

Frequently Asked Questions for Using Caltrans Construction Standards (CCS)

1. The County doesn't understand why Caltrans cares if we use an older version of CCS on a project that is locally funded and off the State Highway System (SHS). Can you explain further this requirement? I understand if it is for a state or federally funded project, but what liability would the state have if the project is locally funded and off the SHS?

Answer: For projects located off the SHS and off the National Highway System (NHS), any of the three options from the current Caltrans Construction Standards (includes Standard Plans, Standard Specifications, Standard Special Provisions, Standard Bid Items, Notice to Bidders, and Bid Book), the current Standard Specifications for Public Works Construction (A.K.A Greenbook), and locally approved construction standards can be used. If Caltrans Construction Standards is used, the current version must be used. The reason for implementing the current version is that our annual updates is often times tied to the legally mandated and safety related updates, new laws, new policies. Asking our local partners to adhere to the latest standard is in their best interest. Caltrans has the liability to oversee that the correct provisions are used if Caltrans Standards are used.

2. Is it permissible to incorporate a blend of Local Agency and Caltrans Standards in a federally funded project, where certain sections follow Local Agency standards and others adhere to Caltrans standards?

Answer:

To avoid any confusion, the response is broken down into three parts:

- I. If a project is on the State Highway System (SHS), use current Caltrans specifications only.
- II. If a project is on the National Highway System (NHS), use either the current Caltrans standard specifications or the current Standard Specifications for Public Works Construction (A.K.A Green Book). No other standard is allowed.
- III. If a project is off the SHS and off the NHS, then any of the following three standards can be used in accordance with the LAPM.
 - 1) Current Caltrans Specifications
 - 2) The current edition of the Standard Specifications for Public Works Construction (A.K.A Green Book).
 - 3) The current edition of local agency approved standard specification. Please note that the LPA has to comply Exhibit 12-G, "required federal-aid language" on all federal-aid projects.

If LPA chooses to use blend of multiple standards for projects off-SHS and off-NHS, then LPA shall specify in their special provision which standard shall prevail when there are conflicting instructions.

Also, LPA may need to include the following wording in the project special provision (shown as an example):

The project shall adhere to the County Standard Specifications for sections 1 to 8 and 2023 CCS for section 9 through 99.

3. Can you clarify that local agencies do not need to implement Division 1 of the Caltrans Standard Specifications?

Answer: If Caltrans Standards is used, then Division 1 is required. If some portions of the Division 1 are not applicable, they can be specified in the special provisions or edited using Nonstandard Special Provisions (nSSPs)

4. Is it possible to get a list of specification revisions from 2018 and 2022? Can you send a link?

Answer:

Look for the Digests of Revisions for 2023 version at the link below-

[2023 Standard Plans, Standard Specifications, and Contract Item Codes | Caltrans](#)

Older versions have been archived. Please reach out to your DLAE to get copies of archived digest of revisions using a secured file transfer site. Provide DLAE with a file transfer site to upload the requested files.

5. Are there going to be updates throughout the year or only yearly for the Caltrans plans and specifications?

Answer: Yes, there are mid cycle in addition to annual updates. However, DLA is not requiring LPAs to implement mid-cycle updates for local projects off SHS/off NHS.

You can sign up for email notifications of changes by [clicking here](#).

6. Regarding the Apprentice/Trainee Program, is it acceptable if the Apprenticeship Standards approved by CA – Department of Industrial Relations (DIR)?

Answer: The requirements for prevailing wage apply for all government entities performing prevailing wage work and in Labor Code 1777.5 and CCR, Title 8, Section 230. Anytime an agency uses Skilled & Trained Workforce, this requirement is applicable.

To be clear this isn't an issue of using Caltrans specs/contract - all of theirs should have this code already as part of their normal contracting with or without Caltrans involved if the contract is funded wholly or in part from public funds and work performed includes construction, alteration, repair, demolition, installation or maintenance work.

DIR- Division of Apprenticeship Standards sets the standard and approves apprentice programs etc. DIR – Division of Labor Standards Enforcement is the division responsible for enforcing the requirements on projects.

7. Please discuss how an agency would use the Local Agency section 39 that resides on the UC Davis pavement studies website. Would its use be allowed?

Answer: Yes, with a California registered civil engineer's approval.

8. For a federally funded project, can 2022 standard plans for guardrails be added into County constructions plans (as county standard) or does 2023 standard plans have to be implemented regardless?

Answer: County standard is considered as a locally approved standard, as long as a California licensed civil engineer signs and approves the standard, following an established process of approval method at a local level. Local standards are sole responsibility of the local governments and Caltrans do not take part in any determination of its drafting.