labor from multiple crews. The contractor can use Smart Start to plan, price, and bid its work using the resources available, thus making the work performed more productive. Caltrans expects at least a portion of this efficiency to be passed on through lower bid prices. Smart Start may also reduce construction support costs, because skilled district construction inspectors can deliver projects in succession with little or no down time, resulting in more efficient, cost-effective contract administration for Caltrans.

Existing Procedure

There is no Smart Start policy or procedure.

New Procedure

District directors will establish procedures in their districts to ensure that a contract's advertising, award, approval, and required completion date allow ample time for a contractor to complete the project in one construction season and will not require temporary suspension of the construction contract.

The contractor must submit a request for authorization to establish the first working day within ten days after contract approval. The request must include the planned beginning-of-work date and a baseline progress schedule. If the contractor does not submit the request for authorization to begin work within ten days after contract approval, the first working day will be 15 days after contract approval.

Minor A or highway maintenance program projects advertised before the fiscal year in which the project is budgeted will include additional contract language restricting the start of work date to begin after the State of California budget becomes law. The contractor's request for authorization to begin work must be submitted within five days after the budget becomes law. If the contractor fails to submit the request for authorization to begin work, the first working day will be fifteen days after contract approval or five days after the fiscal year budget act becomes law, whichever is later.

The resident engineer administers construction contracts with the Smart Start special provision by doing the following:

- Compares the contractor's proposed start date and construction schedule with the contract requirements.
- Reviews the contractor's construction schedule to confirm that the scheduled completion date is earlier than the contract completion date in the special provisions.
- When the work is scheduled to be completed in less than the number of working days listed in the special provisions, confirms that the baseline schedule includes adequate time to complete the work.
- Discusses all discrepancies with the contractor before rejecting a construction schedule that doesn't comply with the contract and documents findings in the project records.
- When the work is scheduled to be completed within the specified number of working days and before the contract completion date, accepts the contractor's proposed first working day and baseline progress schedule.
- Notifies the contractor through the beginning-of-work authorization letter of the first working day and contract completion date, and that liquidated damages will be assessed for each additional day of work beyond the contract completion date.
- Once the first working day and the contract completion date are established, administers contract time requirements exactly as all other standard contract time contracts, including adjusting contract time for weather, suspensions, delays, contract change orders, and value engineering change proposals.
- Calculates and records contract time using the procedures outlined in Section 3-805, "Time of Completion," of the *Construction Manual*.

For guidance on recording or calculating contract time and for determining working days, please contact Perry Mayer, Division of Construction, at (916) 653-2032 or perry_mayer@dot.co.gov. Please direct questions about this policy bulletin to Rick Gifford, at (916) 657-5211 or rick_gifford@dot.co.gov.