Construction Specifications 101

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Construction Specifications Engineer

March 08, 2016
Where do we start?

So.....
The first thing to do is.....

Ask......
Questions to ask concerning Unique Special Provisions

1. Is it covered by the Standard Specifications? If so, do you still need the USP?

2. Does it conflict with the current Standard Specifications? The USP should compliment, not conflict, with the Standard Specs.

3. Do we have an existing special provision, recurring or unique, that addresses the same matter? Can you use that instead?

4. Does it define a unique pay item? (more on this in a few minutes) If so, make sure the 5 basics (the Big 5) are covered.
   - Description
   - Materials
   - Construction Requirements
   - Method of Measurement
   - Basis of Payment

Only items listed in the Standard Specifications are Standard Pay Items.
Questions to ask concerning Unique Special Provisions

5. Does it specify a proprietary item or process?
   If so, is it necessary?
   If so, make sure a **Justification For Use Of Proprietary Material** form has been completed and approved. (see IDM Chapter 17)

6. Do we have access to cited standards? (ASTM, AASHTO, LPA standards)
   If not, can the cited standard be revised to one we do have access to?
   If not, the standard must be included in the unique.

7. Does it involve Department testing?
   If so, have you checked with our folks at Materials and Testing?
   (they may have something to say about it)
   If not the Department, who does the testing?

8. Has it been reviewed by:
**REVIEW OF UNIQUE SPECIAL PROVISIONS**

1. **10 weeks prior to Stage III**
   - **5.0 REVIEWERS**
     - Review draft USP and return comments to PM

2. **13 weeks prior to Stage III**
   - **4.0 PROJ. MGR.**
     - Distributes draft USP for review by appropriate parties

3. **3 weeks prior to Stage III Submittal**
   - **3.0 PROJ. MGR.**
     - With Designer, determines appropriate reviewers for each draft USP

4. **14 weeks prior to Stage III Submittal**
   - **2.0 DESIGNER**
     - Submits draft USP to PM, including explanation & requested pay items
   - **1.0 DESIGNER**
     - Develops USP for the contract in accordance with IDM Chapter 19

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**UNIQUE SPECIAL PROVISION PROCESS**

*Figure 19-3D*

*Project Manager*
Two *not so* Hidden Truths about Specifications and Special Provisions:

- Nobody likes to write them
- Nobody likes to read them!

Well, ...............almost nobody........
The types of Unique Special Provisions

Restrictive Type USP

STOCKPILED BORROW MATERIAL FOR PROJECT

The Department has stockpiled sufficient borrow material for use in the project in the southwest quadrant of the I-465 interchange with I-70 on the eastside of Indianapolis.

All borrow required for the project shall be taken from this stockpile.

EXPLANATION

1. Provision title is centered and is Courier New font, 10-pt. pitch, all capitals.
2. There are no referenced Standard Specifications sections and line numbers.
4. There are no deletions or insertions.

EXAMPLE OF A RESTRICTIVE TYPE UNIQUE SPECIAL PROVISION

Figure 19-3A
The types of Unique Special Provisions

Directly Revises Standard Specs

PERMANENT BUZZ STRIPS

The Standard Specifications are revised as follows:

SECTION 801, BEGIN LINE 636, DELETE AND INSERT AS FOLLOWS:

4. Temporary Permanent Buzz Strips

Temporary Permanent buzz strips shall be a set of transverse markings constructed of removable or durable marking material. Durable marking material shall be used in accordance with 808.07(b).

SECTION 801, BEGIN LINE 1034, DELETE AND INSERT AS FOLLOWS:

Temporary Permanent Buzz Strips.............................................. LFT

1. Title is centered – Courier New, 10 pt.
2. Referenced Spec section and line numbers – Courier New, 10 pt.
3. Spec text is Times New Roman, 12 pt
4. See Chapter 19 – Figure 19-3B
TEMPORARY TRAFFIC CONTROL ROLLING SLOWDOWN

Description
This work shall consist of placing, maintaining and organizing traffic control devices for a rolling slowdown in accordance with 105.03.

Materials
Materials shall be in accordance with 801.02.

Construction Requirements
The Contractor shall submit for approval a traffic control plan detailing expected delay times, interchange ramp control, and rolling slowdown distance in accordance with Appendix D of the 2013 Interstate Highways Congestion Policy.

