Chapter 8 – Construction Orders

1-800 General

Construction Orders are issued to authorize changes to the Contract. They may make increases and/or decreases in quantities of Contract items, add extra work essential for the satisfactory completion of the project, increase or decrease the Contract time, add or modify Contract Plan sheets, or alter the sequence or character of the work. A Construction Order must be processed to gain approval of the change.

For the purpose of this manual the terms Construction Order, Change Order and Contract Order are interchangeable.

The terms of an executed Construction Order are enforced as though they were part of the original Contract. It is essential that Construction Orders explicitly describe the change proposed, including:

- the character and scope of the change,
- where and within which limits the change applies,
- the method of compensation, and
- any changes in the allowed Contract time.

The Construction Order needs to explain why it has been prepared. It should be short and concise yet detailed enough to provide persons with no knowledge of the project with an understanding of why the change is needed.

When a Construction Order is done properly it will identify:

- What is the change
- Who initiated the change
- Where is the specific location of the change
- Why was the change needed
- When the change is initiated

1-801 Review of Proposed Changes

Changes and extra work should be held to the minimum and limited almost exclusively to revisions and additions necessitated by conditions that could not reasonably be anticipated before the project was advertised for bid. The Department must carefully review changes that involve a substitute material or product or a change in the method of construction.

Review of a proposed change will involve the following considerations:

- Is the change in the public interest?
- Does it provide an equal or better material or product than originally planned?
- Does it provide a better method of construction than originally planned?
- Does the Contractor benefit from the change, and if so, is there a corresponding benefit to the project?

Design changes, substitution of materials, revised methods of construction, and specification modifications must satisfy the criteria to provide adequate justification for consideration and approval.
1-802 Need for Construction Orders

Inspectors should use the following criteria in determining the need for a Construction Order.

Construction Orders are required for design-initiated changes in the plans or typical sections, when any changes result in monetary increases or decreases, and/or when an adjustment in Contract time is required. The changes can be made part of the Contract only through Construction Orders. Design changes and cost-plus work should be submitted promptly with estimated quantities, rather than waiting until accurate quantities are available.

Revised quantity determinations are to be made as the work progresses, and final-quantity revisions are to be included on intermediate Construction Orders as items are completed. Updating quantities on intermediate Construction Orders reduces the time required to prepare the final Construction Order, enables one to keep better track of the projected Project cost, and avoids unnecessary revisions to the performance bond which may increase costs (Refer to Chapter 1-19).

Additional Contract time is to be processed on intermediate Construction Orders whenever a Contractor’s request for an extension of Contract time is approved. A full explanation justifying the additional time must be attached to the Construction Order. Refer to 1-702, “Time Extension Procedures”.

1-803 Design Initiated Change Orders

The following guidelines have been established for “Design” initiated Change Orders:

- For change orders less than $25,000, a Construction Order Initiator from design will not be required. Emails, facsimiles, phone call reports, or meeting minutes will be sufficient supporting documentation for the project inspection staff to prepare the Change Order.

- For change orders greater than $25,000, a Construction Order Initiator memorandum will be required from the initiating unit which will include details for the change and an analysis of how the change will affect the project. (Refer to Section 1-803A)

- For complex changes involving unforeseen conditions, changes in scope, or a revision to the contract specifications, regardless of the cost, a Construction Order Initiator memorandum will be required. An analysis similar to that described in Section 1-803A will also be required.

1-803A Analysis of Design Initiated Change Orders

The following analysis procedures are recommended for major change orders:

- The effect the proposed revision has on contract lump sum items such as mobilization, maintenance and protection of traffic, and construction staking should be assessed and included in the estimated cost when applicable.

- If contract items do not exist or if the character of the work differs from the existing contract, unit cost pricing for the extra work may be based on the weighted unit prices for the current time period or an independent evaluation of the work.

- Impacts (direct and indirect) caused by the change order to other construction activities on the project should be considered and reviewed.

- The effect of the change order upon the project schedule should be analyzed and reviewed.
Applicable specifications should be noted and/or provided for the work.

If it is determined that the proposed change will result in substantial impacts to the scope, schedule or budget for the project, District management and Engineering management must be advised and consulted regarding the proposed change. In all cases financial impacts of the proposed change shall be coordinated with the Financial Administration office and FHWA must be consulted on full oversight projects.

