

SpecGuy's Specifications Glossary

Below are common specifications terms and resources, linked to website resources where possible. We hope this helps you navigate the world of construction specifications.

4Specs – "The Specifier's Electronic Library" 15,000 building product manufacturer listings. Better than bookmarks. www.4specs.com

ANSI – The American National Standards Institute. ANSI is an umbrella organization that administers and coordinates the national voluntary consensus standards system. www.ansi.org

ARCOM – Architectural Computer Services, Inc. Publishers of subscription master guide specification libraries MasterSpec® and SPECTEXT®, SpecAgent, and Product MasterSpec manufacturer information, and SpecWare specification automation software. www.arcomnet.com

ASTM International – Formerly the American Society for Testing Materials. They develop and publish testing standards for materials and specifications used by industry. www.astm.org

BSD SpecLink® – Subscription master guide specification library with database editing software. Complies with CSI MasterFormat. www.bsdssoftlink.com

CCB – Construction Criteria Base. An electronic library of federal construction guide specifications, manuals, standards and other criteria documents, published by the National Institute of Building Sciences (NIBS) as part of the immensely useful Whole Building Design Guide at www.wbdg.org/ccb.

CSI – Construction Specifications Institute. Membership organization of design professionals, construction professionals, product manufacturers, and building owners. Develops and promotes industry document standards and certification programs. www.csinet.org.

Descriptive Specification – A method of specifying that describes the desirable characteristics of a product using means other than performance characteristics or reference standards.

FM Global – Factory Mutual Global. Insurance industry consortium whose loss prevention engineering standards serve as defacto construction industry standards for roofing and other construction assemblies. www.fmglobal.com

General Conditions – (When used by contractors) Construction project activities and their associated costs that are not usually assignable to a specific material installation or subcontract. Example: temporary electrical power.

General Conditions – (When used by everyone else) The contract document (often a standard form) that spells out the relationships between the parties to the contract. Example: the AIA Document A201.

Guide specification – A resource specification section that is used as a guide or assist to persons writing or editing contract specifications.

LEED™ – Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. A sustainable design building rating system promulgated by the United States Green Building Council. Also an accrediting program for professionals (LEED APs) who have mastered the certification system. www.usgbc.org

Leeds – A city in Yorkshire, England. www.leeds.gov.uk. Nothing turns off young designers more than to hear a product representative talk about Leeds points.

MANU-SPEC® – A manufacturer's proprietary guide specification library published by Reed First Source. Formerly published by CSI. www.reedfirstsource.com

MasterFormat™ – 6- digit numbering system with 50 divisions of numbers and titles for organizing specifications and other information, published by CSI and Construction Specifications Canada. www.masterformat.com

MasterSpec® – Subscription master guide specification library published by ARCOM and owned by the American Institute of Architects. Complies with CSI MasterFormat. www.masterspec.com

PageFormat™ – Companion industry standard to MasterFormat. Dictates the page design of construction specifications. Updated in 2008.

Performance Specification – A method of specifying that lists specific performance traits that the product or system must fulfill which can be verified by a specific listed method of verification, such as a standard test

Product MasterSpec® – A manufacturer's proprietary guide specification library based on MasterSpec and published by ARCOM. www.productmasterspec.com

Project Delivery Practice Guide (PDPG) – Industry resource text for the organization, preparation, use and interpretation of construction documents, published by CSI. Sourcebook for CDT education program study.

Proprietary Specification – A method of specifying that references the name of a manufacturer or product as a means of establishing the required characteristics of a product.

Reference Specification – A method of specifying that references one or more accepted industry reference standards as a basis for qualifying products.

SectionFormat™ – Companion industry standard to MasterFormat. Organizes specification sections into 3 parts, subdivided by standard article titles. Updated in 2008.

SpecAgent® – A browser-based specification resource platform used in conjunction with MasterSpec to present manufacturer product information, online support, and contact information.

SpecsIntact – Specification editing software developed by NASA for use with the UFGS and used by several federal government agencies. <http://specsintact.ksc.nasa.gov/>

SPECTEXT® – Subscription master guide specification library published ARCOM. Complies with CSI MasterFormat. www.spectext.com

UL – Underwriters Laboratories, Inc. A private testing and labeling organization that develops test standards for product compliance, including roofing requirements and equipment utilizing electrical power. www.ul.com

UFGS – Unified Facilities Guide Specifications. A master specification library published for use by Federal agencies. Edited using SpecsIntact software. www.ccb.org/docs/ufgshome/UFGSToc.htm

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