



US Army Corps
of Engineers®

ENGINEERING AND CONSTRUCTION BULLETIN

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Subject: Metric Design Policy

Applicability: Guidance

1. The purpose of this bulletin is to reiterate current USACE metric policy, which has been in place since 21 November 1994. This ECB replaces ECB 2002-6 that expired on 1 April 2004. This guidance is equally applicable to Military Construction and Civil Works projects.
2. Public Law 94-168 designates the metric system of measurement as the preferred system of weights and measures for United States trade and commerce. Executive Order 12770 requires the use of the metric system in Federal acquisitions except when such use is “impracticable or is likely to cause significant inefficiencies or loss of markets to United States firms.” Public Law 104-289 exempts concrete masonry units and recessed lighting fixtures from the metric policy until January 2007, and they should not be specified in metric units.
3. Generally, design and construction of new or renovated facilities shall use the metric system of measurement, unless such use leads to inefficiencies or would be otherwise impractical. Increased initial cost or life cycle cost is certainly an indicator of inefficiencies. The design agent / project manager is responsible for making the determination on whether or not to use the metric system of measurement on a project-by-project basis. Customer preferences or limited designer experience are not adequate justifications on their own for eliminating metric use, but may be part of the decision process. Decisions to not use the metric system must be justifiable and documented in permanent project files. Where request for proposals (RFP) or similar alternatives to the design-bid-build process are used, the RFP may be issued in dual units (inches and metric) with the requirement that each proposal indicate the system of units to be used by the contractor throughout. Drawings will not be accomplished in dual units on any type of project. UFC 1-300-01, Criteria Format Standard, provides guidance on the use of metric in criteria documents and specifications.
4. HQUSACE point of contact for metric policy is Bob Fite, CECW-CE-H, 202-761-7761.

DONALD L. BASHAM, P.E.
Chief, Engineering and Construction
Directorate of Civil Works