Safety Advantages of Design-Build Delivery Methods

To ensure that safety exists in the collaborative approach for a design-build project, it is crucial that the designated safety officer hold a senior position on the design-builder’s or CMAR team and report directly to the project manager. Senior management’s close involvement to this function demonstrates that it is concerned not only with driving revenue, but also with protecting everyone working on the project. These guidelines present essential steps to integrate best practices for safety into any design-build or CMAR project.

**Safety Criteria in Design-Build and CMAR Procurement Create a Safer Project**

One advantage of collaborative procurement process for design-build delivery is that selection of either the design-build or CMAR firm is based primarily on qualifications. Therefore, each proposer’s safety record should be an important component of those qualifications, and specified within the RFQ/RFP. Design-build and CMAR firms should also evaluate the safety records of potential subcontractors and sub-consultants, based on the owner’s needs. This step helps not only to identify subcontractors and sub-consultants with the best safety records, but also to communicate to them the owner’s safety philosophy.

**Collaboration Enhances Safety**

The collaborative characteristics in a design-build delivery method offers distinct advantages over conventional design-bid-build delivery, in terms of the effectiveness of the safety program and the project’s ultimate safety record. When the design-builder is involved in the development and design of the project from the outset, safety challenges and concerns are effectively addressed early—with all parties, including sub-contactors and sub-consultants. In design-build delivery, the designer and builder work together to incorporate safe work practices into their their project approach: The builder specifies construction equipment, site access, and the sequence of activities to maximize safety as well as efficiency. In a CMAR delivery method, coordinated safety planning occurs during pre-construction services when the owner, designer, and CMAR manager can collaborate to design a safe and efficient project approach.

**Integrating Safety into Every Aspect of the Design**

The owner can work with the design-builder or CMAR manager to integrate safety into every aspect of the design process—from feasibility studies through final design. The team can address constructability and safety-related issues well before construction begins. The owner’s safety needs can be integrated into the design of the facility, avoiding hazards and optimizing efficiency.

**Establishing and Maintaining a Safety Culture is Critical**

Emphasizing safety throughout the duration of the project—including the personal involvement of senior management—is critical to its success. Design-build and CMAR delivery methods facilitate an integrated, collaborative and consistent safety approach that fosters a strong safety culture. This approach includes establishing safety goals and objectives from the start, and implementing procedures to verify that safety plans are carried out and maintained, as well as providing overall consistent safety leadership.

**Monitoring Requires Measuring Performance**

An effective audit program is essential to any safety process. Both Design-build and CMAR delivery methods allow for establishing and implementing a reporting and audit program from inception. Auditing must be established at every level of the operation, so project safety objectives and targets can be constantly evaluated. Audit results should be used to inform continuous improvement.