



Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Division of Transportation System Development

Utility Coordination Newsletter

Contractor Shares Life Experience Installing Power Lines Across USA



Imagine having your work morning begin by being dragged in the air by a helicopter, waiting for the pilot to get you close to a power pole, motioning to the pilot that

you're at the correct height and stepping on to a power line tower as the helicopter flies away?

That's how Rory Andersen, a journeyman lineman, has started his mornings while working on large power line systems in remote areas throughout the United States.

This is Rory's dream job to do this type of work.

Articles Included

- Statewide Utility Conference Postponed
- Utility Conflict Documentation
- Utility Coordination Tools
- Highway Commissioner Shares Insights
- Local Program Guidance
- Norman's Corner
- Staff Updates

A dream that began with the fortunate guidance of Rory's grandfather who had been a journeyman lineman himself.

Rory and his girlfriend, now wife Emily, had decided they would leave their home city of Ashland, Oregon, and head to Boise, Idaho so Emily could attend school there. With just a high school education, Rory was frustrated and could only find jobs that would barely support them during this time. Rory's grandfather suggested he look at Northwest Lineman College to see if that type of training and work might interest him. Rory took one look and said, "I just knew. I was all in." Seeing the transmission towers and physicality of the work excited him. He enrolled and attended Northwest from January-April of 2011.

Release of Rights
Flowcharts

- Utility Status Report
- Buy America
- TUMS
- Work Zone Training



Rory's first job out of school took him to Grand Island, Nebraska, where he worked for Midplains Power doing distribution work for two years. The focus was on rural electric jobs: two wire and 35 foot poles out in the country. During his time with Midplains they also commuted to Iowa for weeks at a time for a job. Rory learned a lot through this job and he said, "I realized there were bigger and better opportunities out there." Commuting every week was also a pivotal time for them as a couple. The weekly separation was difficult on their relationship and they decided to purchase a fifth-wheel camper so Emily could come along wherever he was working.

This led them to work for Brink Constructors out of Rapid City, South Dakota, on a 138 mile transmission project in Oklahoma. "This job opened my eyes to what I was capable of," said Rory. This was a big project using 345 kV, a high voltage line with steel towers. The project finished early and under budget.

The next big jump for Rory was working in Kansas as a foreman for the first time and deciding to join the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW). "This was the biggest changing moment for our family," said Rory. Completing his credentials to join the union allowed him access to jobs anywhere in the country and meant a significant jump in pay and benefits. In three years he went from earning \$16 an hour to \$41.

Beginning in 2014 he moved to several jobs around the country from Colorado, Arizona, Utah and back to Colorado following the best paying jobs and the work experience he wanted to gain. He and Emily would talk through their options and leave within a few days for new jobs. Looking back at it Rory said working in Arizona was good but brutal. He learned helicopter work there but it was 115 degrees while he worked. Also, Emily was pregnant at the time. She and their dogs hid out in the camper with three air conditioners running only to get the temperature down to 96! Fortunately, she's still married to him!!! That fall they moved back to Colorado and their son was born.

Doing helicopter work is what excites and motivates Rory most. "The camaraderie of the lineman when you do that type of work and the adrenaline rush from the physicality of it is amazing! You feel so proud when the work is

done," says Rory.

The Andersens kept travelling around the country as they describe, "chasing the down payment for a house," from 2015 to 2017. One of the most historically significant jobs Rory took was working on upgrading the original power line that came in to St. Louis, Missouri. He said, "It was exciting to know I was working on the first big power line that came into St. Louis during the Industrial Age."

"I really enjoyed moving around for a while seeing different ways of life," says Emily. "People were good to us wherever we lived," said Emily. She was surprised how much she enjoyed living in Nebraska. "The people are good Midwestern, friendly neighbors," she said. Neighbors there made sure she was safe and had what she needed while Rory was away during the week.

"It can be very lonely, but if you have a group of people you move with it helps. You learn to make 'home' where you're at. Being together is what is important." Each time they would move she would need to learn a new grocery store. There were some challenging times when it was cold and their water lines froze or a river was cresting near their camper. "It doesn't matter what it is. We can look at each other and know we can make it," they both chime in.

