



BALTIMORE

# spec NEWS

# Felt Tips

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## PRELIMINARY SPECS -- THE EASY WAY

Once the work has been broken down into specification sections that can be priced and built by a single bidder, it is time to start work on the text. There is no problem, by the way, in writing several sections that can be taken by one bidder: Clearing, Excavation, and Underpinning, for example. It is easier to store good text from job to job if multiple sections of narrow scope can be retrieved if and as needed.

Early in the working drawings stage it is usually necessary to produce a preliminary specification that does six things:

1. Identifies the basic products in the building
2. Pinpoints where product choices are missing
3. Gives the job captain a handy record of product decisions to date
4. Sets terminology to be used in all the documents
5. Provides a preliminary review text for the client
6. Provides a body of text which can be simply added to in order to create the full specification later.

The 'Part 2 Specification' has been adopted by many offices to do all of these things. A 'Part 2 Specification' is really nothing more than a product list, written in outline form, or fully detailed, as time allows. Part 3 EXECUTION can be written later. Part 1 GENERAL is best written much later, since it contains submittal requirements and since it may involve cross-referencing, scope notes, and alternates. Other than a section number and section title, Part 2 PRODUCTS is all that is needed for all parties at this stage.

The simplicity of a preliminary 'Part 2 Specification' has to be broken at some points, to be user. An earthwork section has little or no Part 2 PRODUCTS text: it is wise to write Part 3 EXECUTION instead. Or, a paint or hardware schedule may be available: again Part 3 EXECUTION text. Division 1 text (Submittals, Temporary Facilities, Testing Services, etc.) does not lend itself to 3 Part writing: these should be included in whatever form is convenient.

But, all in all, the use of the 'Part 2 Specification' technique has worked well in organizing the document in its early stages. Sometimes the text remains unchanged right through to the day the full blown text is ready for the final printing.