

HOLD POINTS AND WITNESS POINTS

INTRODUCTION

Hold points and *Witness points* are construction stages which may need additional inspection, verification and documentation to make sure of:

- The safety of the personnel, environment and the public, before proceeding.
- The technical quality and any legal requirements have been satisfied.
- The next stage in the construction process can be completed.

Verification measures will vary with the specification method. For performance specifying, verification involves testing. For specifying by reference, verification is to a standard, or through third-party certification to that standard. Verification procedures are documented in the specification Inspection and test plan designated as *Hold points* and *Witness points*.

HOLD POINT

A *Hold point* is a mandatory verification point beyond which a work process cannot proceed without authorisation by the contract administrator. *Hold points* are usually assigned to those critical aspects of the work that cannot be inspected or corrected at a later stage because they will no longer be accessible. The relevant work cannot proceed until the contract administrator is able to verify the quality of the completed work and releases the *Hold point*.

Hold points can be nominated by:

- The principal, in the contract documents.
- The contract administrator, with a Non-conformance or Corrective action report.

Use *Hold points* sparingly as each potentially affects project duration and cost.

WITNESS POINT

A *Witness point* is an identified point in the work process where the contract administrator may review, witness, inspect or undertake tests on any component, method or process of works. The contractor is required to notify the contract administrator who may or may not take the opportunity. The subsequent activity however, may proceed.

CONTRACTOR'S ROLE

The contractor is responsible for satisfying the documented contract requirements and planning, developing and maintaining a system assuring the detection of non-conformances and control of their resolution. The issue of a Non-conformance report or a Notice of non-conformance automatically creates a *Hold point*.

AUS-SPEC APPROACH

AUS-SPEC is a specification system for the life-cycle management of assets. In AUS-SPEC *Templates*, *Hold points* are part of:

- *0136 General requirements (Construction)*, *0161 Quality management (Construction)* and *0167 Integrated management worksections*. The Quality plan for the works incorporates checklists, inspections, testing and documentation to make sure that the works comply with the contract documents. *Hold points* and *Witness Points* should be included in the checklists. Examples of submissions include a quality plan or soil compaction test results for a prepared sub-base.
- The summary of *Hold points* and *Witness points* in the annexure of each construction worksection provides a checklist for programming sequential activities and communication obligations.
- A Maintenance management plan combines the requirements of the Technical specifications, Quality manual and the Quality plan, for assuring quality in construction projects. The Maintenance management plan covers policy, organisation, selected procedures, maintenance planning and Activity specifications for maintenance activities. The Activity specifications form the core of the document and include the nominated *Hold points*, e.g. test results confirming compliance of materials like asphalt or requirements of the work order for the proposed maintenance work.

AUS-SPEC TECHguides provide further guidance on the use of *Hold points* and *Witness points* for the AUS-SPEC specifications.

NATSPEC APPROACH

NATSPEC *Templates* do not nominate *Hold points* in *Normal* style text. The **INSPECTION** clause in individual worksections includes *Guidance* text for nominating *Hold points* where they may be appropriate for inclusion in a project specification, e.g. inspecting formwork and reinforcement prior to placement of concrete.

NATSPEC *Templates* use **INSPECTIONS**, **Notice** in lieu of *Witness points*. TECHnote GEN 014 provides more information on submissions and testing.

AUS-SPEC definitions:

Hold point: A mandatory verification position in the contract beyond which work cannot proceed without designated authorisation.

Witness point: A nominated position, in the different stages of the Contract, where the option of attendance may be exercised by the Superintendent, after notification of the requirement.

Non-conformance report (NCR): A mandatory (standard format) report submitted by the Contractor that details the non-conformance and the Contractor's proposed disposition of the non-conformance.

Notice of non-conformance (NNC): Formal advice/ instruction from the Superintendent to the Contractor regarding non-conformance, detected by inspection. A NNC requires the submission of a NCR by the Contractor.

Corrective action request (CAR): A formal advice/instruction from the Superintendent to the Contractor on required corrective action for apparent shortcomings in the management system or organisational structure.

Disposition (of non-conformity): A remedial action to be taken concerning material, components or product about which a decision has been made. The resolution of a non-conformance. (This should not be confused with Corrective Action.)

NATSPEC definitions:

Hold point: The activity cannot proceed without the approval of the contract administrator.

NATSPEC defines **Hold points** in *Optional* style text in *0171 General requirements* worksection along with *Guidance* text on minimising contractor intervention of this kind to *accord with principles of quality assurance and risk allocation*.

Contract administrator: Has the same meaning as 'architect' or 'superintendent' and is the person appointed by the 'owner' or 'principal' under the contract.

Relevant documents

0136 General requirements (Construction) (AUS-SPEC)

0161 Quality management (Construction) (AUS-SPEC)

0167 Integrated management (AUS-SPEC)

0171 General requirements

AUS-SPEC TECHguides

TECHnote GEN 014 *Submissions and testing*

Austrroads AGPD03/14 *Guide to project delivery – Part 3 Contract management*.

Austrroads AGPD05/18 *Guide to project delivery – Part 5 Road construction quality assurance*.