**1-804 Additional Approval Requirements**

Construction Orders which incorporate major changes into the contract may require review and approval by the Office of Construction or the FHWA. Project staff must obtain prior approvals for construction orders in the following instances.

**1-804A Change Order Approval Requirements by Office of Construction**

Change orders must be discussed with the Office of Construction when (1) they are valued in excess of 25% of the original contract value or $500,000, or (2) may cause a delay to the project of more than 6 months. Background materials shall be forwarded to the appropriate Liaison Engineer as soon as the information becomes available. The District shall not proceed with the work until authorized by the Construction Administrator or Construction Division Chief. The combined value of all related change orders shall be used to determine if approval by the Office of Construction is required.

For price adjustments that involve Article 1.04.03 or 1.04.04 and the total adjustment is greater than $250,000, the District Engineer must obtain concurrence from the Office of Construction. This approval will be documented.

**1-804B Change Order Approval Requirements by Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)**

On Full-Federal oversight projects, FHWA must approve each and every change order. For contract changes which involve: 1) changes to the project scope 2) time extensions totaling 30 days or more and/or impacts a contract milestone date 3) cost increases greater than or equal to $100,000; a prior approval in order to proceed with the given Change Order is required. This FHWA approval shall be obtained using the Form “Record of Prior Approval for Major Contract Change Orders” (Figure 1-8.1). This prior approval requirement shall include changes that need to be further increased on subsequent change orders that result in an aggregate increase greater or equal to $100,000. Change Orders less than $100,000 can be approved retroactively by FHWA and do not need a prior approval in order to proceed.

For State Administered oversight projects involving Federal-Aid Funds, a prior approval in order to proceed is also required from FHWA when the project change: 1) has a cost increase in excess of 25% of the original contract value or $250,000 whichever is less 2) results in delays or time extensions to the project of more than 3 months 3) results in any scope changes. This FHWA approval shall be obtained using the Form “Record of Prior Approval for Major Contract Change Orders” (Figure 1-8.1).

Upon receipt of any Change Order initiator from the Office of Engineering, the Project Engineer must confirm that the Office of Engineering has advised FHWA as stated in 1-803A, if there has been no notification by the Office of Engineering to FHWA; the Project Engineer shall coordinate with Design Project Engineer to be certain FHWA has been informed.

Whenever a project change requires a “Record of Prior Approval for Major Change Order Form” the subsequent Change Order also shall be submitted to FHWA for final approval, regardless of oversight. The Change Order package shall include the approved “Record of Prior Approval for Major Change Order” form as part of its documentation.
Note - If a change order is processed without FHWA approval as required above then the State may be responsible for any cost that has not received prior approval from FHWA.

FHWA should be informed as soon as possible of all change conditions that result in those situations as stated above.

The decision on whether or not a project is Full-Federal Oversight occurs prior to advertisement. This determination should have been entered into the appropriate cell in Site Manager. It is the Project Engineers responsibility to know the oversight determination for a given project.

1-805 Construction Order Preparation

The process to initiate a Construction Order should be started as soon as the potential need for a change is identified. Work that will be authorized by a Construction Order, other than minor increases and decreases in existing contract items where no change in the Contract plans has occurred, should not be initiated until the Supervising Engineer reviews the requested change and the work is approved. In addition, when a Construction Order exceeds $250,000 the Office of Financial Management, Office of Construction Liaison Engineer, and the District Engineer should be notified in advance of the forthcoming Construction Order; See also Section 1-804.

The Chief Inspector is the primary project staff member responsible for the preparation and content of Construction Orders. Construction Orders are prepared and processed using the procedures and format of SiteManager. For detailed explanation on how to create a Construction Order refer to the SiteManager Help Files. All Method of Measurement/Basis of Payment changes to existing contract items must have prior approval from the Office of Construction. A copy of the memo approving the Method of Measurement/Basis of Payment change is to be included in the Volume III with the applicable item number.

