

WisDOT Justification Email Guidance

December 2020

An estimate is required to be justified by the designer if the low bid is more than 10% lower than your estimate or if the low bid more than 5% higher than your estimate, [FDM 19-5-7.3](#). Emails also may be sent asking to check quantities.

Justification emails use contact information from the plan letter. If the wrong individual is emailed, please forward the justification email to the correct contact and CC everyone else in the original email.

Emails will be sent to the following individuals when a bid justification is required:

- Design Engineer
- Project Manager or Local Program Project Manager
- Region Design QA Engineer
- Supervisor
- Design Chief and Planning Chief

Please send the justification response before noon on Friday. You do not need to wait for concurrence responses before sending the justification. Bureau of Project Development can ensure no additional information is needed for the justification before the letting review and the proposal may be awarded as soon as the concurrences are received.

Justification Responses

Simply saying that a bid is higher or lower than expected bid prices is not enough. Differences between the estimate and bid(s) need more thought out reasons in the justification.

Focus on bid items that caused the proposal to require a justification. You do not need to list reasons why all estimate item prices are different from the bid.

Short justifications do not require a separate attached document. Simply embed responses in different colored text within the original email text for the justification. Otherwise, justification attachments can become lost in replies.

Chief Concurrences

Chief concurrences are only required when the bid is higher than the estimate. BPD needs the emails from the chiefs to award the proposals. These emails can be forwarded or emailed as an attachment.

Local Concurrence

Local concurrences are required when the project has a State Municipal Agreement with local funds included in the funding of the project.

Administrator and Secretary Review

The WisDOT Administrator's and Secretary's Office thoroughly review proposals that are bid significantly higher than the estimate.

- The Administrator's Office reviews the justification when the difference between the estimate and low bid is greater than 20% or the bid is more than \$1 million over the estimate.
- The Secretary's Office reviews the justification when the difference between the estimate and low bid is greater than 15%.

Explaining the proposal's need, scope, and program schedule and reasons why the proposal should be awarded is vital in the administrator and secretary reviews. BPD highly recommends that the designer place a deliberate effort for thorough responses in the email justification for projects where the bids are higher than the estimate.