

Pitfalls and Potholes

General

1. Provide des number in all correspondence, written and verbal.
2. Read and follow INDOT CE and Procedural manuals. If there seems to be or is a conflict, contact INDOT for clarification.
3. Requesting reviews to be expedited because enough time was not allowed in the schedule for reviews. If everything is an emergency, then nothing is a priority
4. Incorporate past guidance into all new documents.
5. Advance investigations should be used when appropriate. e.g. Consultant suggests a HazMat Phase 1 or a karst review when not warranted or the opposite – not pointing out up front that a full 106 is likely needed.
6. Provide clear wording and organized discussions in all documents. Remember, you are writing for John/Joan Q. Public.
7. Greater than ½ acre of permanent right of way is not the ONLY item that warrants offering a hearing.

Early Coordination

8. Early coordination letters should include good project descriptions, discussion on anticipated impacts, information on field identified resources or potential resources (i.e. waters, wooded habitat), good graphics with project footprint, and site photographs with a location map.

NEPA documents

9. Do not wait until Stage 3 submittal to verify use of the Programmatic Categorical Exclusion (PCE). FHWA asks that INDOT confirm the appropriateness of applying the PCE. This can take time and effort. If there's a glitch, the project risks making letting.
10. If the document level changes, all information should be entered onto the new form – do not simply use pages from the previous form with a new cover.
11. Make sure to perform internal QC/QA, including a thorough review by a qualified (experienced) professional prior to submittal to INDOT.
12. Follow instructions provided by the reviewer, particularly when provided specific wording to address a specific situation. Do not ignore comments. If you disagree with the instruction or comment, have a conversation with the reviewer. There will be variation between reviewers.
13. Verify TIP/STIP information.
14. Provide clear Purpose and Need statements.
15. Include sufficient discussions of identified resources and potential impacts. e.g. type and location of historic resources.

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16. Include review of water resources and make sure that a trained professional is performing the field work, especially wetlands. If water resources haven't been adequately/correctly addressed before the CE, there's usually no good way to resolve it through the CE review.
17. Incorporate summaries of appendix information into the text of the CE, including, but not limited to agency responses. i.e. Cut and paste verbatim is discouraged.
18. Summarize public involvement responses in the text of the CE.
19. Initiate additional coordination to account for substantial changes to the design (changes which have occurred before the CE is finalized). Most frequently causes problems for 106, but also USFWS and IDNR.
20. Take appropriate action (coordination with PMs and environmental staff) when impacts have been identified that could affect cost/schedule (usually water impacts that require mitigation).
21. Use consistent acronyms in the same document, like NRHP and NR for the National Register of Historic Places.
22. List commitments in the commitments section of the CE. If an agency provided general commitments that do not apply, include only the applicable and state that those listed are relevant to this project.

Commitments

23. Follow Commitments spreadsheet instructions. Make sure to include the relevant commitments, contact information, and use the correct Excel version (system will only accept Excel 97-2003).

Environmental Consultation Form (ECF)

24. The purpose of the ECF is checks and balances to help ensure that the design and environmental documentation match. The designer should fill out the ECF. It is never a good thing if the reviewer finds an AI is needed during review of the ECF.
25. When submitting the ECF with Stage3, make sure to notify the district. This is not automated.
26. The ECF cannot and will not be signed before environmental is complete.
27. Read and follow ECF instructions – complete the document fully, include permit information, attach the required items.