Construction Orders that involve price adjustments, differing site conditions, or claim settlements cannot be initiated until the Supervising Engineer obtains required approvals. For all price adjustments that involve articles 1.04.02, 1.04.03, and 1.04.04 the Supervising Engineer must obtain concurrence from the Principal Engineer or Assistant District Engineer. For price adjustments that involve Article 1.04.03 or 1.04.04 and are less than $250,000 the Assistant District Engineer must obtain concurrence from the District Engineer; if the total adjustment is greater than $250,000 the District Engineer must obtain concurrence from the Office of Construction. Generally claim settlements will not be processed by Construction Order unless directed to do so by the Office of Construction. This approval will be documented by memorandum unless the approval authority signs the approval letter sent to the Contractor.

1-806 Construction Order Addendums

Construction Order addendums provide an explanation as to why the change is needed, and documentation that the proposed contract changes have been approved. The addendum should be complete, yet simple and clear so that auditors and other reviewers will understand them. In preparing Change Order Addenda, remember that the auditor or reviewer of a Construction Order usually is unfamiliar with the project. The explanations provided must clearly explain the need and authority for the change and provide an analysis that people unfamiliar with the project can understand. Use the following guidelines:

- Dimensional Changes or a Change in the Plans or Typical Sections (with the exception of minor revisions in the location of culverts, manholes and catch basins): Incorporate revised plan sheets when available. When the change is being made to benefit the contractor make sure to indicate as such and also identify the corresponding benefit to the Department if one exists.
• Overruns/Underruns (no design change): Provide a detailed Change Order Explanation whenever both of the following conditions are met: 1) the cumulative quantity change of an item varies by 10 percent or more from the original estimate, and 2) the value of the quantity change is more than $10,000. If the item was increased or decreased on more than one Construction Order, an item summary must be provided. The reason why the quantity differs from the design estimate should be explained in detail whenever possible. Avoid simply stating that Design overestimated or underestimated the item. If the designer provided insufficient detail to determine why there is an overrun or underrun, indicate so. Do not include quantity changes caused by design revisions when determining overrun/underrun percentages.

• For federal-aid projects, when non-participating work is involved apply the item change to the appropriate non-participating section (line item). Unused construction materials transferred to State Stores are always non-participating.

• When an item relates to more than one project section the quantity applicable to each section (line item) must be specified.

• Cost-plus work must be authorized by a Construction Order before any payments can be made for the work. The initial estimate for anticipated costs for a cost-plus item must be established using reasonable assumptions. Attach a copy of the letter ordering or confirming the work done on a cost plus basis to the Construction Order. If not included in the body of the letter, also attach the calculations or assumptions made to establish the reasonable estimate. When the Contractor has submitted a price that is unacceptable, use the assumptions made to analyze the Contractor’s proposal to establish the initial estimate. If a CON-9 is used to calculate the initial estimated value, this form must be clearly labeled “For Estimate Purposes to Get on Change Order” and the Scope Estimate box must be checked. A sample Estimate using a CON-9 is shown in Figure 1-8.2.
**Figure 1-8.1 Record of Prior Approval for Major Contract Change Order**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION CONNECTICUT DIVISION OFFICE</th>
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**REQUESTED BY**

**DATE**

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**PRIOR APPROVAL TO PROCEED GRANTED BY**

**DATE OF AUTHORIZATION**

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Volume 1
Construction Orders
ver. 2.2 (Aug 2010)
On completion of the cost-plus operation, another Construction Order must be processed, showing the exact cost of the work. The same item number and line item(s) are used when the adjustment is made. The detailed explanations for this Construction Order will list any adjustments made and reference the original and any supplemental Construction Orders.

Documentation used to support the Construction Order must be referenced and identified in the Change Order Explanations, i.e. memorandum requesting design revision, price approval letter establishing price for new items, etc.

Supplementary Construction Orders are to be initiated to increase or decrease the original construction order item, so that appropriate project funding can be maintained. The change order explanations to these Construction Orders need to reference the original Construction Order.

Each item in a Construction Order must have at least one standard explanation applied to the specific item (line item) to classify the change. With the exception of minor overruns and underruns of existing Contract...
items, additional explanations must be provided to describe in detail the change. For further explanation on how to create explanations for Change Orders in SiteManager refer to the SiteManager Help Files.

