

Interactive Communication Procedure

Introduction

Interactive Communications are formal and informal communications that occur on a project between the Division of Project Management Project Manager, Designer, Subject Matter Experts (SME's) and Project Stakeholders. As the design progresses, Interactive Communications are critical to help control the scope of work, schedule, budget and the project quality. Maintaining control of these will contribute significantly to the successful delivery of a project.

Interactive Communications during the project delivery process establishes specific details on design elements of a project (such as drainage, geometrics, structures traffic engineering etc.). All the important and pertinent design decisions, agreements, concerns and the resolution of design issues or problems shall be documented in a Design Communications Report (DCR). When applicable, the constraints encountered, the rationale of the decisions, and/or assumptions made shall also be included.

All Designers (NJDOT in-house design staff, Prime Consultant or Task Order Consultant Designers) are required to comply with the DCR requirements of the Interactive Communications Procedure.

NOTICE TO PRIME CONSULTANT AND TASK ORDER CONSULTANTS

Failure of a consultant designer to comply with the DCR requirements will result in the withholding of payment in accordance with Article 21 of the Design Agreement (due to failure of the Consultant to perform its' obligations).

Non-compliance of the DCR requirements will also affect a Consultant's Performance Evaluation. The "Consultant Evaluation Criteria" was revised to include provisions to:

Adversely impact a consultant's evaluation for non-compliance with the DCR requirements.

Adversely impact a consultant's evaluation for failure to make accurate DCR submissions in accordance with Interactive Communications Procedure.

GUIDANCE TO PROJECT MANAGERS FOR DCR NON- COMPLIANCE WITH CONSULTANT DESIGNERS.

The DCR requirements apply to all designers (NJDOT in-house design staff, Consultant and Task Order Consultants) for all Capital Project Delivery projects. DCR's are required throughout the Concept Development (CD), Preliminary Engineering (PE), Final Design (FD) and Construction phases of the Capital Project Delivery Process.

If compliance with the DCR requirements is an issue with a consultant designer, the Project Manager is to contact the Consultant's Project Manager to request compliance and advise that failure to comply with the DCR requirements will result in withholding of payment and that invoice(s) submitted for payment will be returned.

Prior to returning the invoice(s), the Project Manager shall document in the project file that the Consultant's Project Manager has been contacted (via phone conversation or e-mail) and requested to

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comply with the DCR requirements, and that the consultant was advised that failure to comply will result in the withholding of payment, and their invoices submitted for payment will be returned to them unprocessed.

Within a reasonable period (2 weeks maximum) after contacting the Consultant's Project Manager, if the design consultant does not comply with the DCR requirements for their project, the invoices submitted for payment from that point on shall **not** to be processed until compliance with the DCR requirements is achieved. Invoices shall be returned to the consultant designer by letter along with the Invoice Deficiency and the Prompt Payment Notification. **(Refer to Notes 1 and 2 below for returning invoices).**

Note 1:

The Project Manager should verify with the Consultant's Project Manager in a phone communication or e-mail that a DCR Entry was actually necessary for the project before withholding payment and returning the invoice(s) to the design consultant.

Note 2:

A "DCR Non-Compliance Sample Letter for the Return of a Consultant Invoice" is provided on the Capital Project Delivery website. The sample letter shall be utilized by Project Managers when advising the design consultant that their invoice(s) is / or are being returned for non-compliance with the DCR requirements. The Invoice **Deficiency Notification and Prompt Payment Notification are to be included with the letter to the design consultant.**

Objective

Communications and decisions occur formally or informally during scheduled meetings, teleconferences, e-mails, and memorandums by project Stakeholders, the Project Manager and SME's. The Interactive Communications Procedure's purpose is to instruct Project Stakeholders of the proper communication and documentation throughout the Capital Project Delivery process.

The purpose of the DCR is to document all the important design decisions, agreements, concerns and the resolution of issues when they occur and as they are communicated. The DCR documentation will help control the scope of work, schedule, budget and project quality.

DCR's can be used to verify that design decisions were incorporated into the design documents. The DCR also provides an archive for historical review and contributes to a lessons learned data base.

Some examples when design decisions are made during the process that may need to be documented include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Consultant communications (project initiation and design)
- Project Customization decisions
- Design Elements communications (project initiation and design)
- Design Kickoff Meeting (meeting held to initiate design phase)
- Design Submissions (including Interim Submissions)
- Risk Assessments
- Subject Matter Expert (SME) communications (all phases)

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- Contract Meeting (held prior to advertisement)
- Construction (resolution of construction issues-Changes of Plan/ Addendums)

Definitions

Project Stakeholders include but are not limited to the following:

- Project Managers
- Executive Regional Managers
- Directors
- Designers (design consultants, sub-consultants or in house designers)
- Subject Matter Experts (SME)
- Federal Highway Administration
- Permitting and Regulatory Agencies including:
 - NJ Department of Environmental Protection
 - NJ Land Use Regulatory Program
 - NJ Historic Preservation Office
- NJ Transit
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- Community Representatives
- General Public
- Communication Participants: Any subset of the project stakeholders.