Three working days prior to commencing work which necessitates a rolling slowdown of traffic, written notice shall be given to the Department and the Indiana State Police that highway traffic shall be slowed temporarily at a specific location, time, and date to accomplish the specified work. Traffic shall be safely controlled during the rolling slowdown.

Method of Measurement
Temporary traffic control rolling slowdown will be measured by the number of calendar days a rolling slowdown is implemented. Each portion of a day will be measured as a whole day.

Basis of Payment
Temporary traffic control rolling slowdown will be paid for at the contract unit price per calendar day.

Payment will be made under:

Pay Item

Temporary Traffic Control Rolling Slowdown..................DAY

The cost of all labor, equipment and all incidental work shall be included in the cost of the pay item.

1. Title is centered, Courier New, 10 pt.
2. No referenced spec section or line numbers.
3. Text is Courier New, 10 pt.
4. Headings are Bold.
5. See Figure 19-3C.

This USP does not directly revise the Standard Specs, but it does define a unique pay item.
About those Pay Items........

Only items listed in the Standard Specifications are **Standard Items**.

Each existing pay item shown in the list of pay items is identified by:

- **S** = Standard
- **M** = Maintenance
- **R** = Recurring (tied to one or more Recurring Special Provisions)
- **U** = Unique

This means you need a USP with the **Big 5**.

- Check the **examples** of USP’s on our website to see if we already have something that you can **revise to fit** your “unique” project.

- Please also note that adding the word “*modified*” to a standard pay item does not **necessarily** make it Unique that requires the “Big 5”.

- Can you use the standard spec section the way it is written and **show your “modification” on the plans**? Could you use a **Restrictive Type USP** to clarify your intentions?
**About those Pay Items**

**UNDISTRIBUTED QUANTITIES**

The schedule of pay items contains the following undistributed quantities in addition to known plan quantities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>303-08210</td>
<td>Comp Ag No. 53, Temp for Driveways</td>
<td>100 TON</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>715-05203</td>
<td>Pipe, Type 4, Circular, 4 in</td>
<td>100 LFT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>715-05048</td>
<td>Pipe, Type 4, Circular, 6 in</td>
<td>100 LFT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>715-05049</td>
<td>Pipe, Type 4, Circular, 8 in</td>
<td>100 LFT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>715-05051</td>
<td>Pipe, Type 4, Circular, 10 in</td>
<td>100 LFT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>715-05052</td>
<td>Pipe, Type 4, Circular, 12 in</td>
<td>100 LFT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>715-05438</td>
<td>Pipe, Drain Tile Terminal Section, 4 in</td>
<td>10 LFT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>715-05439</td>
<td>Pipe, Drain Tile Terminal Section, 6 in</td>
<td>10 LFT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>715-05440</td>
<td>Pipe, Drain Tile Terminal Section, 8 in</td>
<td>10 LFT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>715-05442</td>
<td>Pipe, Drain Tile Terminal Section, 10 in</td>
<td>10 LFT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>715-05443</td>
<td>Pipe, Drain Tile Terminal Section, 12 in</td>
<td>10 LFT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The exact location of the undistributed quantity, if required, will be determined by the Engineer during the time of construction.

---

**Undistributed Quantities** is unacceptable as a supplemental description for your unique pay item.
About those Pay Items

- Changing the UNITS of a standard pay item may not be necessary. Can you use the standard pay item?

- Changing the name of a standard pay item does not make it unique. Can you use the standard pay item?

- And remember:

  According to In accordance with 105.04, Pay Items govern, over Special Provisions, over the Plans, over the Standard Specifications.
About that CES stuff........

- Please send an email to:
  
  CESSUPPORT@INDOT.IN.GOV

- If you ........
  
  - need a **new** pay item number.
    
    Be sure to include the **APPROVED** USP.
  