- Separate records must be kept for “emergency break out projects.” to identify and clearly track the project.

### 1-807 Standard Explanations - Classification of Line Item Changes

The standard paragraph explanations focus on WHY the change occurred, not who initiated the change or how big the change is. Also, they are organized so that the inspector can quickly determine which explanation applies and so that uniform application of the explanations may be created throughout the Districts.

To apply an explanation to a change, the inspector must first determine the reason for the change. To do this, the inspector begins with the first explanation (1-U) and proceeds down the list until the appropriate explanation is determined. If more than one explanation applies to the particular change, the change shall be assigned the first explanation from the list. Only one paragraph classification is to be used to classify a change.

1-U Unforeseen Condition – Additional work necessitated by encountering reasonably unforeseeable conditions which differ materially from those indicated in the contract or unusual conditions differing from those normally encountered. Items applying to this explanation are defined by Article 1.04.04-Differing Site Conditions of the Standard Specifications. Examples: underground storage tank, contaminated materials, concealed decay, unanticipated rock or groundwater.

2-S Change in Scope – Changes from the original intent or purpose of the project, extension of projects limits (i.e., additional signalized intersection, limits more than 100’ beyond original, etc.), elimination of contract work, and work not normally associated with the type of work originally bid.

3-C Contract Revision – Changes in the original design initiated by design or construction which falls within the original scope of the project and does not alter the basic character of the project. This also includes revised specifications. Examples: revisions to pavement markings, revisions to base materials, revisions to stage construction, revisions to signalized intersection.

4-Q Quantity Adjustments – Minor increases or decreases in original quantities not attributable to any of the above explanations. (Increase or decrease less than 10% of the original estimate or the value of the quantity change is less than $10,000.)

5-O Other Adjustments – Revisions to the contract or plans to correct foreseeable changes which reasonably could have been expected. (Ex. Work shown on the plans for which no pay item was provided - no rock in trench item where rock outcrops are plainly visible, revisions to comply with environmental permit requirements or R-O-W agreements, incorrect original computations, and elevation bust resulting in extra work to correct.)

This explanation also includes contract adjustments. (Ex. Liquidated Damages, incentives/disincentives, sanctions, material escalation clauses, etc.)

6-T Time Extension – Adjustment in the allowable contract time for any portion of the work.

### 1-808 Documentation

Generally, the documentation should include the following:

- The District’s letter to the Contractor advising of additional work and requesting a price submittal for new Contract items.
• The Contractor’s letter outlining requested prices, with breakdowns showing the methods of computation.
• The District’s letter to the Contractor approving prices or, if the prices cannot be substantiated, notifying the Contractor that work will be done on a cost-plus basis.
• A summary of the cost-plus documentation and a reference to the Volume III or DWR where the source documentation is located.
• Correspondence should be listed in chronological order following each paragraph and numbered “1A”, “1B”, etc. If the same correspondence is used for multiple paragraphs, reference the previous paragraph rather than attaching a second copy. Label each copy of correspondence in the lower right-hand corner with the project number, construction order number, the paragraph and the correspondence letter.

1-809 General Processing Guidelines

Construction Orders are processed according to the following guidelines:

• The Project Engineer and Chief Inspector must make regular checks of the project records to identify any need for a Construction Order.

• All Construction Orders that have been initiated should be processed and sent to the Contractor within a 60-day period, with appropriate backup information.

• Draft Construction Orders for emergency work or work of a critical nature must be submitted to the District within 5 working days after the start of the extra or additional work. If actual costs are not known, they should be estimated and processed as “estimated cost-plus”.

• Funding for the Construction-Order work must be checked out as soon as the cost is estimated.

• Project modifications and Work Orders must be processed as soon as possible.

• Any Construction Orders not returned or returned unsigned by the Contractor must be noted as such and processed unsigned.

• Contractor objections for not signing a Construction Order will be investigated and the Contractor will be advised in writing of the action the Department has taken. The letter must be included with the Construction Order.