All the sacrifices paid off, the six years of working as a contractor allowed the Andersens to save enough for a down payment for a house. Rory had a goal of eventually being able to work at a large power company out West nearer to their family. He got recruited by Pacific Gas and Electric, was offered a job as a journeyman lineman, and has had the opportunity to fly a lot. "It has taken me a really long time, but I am in my dream job," said Rory. Both Emily and Rory are extremely happy to have accomplished this dream together.



Rory & Emily Andersen lived in their camper for four years as they moved from project to project every couple of months.

UN #09-01

Statewide Utility Conference Postponed

Until Spring 2021



The Statewide Utility Conference is postponed until spring 2021.

"Unfortunately, we need to reevaluate when we can safely hold a statewide meeting due to COVID-19 concerns," said Norman Pawelczyk, Technical Services chief. "In the meantime we'll do our best to inform WisDOT staff, consultants, local programs and utilities of news and updates," said Pawelczyk.

UN #09-02

Utility Conflict Documentation Report Findings

WisDOT performed a cursory review of the Utility Conflict Documentation Reports that were submitted for the 2019 construction season. This review resulted in some expected results, revealed some unexpected utility issues, and uncovered some additional items of interest.



Of the seven projects that utilized the conflict report, six projects submitted a total of 18 utility issues.

Some of the results that were expected include the following:

- The majority of utility issues were resolved in a short amount of time.
- Several of the utility issues affected the work on storm sewer and culvert pipes.
- Numerous utility conflicts were not identified during the design process. Design process issues were discovered.

On the other hand, utility issues that were unexpected include the following:

- The number of utility issues affecting the work on sidewalk and sidewalk ramps.
- Utility issues affecting excavation common were significantly lower than expected.

Finally, some items that were uncovered and unanticipated include the following:

- Contractors were able to move people, equipment, and materials to other locations on the project in order to keep the project moving forward.
- The resolution of the utility conflicts were mainly split between relocating the utility facility and the project staff designing around the utility facility.

- The ability of the contractor to utilize alternate, yet less efficient, construction methods in order to work around the utility facility until the utility company was able to relocate the utility facility.

UN #09-03

Utility Coordination Tools

Resources were added to the WisDOT's webpage for Utility Coordination.

A new link was added called **Utility Coordination Tools** and it was designed for WisDOT and consultant staff who perform utility coordination. The contents were developed to act as resources to help people remember all the required steps and ultimately improve utility coordination.



This is where the information is located: [Utility Coordination Tools](#).

Questions can be submitted to DOTDTSDCOUtilityCoordination@dot.wi.gov

UN #09-04

Highway Commissioner Shares Insights



Shawano County Commissioner Grant Bystol shares insights on best ways to tackle highway improvement projects.

Bystol's work experience includes six years at WisDOT in the Project Design Unit overseeing construction nine months of the year and three months of the year in design. After that he learned about the day-to-day operations of a county highway department by working as the

assistant highway commissioner for Shawano County. This experience gained him his current role as highway commissioner for Shawano County for the last 11 years.

As highway commissioner Bystol is responsible for the following areas:

- overall maintenance of the highways in the county
- purchase and maintenance of equipment to upkeep the roads within the county
- management of 72 employees
- administration of the FHWA program to maintain the 103 county, town and village bridges
- administration of WisDOT's Local Road Improvement Program (advertising and reviewing applications, awarding funding and inspecting project completions).

"Working well with DOT is important," says Bystol. He says his first line of communication is with WisDOT Highway Maintenance to get answers on day-to-day issues. He also works closely with project design and Central Office staff for the Local Road Improvements Program and utility coordination.

Two big projects Bystol says that his county is preparing for are two bridges to be constructed in 2022 under WisDOT's Surface Transportation Improvement Program. One of the projects is the CTH HHH bridge over the Wolf River and Shawano Lake. The second bridge is the CTH A over the Red River. Bystol attributes the ability to tackle these two large projects with early planning that began in 2015 with real estate acquisitions, right of way clearing, DNR requirements and bridge design.