  - require any Group Number changes
  
  - have any CES questions or have any problems with CES

  Or,

  - If you need a **Detailed Cost Estimate** to mark up for revisions.
## Revised Detailed Cost Estimate

### INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
**DETAIL COST ESTIMATE**

**ESTIMATE NUMBER:** B-29070-A  
**PCN:** 0400473  
**PROJECT NO.:** G00473

**CONTRACT ID:** B-29070-A  

**CATEGORY:** G001  
**DESCRIPTION:** BRIDGE DECK REPLACEMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LINE</th>
<th>ITEM NO.</th>
<th>ITEM DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>ESTIMATED QUANTITY</th>
<th>ITEM UNIT</th>
<th>UNIT PRICE</th>
<th>AMOUNT</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0072</td>
<td>711-96800</td>
<td>STUD SHEAR CONNECTORS</td>
<td>3,150.00</td>
<td>EACH</td>
<td>1,000.00</td>
<td>3,150.00</td>
</tr>
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<td>715-05149</td>
<td>PIPE, TYPE 2, CIRCULAR, 12 IN.</td>
<td>443.00</td>
<td>LFT</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>44,300.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0074</td>
<td>715-05407</td>
<td>PIPE, ENO BENT DRAIN, 6 IN.</td>
<td>166.00</td>
<td>LFT</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>16,600.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0075</td>
<td>720-45069</td>
<td>INLET, PI2</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>EACH</td>
<td>1,000.00</td>
<td>1,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>0076</td>
<td>720-45410</td>
<td>MANHOLE, C4</td>
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<td>EACH</td>
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<td>1,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>0077</td>
<td>726-92406</td>
<td>BEARING ASSEMBLY ELASTOMERIC</td>
<td>14.00</td>
<td>EACH</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>1,400.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0078</td>
<td>801-03290</td>
<td>CONSTRUCTION SIGN, C</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>EACH</td>
<td>1,000.00</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>0079</td>
<td>801-06308</td>
<td>ROAD CLOSURE SIGN ASSEMBLY</td>
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<td>2,000.00</td>
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<td>0080</td>
<td>801-06207</td>
<td>TEMPORARY PAVEMENT MARKING, REMOVABLE, 4 IN.</td>
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<td>0082</td>
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<td>35.00</td>
<td>EACH</td>
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<td>CONSTRUCTION SIGN, B</td>
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<tr>
<td>0084</td>
<td>801-06710</td>
<td>FLASHING ARROW SIGN</td>
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<td>0085</td>
<td>801-06775</td>
<td>MAINTAINING TRAFFIC</td>
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<td>LUMP</td>
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<td>0086</td>
<td>801-07024</td>
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<td>0087</td>
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<td>LFT</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>9,600.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>0088</td>
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<td>BARRICADES, IIL-B</td>
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<td>LFT</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>9,600.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0089</td>
<td>801-08400</td>
<td>TEMPORARY TRAFFIC BARRIER, TYPE 1</td>
<td>3,420.00</td>
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<td>100.00</td>
<td>342,000.00</td>
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<td>0090</td>
<td>801-52817</td>
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<td>EACH</td>
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<td>310,900.00</td>
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<td>0093</td>
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<td>236,760.00</td>
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<td>LFT</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>11,400.00</td>
</tr>
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<td>0095</td>
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<td>289.00</td>
<td>LFT</td>
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<td>28,900.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0096</td>
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<td>LFT</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>28,900.00</td>
</tr>
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<td>0097</td>
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<td>3,443.00</td>
<td>LFT</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>344,300.00</td>
</tr>
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<td>0098</td>
<td>808-75998</td>
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<td>EACH</td>
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<td>47,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0099</td>
<td>808-75998</td>
<td>SNOWPLOWABLE RAISED PAVEMENT MARKER</td>
<td>47.00</td>
<td>EACH</td>
<td>1,000.00</td>
<td>47,000.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CATEGORY TOTAL**

**PROJECT TOTAL**
As for any CIB Revisions……

Deletions highlighted in red.

Additions highlighted in yellow.

Please,

Only send the pages being revised,

NOT the entire CIB.

(please?)
About those Pay Items........

The Contractor shall dispose of water removed by dewatering in a manner that avoids endangering public health, property, and portions of work under construction or completed. Disposal of water shall not inconvenience others. Sumps, sedimentation tanks, flow-control devices, and temporary sediment and erosion control shall be provided in accordance with 205 and as required by authorities having jurisdiction. Sediment in filter bags shall be removed once it has accumulated to the design volume and be disposed of in accordance with 202.

Method of Measurement
Dewatering will not be measured, regardless of how many times the system is moved, replaced or relocated. Sediment filter bags will not be measured regardless of the number of times a day a filter bag may become filled and replaced.

