

Technical Circular T-2/93
July 28, 1993

TO: ALL H.Q. DIRECTORS: Prof. Services, Planning & Major Projects
ALL REGIONAL MANAGERS Prof. Services, Planning & Operations
ALL DISTRICT HIGHWAYS MANAGERS

SUBJECT: SIGNING PRACTICE AND REVIEW OF WORKS CONTRACT DRAWINGS

REFERENCE: Highway Engineering Branch Design Manual

BACKGROUND:

The Ministry has had, through the years, a standard and practice for signing general design and structural shop drawings. The main title block of each drawing included three signature spaces; one for the senior designer who prepared the drawing, one for a Branch Director, Regional or District Manager recommending the drawing, and one for the Chief Engineer or Regional Director accepting the drawing for construction.

This practice permitted senior officials to catch inappropriate general arrangements, layouts or standards with careful review. The Highway Engineering Branch Design Manual In-House and Consultant Title Blocks H.1-8 and H.1-9 respectively, dated September 1990, and since amended, were consistent with this previous practice.

The principal drawbacks of this practice were that, with the exception of the senior designer, others' signatures did not constitute meaningful review but were a time consuming element in the paper flow. This is equally true for the set of drawings designated as "Approved for Right-of-Way Acquisition Only".

Previous research has also shown that there is little difference in legal liability of senior Ministry officials, whether they sign or not. It was also found that senior officials of other Provincial public bodies and Crown Corporations do not sign design drawings.

Accordingly, the Standard title block was revised in November, 1992 and included in the Highway Engineering Design Manual as: Title Block for Headquarters Key Plan (H.1-8A), Title Block for Region/District Key Plan (H.1-8B) and Title Block for Drawings (H.1-9).

There has always been, to varying degrees, a Quality Control process to review designs for technical content. This process, parallel to the signing of drawings, shall be formalized and documented to ensure broad conformity with design standards and consistent high quality. This will describe the relationship and sequence of Quality Control and Quality Assurance. The Design Manual will be modified to reflect this important relationship between signing and technical review.

PROCEDURE:

The Highway Engineering Branch Design Manual shall reflect the following principles.

1. Title blocks are limited to working drawings and will show only one signature block for the Senior Designer. This will be a Consultant's representative or the Regional Manager of Design whether for Major Projects*, Regional or District Contracts. Contract drawings prepared by Consultants selected from the Profession category of RISP shall be signed by a Professional Engineer. Additional drawing types requiring a Professional Engineer as the Senior Designer will be determined as needed. Professional Engineers may either use the signature space provided or place their seal outside the title block.

* Vancouver Island Highway Project (VIHP) has a separate working arrangement.

2. All but very small contracts, will have a Front Page and a Key Plan Page. The Front Page will have no title block; it will show the Provincial Logo, the Ministry Name, the Project Name, the Contract Number and the Name/Title (no signature) of the Chief Highway Engineer or Regional Director. The Key Plan Page will show the Ministry name, a key plan, the drawing index, the symbol legend where appropriate, the contract details including contract type, number, location, length etc. as well as the dated signatures of the Chief Highway Engineer/Regional Director and the Branch Director/Regional Manager of Professional Services. For Major Projects*, the Major Project Director will sign along with the Chief Highway Engineer. The Key Plan Page signatures will be on either the full size or reduced title block as shown on H.1-8A or 8B. For very small contracts, the Front Page and the Key Plan Page may be combined.

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3. Right-of-Way Acquisition drawings shall be signed by the Senior Designer which indicates the only meaningful review to ensure the accuracy of the proposed Right-of-Way. The "Approved for Right-of-Way" note shall be modified to use this single title only and will be retitled "For Right-of-Way Acquisition Only".
4. The design manager for the project will, at the start of each major design phase, identify the person who will provide Quality Control of the technical content by reviewing and approving each stage. Highway Engineering is currently working to develop and document a Ministry Quality Assurance process. A few typical review matrixes, following this work, will be included in the Highway Engineering Branch Design Manual for guidance.

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