Bystol said his county adopted a utility policy that sets out guidelines for all utilities to follow within the county for depth of burying and posts legal information. This policy was established using guidance from the Wisconsin County Highway Association. "Getting to know your local utility representatives is important," says Bystol. Additionally, Bystol says two years prior to any construction project they send the plans to any affected utilities and they also host on-site meetings to work through any possible conflicts. Finally, for all construction projects Bystol says they began the real estate acquisitions and right of way work four years in advance.

Bystol is excited for a rural to urban project that will widen CTH H from Old Lake Lane to Shawano County Lake Park. This project will continue an expansion of the road for an additional 1.8 miles to include pedestrian/bike lanes heading toward the county park. "Whenever we can work with the park system to improve pedestrian and bike options, we do," says Bystol.

Following is a link to several of the programs Bystol utilizes to fund his projects: [Road and Bridge Assistance Programs](#)

UN #09-05



Shawano County will widen CTH H from Old Lake Lane to Shawano County Lake Park to add space for pedestrian/bike traffic.

Local Program Guidance

Contacts from Local Program Agencies can find guidance from WisDOT on its website on the Utility Coordination page by following this link: [Local Program Agency Tools](#)

The American Public Works Association (APWA) recently worked with WisDOT to put together an online training workshop on the Local Program Project Development Process. People interested in this training, can register for the free workshop and the live Q&A event [here](#) . The Q&A event will take place on Tuesday, June 30th from 9:30-11:30am. Questions for this Q&A event can be sent to the following mailbox: [DOT Local Program Project Development Training](#)



People who can't attend the Q&A on June 30th , can still view the online trainings [here](#) .

UN #09-06

Norman's Corner

I hope all is well with everyone as we are now fully engaged in a busy construction season with a lot of utility coordination and relocation being completed.

One of our main goals for utility coordination statewide currently is to compile data and learn from some of the obstacles we are encountering on our projects.

Safety is always our first concern. As a result we have developed a new Utility Conflict Report to help document and work toward solving our utility relocation challenges. We are also reviewing our current utility permitting requirements to make the process more efficient and useful for all those working in the highway right of way.

Let's please keep our communication lines open so we can all have a successful 2020 construction season.

If you have a question or comment, please send it to: DOTDTSDCOUtilityCoordination@dot.wi.gov

Thanks,

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UN #09-07

Staff Updates

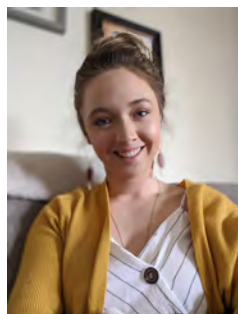
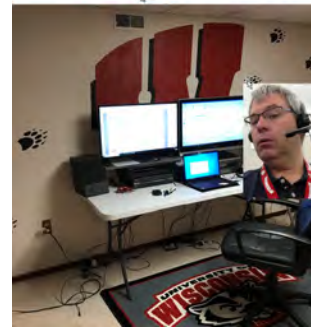
Southeast Region

Michael Birschbach returned to the Southeast Region Utility Unit as a utility construction engineer in March. He'll be working on all construction projects where there are utility conflicts during construction.

"I like being out in the field. I like a good mystery. I like taking pictures. So this is a good fit," says Birschbach about his new job.

Birschbach started with WisDOT in 2012 in the Utility Unit. Three years ago he transferred and worked as a railroad coordinator for the SE Region and had been working on completing the Waukesha bypass the last three years. Prior to his career at WisDOT Birschbach worked at PSI, Midwest Engineering, and Jahnke & Jahnke Associates. He earned a degree in civil and environmental engineering from University of Wisconsin-Madison.

In his free time Birschbach enjoys watching sports, woodworking and fishing. He recently purchased a kayak.