Basis of Payment
The cost of dewatering shall be included in the cost of other items.

- By the way........
  Dewatering is INCIDENTAL to, 206, 702, 715, 716, 720, and 734 Standard Pay Items.
Did **anyone** proof-read this?

Please be specific!

**So….what does “incidental” mean to you?**

(By the way, this work is “**incidental**” to a standard 805 pay item)
Who are we writing these for?

- The Contractor
  - to bid the work
  - to perform the work

- Department personnel involved with the contract
  - to enforce those standards.

And since we are writing these special provisions for the contract.....

Get to the point
and keep it simple.
Please note:

The Department, as illustrated in the Standard Specifications, is striving towards the use of performance based language, not directive.

Phraseology and terminology used in a Unique Special Provision should be consistent with that used in the *Standard Specifications*.

Please keep in mind that there are no metric equivalents shown in the 2016 Standard Specifications, so please do not show them in your provision.
Please note:

When referencing a Standard Specifications section, do not say, **Section** 605. Use **shall be in accordance with** 605.

With that in mind, do not say **per**, **shall conform to**, **shall comply with**, but say **shall be in accordance with_____**.

Other terms to **avoid** include:

- **and/or**. Use either **and** alone, or **or** alone. Choose the one most appropriate for your unique situation. (if in doubt, use **or**)

- **as per**. Instead, use **as stated**, **as shown**, **in accordance with**.
More terms to **avoid**:

- as shown in the plans, as detailed on the plans, as indicated in the plans, as shown on the standard drawings.  Instead, say
  
as shown on the plans.

- at the Contractor’s expense.  Instead, use
  
  ____shall be included in the cost of ____,

  .....at no additional cost.....,  or

  with no additional payment.

And, (parenthetically speaking), do not use parentheses, use a comma, or two.
**Please be Specologically correct:**

- **INDOT.** Instead, use **the Department.**

- or approved equal. Do not use this phrase, but define the equal, or say **as approved.**

- **must, should, or is to.** Use **shall, or will.**

  Remember: the Engineer **will**

  the Contractor **shall.**
Proper spec language:

- permit or permitted, unless you are actually going to require them to obtain a permit.

  Use allow, or allowed.

- Do not use “ for inches.

  Use in.

- Do not use ' for feet or foot.

  Use ft (no period after ft)

- For measurements, instead of using 9” x 9”, write

  9 in. by 9 in.

do the same for ft
Please ALSO note:

- For numbers, use 9 for dimensions, and nine for quantities, and by all means – do NOT say nine (9). That is not necessary.

- Also, numbers nine or less are spelled out, numbers 10 or above are written numerically.

- And please, don’t ever, I mean never, use “i.e.” or “etc.” (Seriously. Don’t try it. I know people!)

- If at all possible ---> avoid using any “-ly” words. Seriously.

Absolutely.

Usually.
So, when visiting a site, please watch your step. Do you really need to say it at all?

12. Workers shall avoid traffic during the final strata placement. Foot traffic shall be permitted only at the bottom of the hydrated concrete. Apparent defects in concrete into an approved pavement may require sufficient compaction to be firm enough to seal the pavement.

13. Following striking the concrete level, utilizing equipment approved by the contractor, shall be assured paving to achieve sufficient compaction and strength to repair, no further hand tampers immediately after cutting.

14. Hand tampers shall not immediately address any repair, no further hand tampers immediately cut.

15. The pervious concrete:

So, when visiting a site, please watch your step.
Method of Measurement

The accepted quantities of sewer pipe installed will be measured by the linear foot, complete in place of the type of pipe installed in accordance with 715.13.

All lateral connections made to the sewer main including the tapping into or cutting into the main, the removal of the existing sewer main, all by pass pumping, or other means of sewer collection, flexible couplings, manufactured Sanitary Tee-Wyes, Wye tapping saddles, and larger main size connection pipe for cut ins will not be measured for payment.

Cleanouts and all required cleanout materials, including the sanitary Tee-Wye used at the riser, length of pipe, concrete, brass caps, and cleanout castings will not be measured for payment. An allowance of an additional 10 lft of the type of lateral pipe used will be provided to account for each cleanout structure.

