



Since 1982, the department has entered into contracts with private engineering consulting firms for field services involving administration, engineering, surveying, inspection, and materials sampling and testing on road and bridge construction projects. The services of these firms have been used to augment the services of our permanent region personnel.

Each region has the authority and responsibility to select the needed consultants and negotiate contacts between WisDOT and the selected consulting engineering firms. Coordination and direction is provided by consultant services section.

Consultant personnel are expected to represent the department in the same competent and positive manner, as would WisDOT employees when meeting with the contractor, utilities, general public, news media, public agencies, and local officials. They are expected to administrate, engineer, survey, inspect, sample, test, and report under the same standards and to the same degree of competency as department personnel.

The standard consultant contract contains the provisions, except when deleted by special provision, that the consultant will be evaluated by the department at a closeout conference prior to completion of the consultant contract. The supervisor and engineer are to be present at the evaluation. Both parties may designate additional representatives.

Complete information on the selection of consultants, contract negotiations, contract provisions, and format is to be found in [FDM Chapter 8](#).

Please refer to [CMM 1-10.5.7](#) – Procurement Management for a discussion of procurement from a project management perspective.

When consultants are contracted to provide construction-engineering services on WisDOT projects, the role of the project manager or on these projects is slightly different compared to projects that are staffed by department employees.

On both occasions the project manager provides oversight to ensure the project is being built successfully. The project manager will also be called upon from time to time to resolve disputes between the contractor and the engineer.

The big difference between the two situations is that on a project with department employees the relationship between the project manager and the field staff is an employee-employer relationship; on a consultant project the relationship between the project manager and consultant engineer is purely contractual.

Theoretically a consultant project should require less WisDOT oversight than a DOT staffed project because of less employee-employer supervision. Supervision of consultant employees is the responsibility of the consulting firm when consultant staff is used.

When deciding how much time should be spent on a consultant project the following factors should be taken into consideration:

1. The experience of the field staff.
2. The contractor.
3. The level of risk.
4. The level of controversy.
5. The level of inconvenience to the public.
6. Complexity of project.

These factors must be weighed in determining the number of times a project should be visited by the project manager. For instance, it may be appropriate to visit a town road bridge project on only one or two occasions during the life of the project, while an urban reconstruction project may warrant more visits.

Project managers should take advantage of current technologies such as telephone, facsimile machines, teleconferencing, web conferencing, project tracking, estimate viewing website, contract log, etc., to reduce need for field visits.

Ideally, at least some of the visits should coincide with contractor operations that are deemed critical to be inspected. This ensures that the project manager is able to observe the consultant staff as they engage in inspection and contract administration activities. It is important that the level of supervision and number of site visits be carefully considered so that the project is adequately supervised, but not over-supervised as to

unnecessarily raise the delivered cost of the project.