

CITY OF TUCSON, ARIZONA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

ENGINEERING DIVISION
ACTIVE PRACTICES GUIDELINES

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SUBJECT: ACTIVE PRACTICE GUIDELINES/ALTERATION OF SEALED CONSULTANT PLANS

A. PURPOSE

To establish a procedure that will allow for the alteration of sealed construction plans.

B. GENERAL

For the purpose of this guideline, an alteration is defined to be any change, modification, revision, deletion or addition which affects the design in a set of construction plans. The alteration may seem minor or insignificant, but to the registrant who sealed the plans, the alterations could have a deleterious effect on the project. Minor clarification or addition of missing information which does not affect the design shall not constitute an alteration.

Frequently an alteration is necessary after a set of plans is finalized and sealed by a consulting engineer or architect (consultant). The need to alter sealed plans may be due to a number of factors. When alterations are required there is a need to ensure a responsible and legal approach. There is also a need to identify plan sheets containing revisions so that projects are not constructed with superseded plan sheets.

The State of Arizona Board of Technical Registration is responsible for determining the proficiency of prospective registrants, certifying the registrants, and enforcing the rules of professional conduct for registrants. In regards to the alteration of a set of plans with a registrant's seal affixed, A.R.S. §32-125.C, §32-125. D, and A.C.R.R. R4-30-301.A.3 provide the basis for the regulation of all alterations. These statutes and regulations are written in very broad terms and it is through their interpretation that the authority is derived.

C. PROCEDURE

Whenever the alteration of a set of plans, (which was prepared and sealed by a consultant for the City of Tucson), is considered, the appropriate consulting registrant/firm must be involved in the alteration. The project manager for the City of Tucson Engineering Division will contact the consultant and describe the problem encountered and the proposed course of action. If the consultant agrees with the proposed alteration, the project manager will document the discussion and the alteration may occur. The actual revision may be drafted by City of Tucson personnel or the consultant depending on the time or budgetary constraints. With the completion of alterations to the plan set, the project manager will provide a courtesy blue-line copy of the alteration to the consultant. This procedure will apply for most alterations.

In all cases, revisions made after the set of plans has been sealed shall be done in such a manner that the change can be distinguished from the original work, including use of revision blocks and a "bubble" around the revised details. A diazo-mylar of the original sheet should be saved in order to document the original design.

If the consultant does not agree with a proposed alteration, then the project manager will request that the consultant review the proposed changes. The project manager will provide to the consultant a blue-line copy of the appropriate sheets which have been "redlined" to depict the proposed alteration and will request that the consultant review and comment, or provide an alternative to the proposed alteration. After the project manager and consultant have arrived at a mutually agreeable alteration, the appropriate documentation will be generated. This will include the completion of a revision block and a "bubble" around the revised details as previously indicated.

If the project manager and consultant can not concur on a mutually agreeable alteration, the project manager can still proceed with the alteration by differentiating the alteration from the original set of plans. This is accomplished by highlighting the alteration and then affixing the seal of the registrant responsible for the alteration. The most important aspect of pursuing an alteration in this fashion is to denote where the original consultant's design ends, the breadth of alteration, and the seal of the responsible registrant with a statement on the extent of the alteration. At the completion of this process, adequate documentation needs to be generated which describes the problem, the reason why a mutually agreeable alteration could not be formed, and a statement on the resolution of the problem. A copy of the revised plans shall then be transmitted to the consultant who originally sealed the plans.

In general, any required alteration to a set of plans can occur if the original registrant is consulted, the plans clearly define the alteration, and the appropriate documentation is addressed, including the preservation of a mylar or diazo-mylar showing the original design. If the consultant engineer is no longer employed by the consulting firm that prepared the plans, both the consultant engineer and the consulting firm should be involved in plan revisions. The consulting firm has the right to revise sealed plans without input of the registrant if the plans or changes are subsequently resealed by another registrant. In such cases, changes should not be made without input of the consulting firm, despite any direction given independently by the registrant.

D. CONCLUSION

Whenever alterations of sealed plans are required, the consultant who sealed the plans must be contacted. If the consultant engineer is no longer employed by the consulting firm, then the responsibility for plan content lies with the firm which then has certain authority to properly approve plan revisions. All revisions must be clearly shown as revisions by use of highlighting or bubbling and the revision block at the bottom of the plan sheet. If the consultant does not agree with the proposed changes and an agreement cannot be arrived at regarding the changes, another registrant (in the appropriate field) must seal these changes.

All efforts should be taken to avoid modifying a plan set without the approval of the registrant who sealed the plans to avoid the splitting of liability and responsibility.