Elbow connections will be measured along the centerline of such connection except those elbows which are paid for under sewer lateral connections as shown on the plan details. An additional 2 lft of pipe of the same diameter as that of the elbow will be has been included for each such elbow.

Concrete Encasement or cradles will not be measured for payment. Pavement sawcuts will not be measured for payment.
How do you “level vertically”? Lay on your side? “Yep. Looks good! The bubble is off though……”

Do they mean “plumb”? 

Make it a point to read through your USP and imagine how someone else may interpret what you have written.
compaction following installation. Trees shall not be planted in rows, rather installed **haphazardly** to imitate a more natural pattern. Trees shall be planted so the root collar is even with the ground surface. The roots shall be extended downward into a hole or topsoil. Roots shall not be forced into improper planting holes which would restrict their ability to grow and support the seedling to **permit** survival. Failure to comply with these procedures shall require replanting of trees with no additional payment. Outside temperature and storage requirements shall be in accordance with **INDOT design manual standards** found in 622.03. All other provisions of planting, backfilling, and watering shall be in accordance with 622.08.

All trees shall be marked with wire flags **immediately** adjacent to their stems.

Haphazardly.

An **LY** word.

Was it a good idea?
The Contractor shall avoid soil compaction as much as possible. Equipment access and travel shall be routed around all planting areas, and repeat passes over the same area shall be limited during all grading, topsoil application, and decompaction-surface preparation work. Equipment having low unit pressure ground contact shall be utilized whenever possible.

All planting areas which have been excavated into subsoil shall be amended by the following process:

1. Over excavate to 4 in. below the final elevations shown on plans.
2. Check the compaction and density of the subsoil according to the parameters listed below under "Measuring and correcting soil compaction". Decompress-Loosen if necessary.
3. Apply 4 in. of topsoil
4. Incorporate the topsoil with the subsoil by ripping, tilling, dicing, or other method.
5. Apply and spread evenly enough topsoil to achieve the final grades specified in the plans within a tolerance of +/- 0.3 ft. After final application of topsoil, the Contractor shall measure soil compaction again as specified below and decompress-loosen as necessary.
6. After decompaction-loosening, the surface should-shall be prepared for seeding by any method which leaves the upper 2 to 3 in. broken down into a fine-particle seedbed with no clods larger than 3 in. diameter. The final graded surface should conform to the elevations shown in the plans to +/- .25 feet.

If crusting from rainfall has occurred, re-scarification shall be required. Scarification may not be required if drill seeding is to occur.
So, ...... Let’s be clear ...........

A cone seeder or other similar broadcasting equipment may also be used if the seed mix does not contain **fluffy seeds** in amounts sufficient to prevent free flowing without plugging. Seed shall then be pressed into the surface using a cultipacker or roller.

All seeding equipment shall be calibrated to deliver the seed at the rates and proportions specified in the plans. Equipment shall be operated in such a manner as to ensure complete coverage of the entire area to be seeded, and seed shall be placed no deeper than \( \frac{1}{4} \) in. into the soil.

So..... What ARE “**fluffy seeds**”?  

Is it this?  

Or this?
Sometimes, you can’t trust spellcheck......

Construction Requirements
Environmentally sensitive wetlands, streams, and open near the vicinity of the construction plans. Delete areas, borrow or waste sites in these areas. Wetlands limits shown in on the Con...
Labeling and Tagging:

The Electrical Contractor shall label all electrical equipment by one of these methods described below:

1. Printed card labels may be used on items of equipment furnished with plastic windows. Labeling of the cards shall be nearly printed using a lettering device such as Leroy Instrument.

2. Directories on the inside of panelboards shall be typewritten and shall show a list of circuits and points, equipment, or areas supplied.

Did they mean NEATLY?

Or is it okay if the Contractor just thought about it?

“Well, we nearly printed those........”

How about we just leave out the LY words?
The importance of Proofreading
Did they think this through????
What’s wrong with this picture?

Have you checked that “Buy America” spec?
Consider Your Audience
In Summary

Please make sure you are referencing the Current version of the Standard Specifications.

And please (did you notice I said please? I’m begging here People!)

If at all possible, write your Unique Special Provisions in such a way that it points the reader back into the Standard Specifications book at every opportunity.

Also, please (there it is again!) look inside the SS Book to see if what you are trying to do is already in there.
Just go to the INDOT website and click on Doing Business with INDOT