1-810 Review and Processing Procedure

Each District will implement a review process that enables the majority of the Construction Orders to be sent to the Contractor for signature within 60 days of initiation. The only Construction Orders not sent to the Contractor within 60 days should be those where the Project is waiting for documentation from the Contractor. A routing slip is to be used to document the review process, including the approval authority (refer to 1-810C). See Figure 1-8.3.
1-810A Review by Project Engineer

The Project Engineer has the primary review responsibility. They will:

- Review the Construction Order for scope, completeness, and accuracy. Check for appropriate specification references and accurate descriptions of any changed conditions.

- Review the explanations and attachments to ensure an adequate basis is established for the changes contemplated and that all relevant attachments are provided.
• If the Construction Order will trigger the need for a new performance bond, confirm with the Chief Inspector that quantities have been revised or finaled to accurately reflect the work remaining.

• Make minor revisions.

• Return the Construction Order to the Chief Inspector if major revisions are required. Note the reason and date returned on the routing slip.
• Sign and date the routing slip and forward package to the Transportation Supervising Engineer.

1-810B Review by Supervising Engineer

The Supervising Engineer ensures that the Construction Order complies with current Department policies. They will:

• Review the Construction Order and attachments as necessary.

• Determine the appropriate level for approval of the draft Construction Order in accordance with the guidelines listed below.

• Meet with the Transportation Principal Engineer or the Assistant District Engineer, as appropriate, to obtain approval of the draft Construction Order.

• Return the Construction Order to the Project Engineer if revisions are required.

• Signs and date the routing slip and return to District staff for initial processing.

1-810C Authorization to Process Construction Order

District Management (D.E. or A.D.E.) shall obtain the concurrence (phone, fax, email etc.) of the Construction Division Chief or Construction Administrator when:

• Prior to authorizing any change order that is valued in excess of 25% of the original contract value.

• When the aggregate value of all related change orders exceeds $500,000.

• Price adjustments greater than $250,000 in accordance with Article 1.04.03 and 1.04.04.

• May cause a delay to the project of more than 6 months.

The Transportation Principal Engineer or the Assistant District Engineer must authorize the processing of Construction Orders when:

• the Construction Order value exceeds $150,000;

• the cumulative value of all C. O.’s reaches 5%, 10%, 15% etc. of the original contract value;

• the Construction Order adjusts the price of an item under Article 1.04.02, 1.04.03, or 1.04.04;
• the Construction Order addresses a potential claim issue;
• the Construction Order grants additional time; or
• the Construction Order contains an item change that involves a design error or material change.

The Supervising Engineer will authorize the processing of Construction Orders for:

• routine quantity revisions,

• extra and additional work that has received prior approval by the Department, and

• any other item not reserved for other authorities.

**1-810D Review and Initial Processing by District**

The District Office Staff performs the following when processing a Construction Order:

• Check funding (both Federal and State).

• Review general format.

• Ensure required corrections are made. Return to the Chief Inspector or Project Engineer, if necessary.

• Prepare the package with a cover letter to the Contractor.

• Return the completed package to the Project Engineer for signature.

**1-810E Processing by Project Engineer**

The Project Engineer reviews the completed package to ensure comments have been incorporated, signs all copies and sends it to the Contractor for their signature. Typically only two copies of the Construction Order are sent to the Contractor for signature.

If the Contractor does not return the Construction Order within 15 days, a follow-up letter is sent to the Contractor to determine the status. See sample letter in Figure 1-8.4. A copy of this letter is included with the Construction Order.

**1-811 Guidelines for Approval of Construction Orders**

The Supervising Engineer has the primary responsibility for approval of Construction Orders. The District Office receives the Construction Order from the Contractor and sends it directly to the Transportation Supervising Engineer for approval.
If the Contractor fails to return a Construction Order after the second notice, the District Office provides the Transportation Supervising Engineer with copies of the Construction Order for approval.

The Transportation Supervising Engineer signs the Construction Order and forwards it to the District Staff for further processing.

**Figure 1-8.4 Second Letter to Contractor Transmitting Construction Order**

| CONTRACTOR NAME  
| CONTRACTOR ADDRESS  

Gentlemen:

Subject: PROJECT NO.
FAP NO.
Description
Town

In a letter dated , we sent to you for signing Change Order No. for the above referenced project.

This Change Order has not yet been returned to the District Office by your firm. Please sign and return the Change Orders by . If it is not returned by this date we will process this order and you will receive an approved copy in the mail.