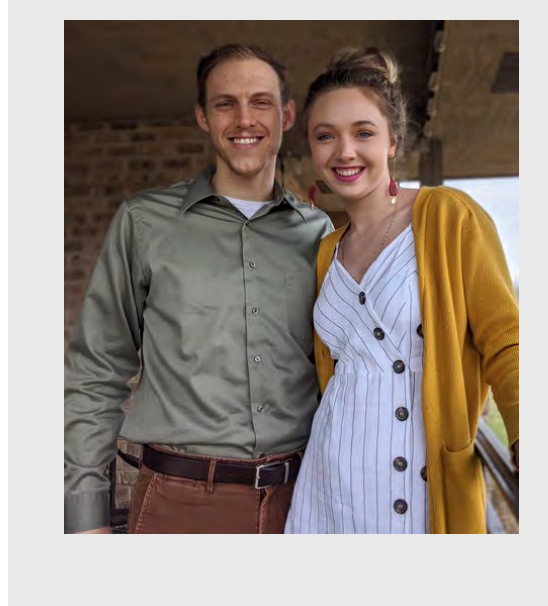
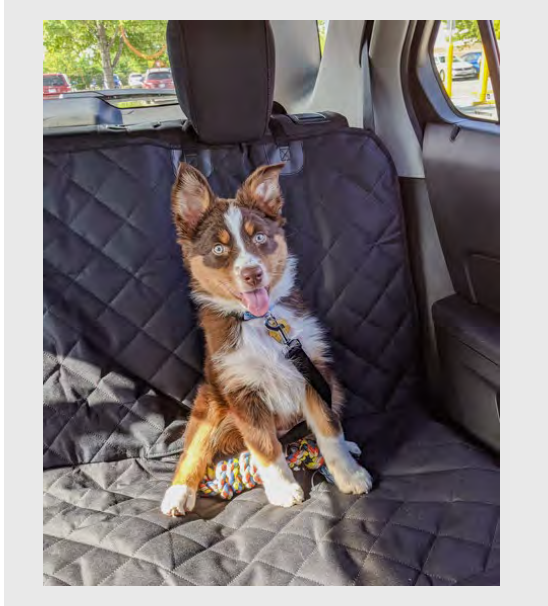
Amanda Wilker joined WisDOT as a part-time, in-house consultant utility coordinator/engineer working in the Southeast Region. She'll be assisting other WisDOT utility coordinators. Currently she has been working on I-794 projects. She also spends the other half of her time working for Bloom Companies, LLC where she has worked for three years and is currently a staff engineer.

Wilker says this about her new role, "I am mainly excited about the experience and the learning. I love to learn."

At Bloom she has inspected construction, completed minor surveying projects and assisted on many design projects. When she interned at Widseth in Minnesota she assisted with building and civil projects and inspected repaving

jobs. Wilker earned her civil engineering degree from University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

In her free time Wilker enjoys being outdoors, camping, reading and working out. She's recently adopted a puppy, Hazel, and has been working on training her. Wilker and her fiancé, Brian, are planning their wedding.



Colin Doherty is working as an in-house consultant utility coordinator/engineer in the Southeast Region. Doherty graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and has worked for Bloom Companies, LLC for the past two years. He has 12 years of experience in design and construction management. While working for Bloom he works as a project engineer as well as a construction project lead. Erickson will be doing utility coordination for a wide variety of SE Region projects including STH 100 in Brown Deer, USH 18/Bluemound Road in Brookfield, and a several I-43 and I-41 projects.

Doherty started at the WisDOT SE Region office about a month before everyone started working from home. He says, "I am looking forward to getting back to the office and getting to know the utility coordination team better! They have all been extremely helpful while I've been learning the utility coordination process while at home." One benefit of working from home Doherty has enjoyed is that he and his wife have gotten to spend a lot of time with their new dog Winston. In his free time Doherty enjoys golfing and he is looking forward to going to Door County for a weekend in July.



Colin Doherty working as a consultant utility coordinator/engineer in the WisDOT SE Region.



Doherty's new dog Winston.

Northeast Region

WisDOT Northeast Region would like to welcome Garrett Vickman in his new role as a utility coordination engineer.

Vickman is working on a wide variety of projects in the region including: Village of Cambellsport, USH 45, and USH 151 in Fond Du Lac County; STH 47 and STH 47 Village of Black Creek in Outagamie County; Waupaca-Clintonville in Waupaca County; STH 42 City of Sturgeon Bay and STH 42 Forestville in Door County; STH 42 Howard Grove in Manitowoc County; and I-43 in Sheboygan County.



From 2013 on he worked for WisDOT in the Project Development Section as the design lead for STH 441 and STH 23 Majors program. Prior to coming to WisDOT in 2013, Vickman worked as an industrial wastewater engineer in Newport Beach, California for three years.