Design Element: A project related activity performed as defined by the Project Delivery Process.

Design Communications Report Requirements

The Concept Development phase will begin the DCR process for a proposed project and continue for a project throughout the Preliminary Engineering, Final Design and Construction phases of the Capital Project Delivery Process. The DCR process ends with Final Acceptance of the project in the Construction phase. All important decisions, agreements during the development of alternatives and design schemes during the project initiation phases between SME's and Stakeholders shall be documented in the DCR.

There is only one DCR per capital project. At the end of each phase of the project delivery process, the final approved DCR for that phase is provided by the Project Manager to the next phase prime designer (NJDOT or consultant). Included in the DCR is all interactive communications from the prime designer, sub-consultants and task order consultants, if utilized. The complete DCR shall be assembled and maintained by the prime designer. The Project Manager is responsible for providing all approved interactive communications to the prime designer for DCR assembly.

The lists of Design Elements that should be documented in the DCR throughout the Capital Project Delivery Process (when applicable) include Survey/Mapping, Geometrics, Hydraulics & Hydrology, Pavement, Geotechnical, Environmental, Utilities, Structures, ROW, Access, Landscape, Traffic Engineering, Electrical, Safety, Railroad and ITS.

All DCR Entries shall include the following:

- Identification of the issue, communication or agreement (as applicable)

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- Type of communication (informal or formal meeting)
- Constraints encountered (when applicable)
- Agreement, outcome, resolution, or decision of the issue and the date resolved
- Rationale used in making the decision(s) (when applicable)
- Assumptions made (when applicable)

The format for the DCR Entry as provided (See “SAMPLE DCR”-this document) must be utilized and shall **not** be altered.

All DCR Entries must be approved prior to posting and shall include a DCR Entry No. when posted.

The Designer is responsible for preparing and maintaining the DCR. **(See the “Responsibilities” Section - this document).**

The Designer is required to submit DCR entries to the Project Manager for approval. **(See the “DCR Approval Procedure” Section - this document.)**

A designer’s formal design submission must include a current copy of the DCR. (The design submission will be deemed incomplete without a current copy of the DCR included with the submission).

During construction, designers are required to document important decisions in the DCR that result in Changes of Plan and Addendums that reflect a significant cost or schedule change. Addendums that do not reflect a significant issue with cost or schedule do not need to be documented in the DCR since the Addendum itself is the documentation.

Drawing, sketches, calculations, project summaries, letters, memos, e-mails, resolutions of support, comment resolution summaries (no longer required), copies of plans, and copies of permits shall NOT be included in OR be submitted as DCR Entry.

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DCR's/Quality Review Comments

The following clarification is provided for guidance to designers for documenting “Quality Review” comments in the DCR received from the Department’s Subject Matter Experts (SME’s) and / or Stakeholders.

Comment Resolution Summaries are not to be included in the DCR. Comment Resolution Summaries have been eliminated and shall not be prepared – See “Design Submissions Procedure”.

The DCR essentially replaces the functionality of a Comment Resolution Summary during the Quality Review process, however, documentation of a Quality Review comment in a DCR is required for a “substantive issue” or important design review comment” that requires coordination and resolution with a SME or Stakeholder.

Designers must resolve all Quality Review comments with SME’s or Stakeholders when the designer does not agree that the comment should be included in the project design. “Quality Review” comments that are considered **“minor”** shall **not** be included in a project’s DCR regardless of whether coordination was needed to attain resolution with the SME or Stakeholder.

If a designer is not clear whether to document a particular Quality Review comment issue (or other design related issue or concern that develops during the proposed project or project’s design development) as a DCR Entry, the designer may opt to include the issue in a DCR Entry and submit it for approval or they may contact the Project Manager prior to submitting it for their direction on whether it should be documented.

Interim Design Submissions are to be made at the direction of the Project Manager. Important Interactive Communication decisions that occur during Interim reviews with SME’s or Stakeholders shall be documented in the DCR.

Design Submissions/DCR’s

- Design submissions shall include a current copy of the DCR. Design Submissions during the Capital Project Delivery Process that require a current copy of the DCR with the submission include:
 - Concept Development (CD) Report
 - Preliminary Engineering (PE) Report
 - Final Design (FD) Submission

The above submissions will be deemed incomplete without a current copy of the DCR included in the submission.