If you have not received the Change Order in question, please contact me and I will send out a new one for your signature. If you have any questions, please contact me at telephone number (860) XXX-XXXX.

Very truly yours,

District Representative (TE3 or above)

cc: Construction File

When a Contractor returns a Construction Order unsigned, and the Contractor has stated their objection, preferably in writing (a copy of this letter is included with the Construction Order), the stated objections are investigated to the satisfaction of the Transportation Supervising Engineer. The Transportation Supervising Engineer will consult with the Transportation Principal Engineer or Assistant District Engineer as appropriate. If the objections are determined to be invalid, the Construction Order is processed unsigned and the Contractor is notified of the action. If the objections are determined to be valid, a subsequent Construction Order is processed with the appropriate corrections; the Construction Order is processed unsigned, and the Contractor is notified that the corrections will be addressed by a future Construction Order.
1-811A  Final Processing by District

The District Office Staff completes the final processing:

- Adds the explanations (addendum) and attachments to the Construction Order copies, as required.
- Sends an approved copy to the Contractor and, if necessary, to FHWA. The District number must be placed in the upper right-hand corner of the first sheet of the copy sent to FHWA.
- Files the approved copies.

1-811B  Distribution

Once a Construction Order is approved, hard copies are distributed in accordance with the charts in Figure 1-8.5.

The following Construction Order addenda are sent from the Assistant District Engineer to the Construction Division Chief for information and reference.

- Non-participating construction orders on direct FHWA oversight projects
- Construction orders over $250,000.
- Any construction order which incorporates the following:
  - time extension
  - claim payment
  - liquidated damages
  - incentive payment
  - project incidents which trigger a “construction issues” form

On Contracts reimbursable by Department of the Army Corps of Engineers, one extra copy of the Construction Order is required for its records.

1-812  Final Construction Orders

A project must not be accepted, and retainage must not be released, prior to receipt of all required paperwork from the prime Contractor. Once the project has been accepted, the State is required, by Statute, to make full and final payment to the Contractor within 60 days of acceptance or pay interest at the rate of 6 percent per annum on the unpaid balance of the final estimate. In many cases, the interest charge could be a significant amount of money, and in all cases, it is an unnecessary cost that requires much extra work and explanation by the District.

Occasionally, delays resulting from disagreements on quantities, submission of agreed prices, incomplete final quantities, or disagreement on the interpretation of the special provisions or plan notes contribute to the overall delay in the processing of the final Construction Order and estimate. The Assistant District Engineer should be advised promptly of any problems that may affect the expeditious processing of the necessary papers.
When all of the work pertinent to a Contract item has been completed, the original or revised estimated quantity is adjusted to the final pay quantity by Construction Order, for payment on an estimate. Minor adjustments to quantities, due to actual field measurements, computation corrections, etc., can be made on final Construction Orders; however, no new or cost-plus items can be initiated. New items must be introduced on intermediate Construction Orders.

If the final Construction Order has been accepted and quantity changes are required for any reason, a supplemental final may be initiated. The Construction Order is designated “Supplemental Final Construction Order” on the front sheet.
Figure 1-8.5 Distribution of Construction Order Copies

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<th>#s</th>
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<th>District</th>
<th>Inspector</th>
<th>Laboratory*</th>
<th>FHWA</th>
<th>Public Trans</th>
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<td>Send Construction Orders to Designated FHWA representative at FHWA 628-2 Hebron Ave. Suite 303 Glastonbury CT 06033-5007</td>
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General Note: Whenever a Project includes funding from the Army Corps, a copy of the Construction Order will have to be sent to that Agency.

*The Laboratory only needs copies of C.O.’s if new items are being incorporated. The District has to coordinate with the Lab to establish and/or set up the testing requirements for new items.

** Non-participating C.O.’s on direct FHWA oversight projects, C.O.’s over $100,000 and/or any C.O. which incorporates the following: time extension, claim payment, liquidated damages, incentive payment or project incidents which trigger a “construction issues” form.

*** For State administered oversight projects involving Federal-Aid Funds certain Construction Change Orders require both prior approval to proceed and final approval of the subsequent change order; reference Construction Manual section 1-804B for guidance.