Vickman's adventure to California began after he graduated from the University of Minnesota in civil engineering and he got a job offer from a small consulting firm. He said he packed up his Nissan Sentra with all his belongings and drove the three thousand miles to his new job. " After three years of industrial waste water work, endless summer and constant traffic jams, I became rather homesick and accepted the fact that my acting career was never going to take off," said Vickman. He started applying for transportation engineering jobs at WisDOT and made his way back to Green Bay in September of 2013. In October of 2013 he met his wife Haley and they were married in 2016.

When asked what he does in his free time, Vickman responded, "Recently, a lot of playing with my 6-month-old daughter. We sing so many of those

nursery rhymes that we have dreams about them." When he's not singing, Vickman loves camping, fishing, running outside, golfing and the constant grooming of landscaping and lawn.

Northwest Region

Zachary Erickson is on a temporary assignment as a utility coordinator in the Utility Coordination Unit in the Northwest Region. He started with WisDOT about five years ago as a design project leader in the NW Region Project Development Section (PDS), participates as a Regional Incident Management Coordinator (RIMC) and is a volunteer of the Superior Office Employee's Association. Prior to starting at WisDOT, Erickson worked for American Engineering Testing, Inc. (AET) in Duluth, Minnesota for the previous 17 years performing environmental, geotechnical, and construction oversight roles related to commercial and public construction projects in the region.



Erickson lives in Duluth, Minnesota with his wife Taryn and three boys Owen, Camden and Lincoln. When there is free time, Erickson enjoys mountain biking, camping, canoeing and playing hockey. However, most of his free time is spent fixing broken things around the house and inventing new house projects.

UN #09-08



Erickson enjoys spending time outdoors snowshoeing and hiking with the family.

Release of Rights Flowcharts

Release of rights documents are used in the process to acquire utility land rights that exist on lands being acquired for a highway. This provides WisDOT

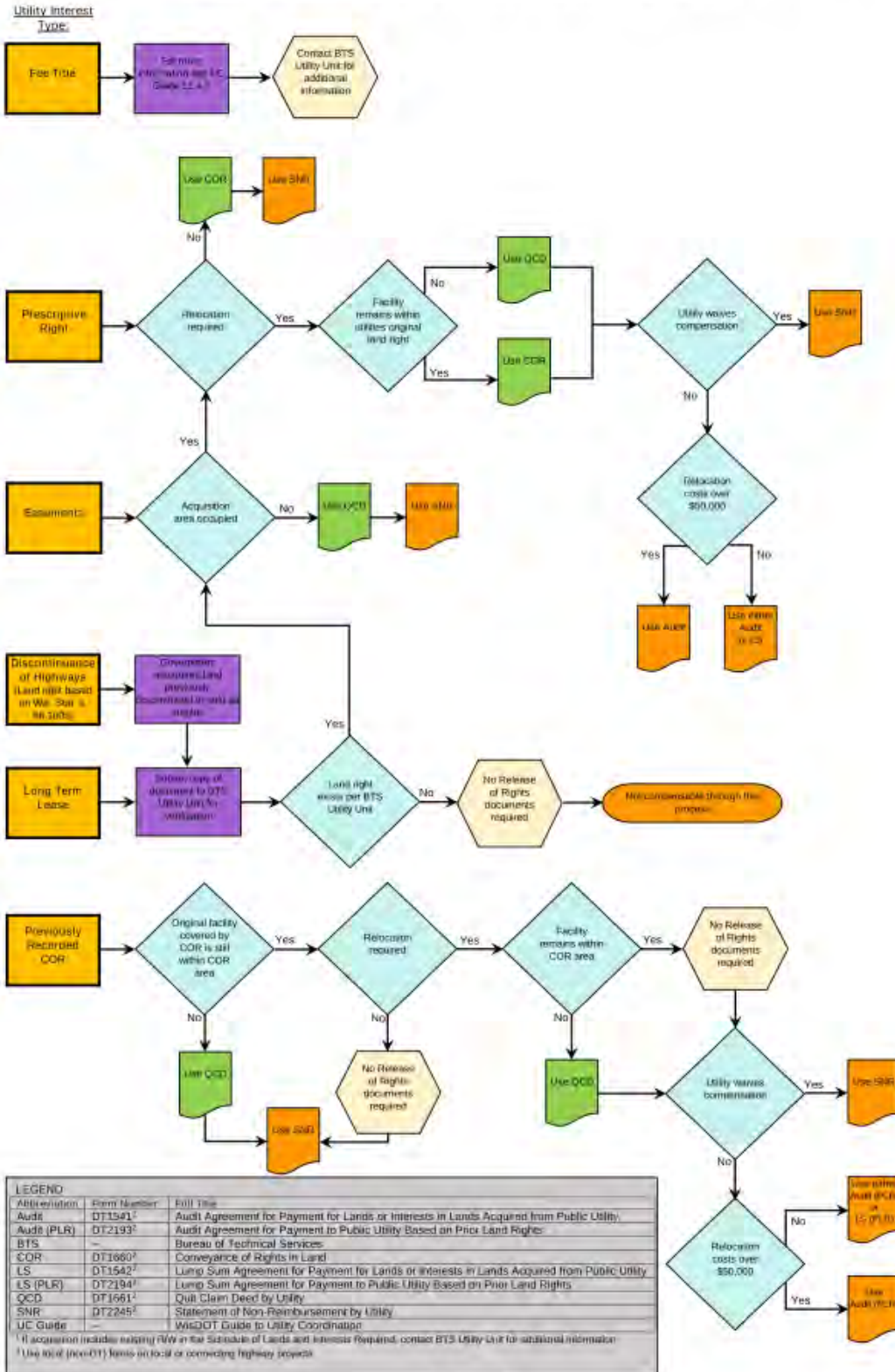
or the municipality with clear title and ownership of the highway. The appropriate document(s) to use can depend on multiple factors including the type of land acquisition, the type of land interest held by the utility company or municipality, and the location of the existing and proposed utility facilities. These factors, along with certain statutory and policy requirements, play a role in determining just compensation for the utility land rights.