The Designer is responsible for preparing and maintaining the DCR. **(See the “Responsibilities” Section - this document).**

The Designer is required to submit DCR entries to the Project Manager for approval. **(See the “DCR Approval Procedure” Section - this document.)**

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Interactive Communications / Design Communications Report Process

The communication participants (Stakeholders, SME's etc.) discuss an issue or problem pertaining to the project design.

The communication participants (SME's, Designer, and Project Manager) reach a decision or resolution of the issue.

A draft DCR is prepared by the Designer.

The Designer verifies that all communication participants are in agreement with the draft DCR prior to submitting it to the Project Manager.

All entries made into the DCR document the communications participants involved, the type of communication (informal or formal meeting etc.), the issue, the decision reached, and date.

The Designer prepares and submits the DCR along with the DCR Approval Sheet to the Project Manager for approval. **(See the "DCR Approval Procedure" Section- this document).**

The Project Manager reviews the DCR. If the DCR is acceptable, the Project Manager approves the DCR. (Refer to: DCR Approval Procedure in this document). If the DCR is not acceptable to the Project Manager as submitted by the Designer, the Project Manager shall coordinate with the Designer or SME's as necessary until the DCR is acceptable for approval.

Past entries in the DCR may not be changed or deleted.

DCR - Responsibilities

Designer: The Designer is responsible for:

Identifying when interactive communications are necessary on issues with design elements in consultation with the Project Manager. Requesting meetings as necessary through the Project Manager to address issues with SME's.

Documenting the agreements and /or resolutions of design element issues from all formal and informal communications between all Subject Matter Experts (SME's), Project Stakeholders during the project's design and construction process into the DCR as the issues occur during each phase of the Capital Project Delivery Process. Issues to be documented during the construction phase of a project include only those that require SME or other stakeholder input for the preparation of Changes of Plan, Change Orders and Addendums.

Incorporating all pertinent formal / informal communications and decisions into the DCR.

Preparing the DCR Entry.

Numbering of the DCR shall be assigned in a consecutive manner, as each DCR is submitted for approval.

Submitting the DCR to the Project Manager for approval. **(See "DCR Approval" Section - this document).**

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Submitting the current approved DCR to the Project Manager with all design submissions and interim submissions. (A design submission will be deemed incomplete if the DCR is not included with the submission).

Submitting the DCR new entries routinely to the Project Manager for approval in accordance with the schedule that the designer agreed upon with the Project Manager.

Note:

The Designer (prime consultant and in house designers) need to document issues and obtain DCR approval for their sub-consultants, as necessary.

Department's Project Manager:

The Project Manager approves DCR's for the Concept Development, Preliminary Engineering, Final Design and Construction phases of the Capital Project Delivery Process.

The Project Manager is responsible for:

Coordinating with the Designer to establish the routine or schedule that the Designer will submit DCR new entries for approval (e.g., regularly on a monthly basis, or a more or less frequent basis based on the type, magnitude and complexity of the project). Documenting of the agreed upon schedule should be an entry into the DCR.

Coordinating with Subject Matter Experts (SME's) and the Designer as necessary to confirm accuracy of the Designer's DCR Entry. (Project Managers - refer to DCR Approval procedure).

Reviewing and approving of all DCR entries. (See DCR Approval Procedure).

Maintaining a record of the most recent approved DCR approval number in the project file.

Familiarity with the all DCR issues and contents and decisions made during the Interactive Communications process and distributing the DCR to the Project Stakeholders, upon request.

DCR Approval Procedure

The approval procedure for DCR Entries is as follows:

Step 1.- The Designer completes the DCR Entry, including the Project Review Certification and DCR Approval sheet with appropriate designer electronic signatures on both, and submits to Project Manager by email.

Note:

More than one new DCR Entry is permitted and the approval sheet shall note the numbered entry (or entries) accordingly.

Step 2. - The Project Manager reviews the complete DCR Entry to determine that the new DCR Entry is accurately stated by the Designer and that the Project Review Certification has been signed and dated by the Designer's Project Manager and applicable principal of the Designer, for consultant designers, or by the NJDOT Design Team Lead (Roadway or Bridge), for in-house designers.

Step 3. - If acceptable, the Project Manager electronically signs and dates the DCR Approval sheet.

IF DCR IS NOT ACCEPTABLE FOR APPROVAL

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The Project Manager shall coordinate appropriate changes with the Designer or SME's as necessary (back to Step 1 until Project Manager approves).

Step 4. - The Project Manager emails the signed DCR Approval sheet to the designer for signature.

Step 5. - The Designer uploads the signed DCR into PMRS

DCR - Formatting Requirements

The DCR shall be a letter size Microsoft Office Word document.