Due to the complexities involved, the BTS Utility Unit developed flowcharts to guide utility coordinators, consultants, utility companies, and municipalities through this process. Both flowcharts may be applicable on any given project. Users can apply these flowcharts separately for each utility company or municipality on every land parcel to ensure that the proper documentation is used.

The flowcharts are as follows:

- [Process to Release Utility Land Rights When WisDOT Acquires Land in Fee](#)
 - This flowchart should be used for utility interests on land parcels that WisDOT is acquiring in fee simple. It details the variety of utility land interests that may exist and the appropriate document(s) to use.
- [Process to Release Utility Land Rights When WisDOT Acquires Easements](#)
 - Oftentimes, WisDOT will acquire an easement (highway easement, permanent limited easement or temporary limited easement) instead of fee simple. This flowchart details the appropriate document(s) to use when easements are being acquired.

Process to Release Utility Land Rights When WisDOT Acquires¹ Land in Fee (Follow this flowchart step by step for each land parcel being acquired)



LEGEND		
Abbreviation	Form Number	Full Title
Audit	DT1541 ¹	Audit Agreement for Payment for Lands or Interests in Lands Acquired from Public Utility
Audit (PLR)	DT2193 ²	Audit Agreement for Payment to Public Utility Based on Prior Land Rights
BTS	-	Bureau of Technical Services
COR	DT1660 ³	Conveyance of Rights in Land
LS	DT1542 ²	Lump Sum Agreement for Payment for Lands or Interests in Lands Acquired from Public Utility
LS (PLR)	DT2194 ²	Lump Sum Agreement for Payment to Public Utility Based on Prior Land Rights
QCD	DT1661 ⁴	Quit Claim Deed by Utility
SNR	DT2345 ⁵	Statement of Non-Reimbursement by Utility
UC Guide	-	WisDOT Guide to Utility Coordination

¹ If acquisition includes releasing ROW in the Schedule of Lands and Interests Required, contact BTS Utility Unit for additional information.
² Use only for (pre-CR) lands on local or connecting highway projects.

Utility Status Report



The BTS Utility Unit reviews every PS&E E-submittal from a utility coordination perspective. One of the documents reviewed is the Utility Status Report (USR). The USR is required for all projects with some exceptions for low risk projects in the Local Program. Consult with the Local Program Project Manager (LPPM) to determine if a USR is required.