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STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Quality Management Process

Design Communications Report Approval

Final Design and Construction Phases

PROJECT NAME:	UPC#:
CONSULTING FIRM:	DESIGNER PROJECT MANAGER:
NJDOT PROJECT MANAGER:	NJDOT EXECUTIVE REGIONAL MANAGER:

Design Communications Report (DCR) Entry No.(s) _____

Pursuant to the Interactive Communications Procedure and the Interactive Communications Procedure of the New Jersey Department of Transportation (the Department), the Department's Project Manager has approved the DCR identified above, (approved by Entry No.(s)) subject to the certification below of the Designer.

This approval by the Department's Project Manager is not a certification by the Department that the above project has been designed in accordance with all applicable State and Federal design standards and requirements or that comments and decisions made during Interactive Communications with the Department on design elements and features of the project to this point have been incorporated or satisfactorily resolved and the Contract Documents have been revised accordingly, and the Department is fully relying in this regard upon the certification below by the Designer.

Furthermore, the Project Manager, by signing below on behalf of the Department, has not waived the Designer's obligation to provide contract documents that are constructible and free from errors and/or omissions.

Designer's Project Manager / Date

NJDOT Project Manager / Date

Or

NJDOT In-House Design Team Leader

Quality Management Process

(Bridge Lead or Roadway Lead)

Project Review Certification

In accordance with the Interactive Communications, in the Designer's professional opinion, and to the best of the Designer's knowledge, information and belief and based upon the performance of the Designer's duties as set forth in the NJDOT and the Designer Agreement, the Designer represents that the above project has been designed in accordance with all applicable State and Federal design standards and requirements. Comments and decisions made during the Interactive Communications with the Department on design elements and features of the project to this point have been incorporated or satisfactorily resolved, and that the approved DCR entry (or entries) identified above will be incorporated into the Contract Documents accordingly.

Designer's Project Manager / Date

Designer's Principal / Date

Or

NJDOT In-House Design Team Leader

(Bridge Lead or Roadway Lead)



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Quality Management Process

Design Communications Report Approval

Concept Development Phase

PROJECT NAME:	UPC#:
CONSULTING FIRM:	DESIGNER PROJECT MANAGER:
NJDOT PROJECT MANAGER:	NJDOT EXECUTIVE REGIONAL MANAGER:

Design Communications Report (DCR) Entry No.(s) _____

Pursuant to the Interactive Communications Procedure of the New Jersey Department of Transportation (the Department), the Department’s Project Manager has approved the DCR identified above, (approved by Entry No.(s)) subject to the certification below of the Designer.

This approval by the Department’s Project Manager is not a certification by the Department that the above project has been conceptually designed in accordance with all applicable State and Federal design standards and requirements or that comments and decisions made during Interactive Communications with the Department on design elements and features of a conceptual design or alternative during the Concept Development phase of the Project Delivery Process have been incorporated or satisfactorily resolved. The Department is fully relying in this regard upon the certification below of the Designer. All DCR Entries include the resolution of the issue and reference the applicable design alternative.

Furthermore, the Project Manager, by signing below on behalf of the Department, has not waived the Designer’s obligation to provide design alternatives that incorporate the decisions and agreements made by Stakeholders and Department Subject Matter Experts during the Interactive Communications Procedure.

Designer’s Project Manager / Date

NJDOT Project Manager / Date

Quality Management Process

Quality Management Process

Project Review Certification CD

In accordance with the Interactive Communications Procedure of the Department, in the Designer's professional opinion, and to the best of the Designer's knowledge, information and belief and based upon the performance of the Designer's duties as set forth in the NJDOT and the Designer Agreement, the Designer represents that the project alternatives have been or are being designed in accordance with all applicable State and Federal design standards and requirements. Comments and decisions made during the Interactive Communications with the Department on design elements and features of the project to this point have been incorporated or satisfactorily resolved and that the approved DCR entry (or entries) identified above will be incorporated into the concept plans and alternatives accordingly.

Designer's Project Manager / Date

Designer's Principal / Date



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Quality Management Process

SAMPLE DCR

Design Communications Report (Provide Project Name)

Design Activity No. 1170	(Approved date by Department’s PM)	DCR Entry No. (use consecutive numbering as issues are submitted for approval) <hr/> Survey / Mapping
John Consultant, PM and Dan SME from Survey Central met in Dan’s office on (date) to discuss and agree on future staging areas during construction.		
Design Element--Cross sections		
The cross sections between station 60+00 and 80+00 must show the existing slope beyond the curb, so that the contractor can identify staging areas.		

Notes:

Refer to “Design Communications Report (DCR) Requirements” (this document) for a list of the “Design Elements” to be included in a Design Communications Report (as necessary).

The “DCR Entry Form” template shall be utilized for DCR Entries in the Design Communications Report. The “DCR Entry Form” template document includes the Design Communications Report Cover Page for the project.

When uploading “New DCR Entries”, designers shall include all DCR Entries previously posted so that a single comprehensive DCR Report is available.

DCR Entries shall be numbered in a successive order.