It has been identified that a few items on the final version of the USR require clarification. These items are the certifications for Wisconsin and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

The Wisconsin certification is required for all projects that require a USR. There are three sections in the Wisconsin certification: Project Description, Utility Coordination Summary, and Utility(s) Clear for Letting. It is necessary for one box within each of the three sections to be checked on the final USR.

The FHWA certification is required for every project that requires a USR and utilizes Federal Aid anywhere on the project. These federal funds can be used in one or all of the following project IDs:

- Design
- Construction
- Railroad
- Real estate
- Utilities

The two sections in this part of the certification include Utility Coordination and Accommodation of Utilities. It is necessary for the box within each section to be checked on the final USR if Federal Aid is used on the project.

Additional guidance about PS&E requirements, from a utility coordination perspective, can be found in the WisDOT Guide to Utility Coordination (WGUC) and a job aid that is called the Let Review Standards (LRS). These can be found on the wisconsin.gov website or using the following links: [WisDOT Guide to Utility Coordination](#) and [Let Review Standards for Utility Coordination](#)

-- For WisDOT Region Utility Representative Use Only --

Wisconsin Certification**Project Description** (Check one)

- This is a Trans 220 project This is NOT a Trans 220 project

Utility Coordination Summary (Check one)

- The above table contains any utility(s) within the improvement project limits.
 Within the improvement project limits, the project will not conflict with or impact every utility. Any utility(s) not in conflict or impacted by the project need not be listed in the table above.
 No known utility(s) within the improvement project limits.

Utility(s) Clear for Letting (Check if applicable)

- We certify that all necessary coordination arrangements have been made in accordance with Wisconsin Statutes, Administrative Code, and applicable policies and procedures.

Federal Highway Administration Certification**Utility Coordination** (Check if applicable)

- In accordance with the Code of Federal Regulations 23, Part 635, Subpart C – Physical Construction Authorization, we certify that arrangements for work affecting the subject contract have been completed as required for proper coordination with the physical construction schedules.

Accommodation of Utilities (Check if applicable)

- Upon completion of the improvement project, we certify that all utility facilities along, across or within the right-of-way of the improvement project limits are authorized and such facilities are located in accordance with the Code of Federal Regulations 23, Part 645, Subpart B – Accommodation of Utilities, and such policies and practices as agreed to between the Department and the Federal Highway Administration.

Defer Wisconsin and/or Federal Highway Administration Certification**Utility(s) Not Clear for Letting** (Exception request submitted. When utility(s) clear, resubmit USR.) (Check if applicable)

- Necessary coordination arrangements have not been made with utility(s). (See COMMENTS)
 UTL's or UA's not clear. (See STATUS OF UTL'S OR UA'S NOT CLEAR)

Buy America

The Buy America Development Team is comprised of stakeholders from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), Local Public Agencies (LPA), and utility companies. The goal of this team is to create a guidance document that will assist stakeholders in complying with Buy America.



WisDOT has completed the preliminary draft of a guidance document. Notable elements include clarifying when Buy America applies, defining all items as manufactured products, explaining overseas manufacturing and assembly, defining when to calculate if an item is predominantly steel, how to calculate predominantly steel, and WisDOT certification requirements.

The preliminary draft has been shared with the team. As of Monday, June 22nd, the utility companies have completed the review of this document and provided comments.

In the near future, WisDOT will review these comments and determine the next steps for this team. The Buy America Development Team may reconvene to discuss the input that was received. If further discussions are not needed, WisDOT will proceed with sending this document to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) office in Madison for review.

Once the final draft of the guidance document has been sent to FHWA, they will have approximately 30 days to review this guidance document and determine if there are any concerns. If FHWA expresses concerns, the Buy America Development Team will meet to make any necessary revisions to the document. If FHWA does not express any concerns, WisDOT will work towards

publishing this document on the wisconsindot.gov website. It is anticipated that the guidance document will be included with the other utility coordination tools which are available by using the following link: [Utility Coordination Tools](#)

UN #09-11

TUMS Framework Updated

A major update to TUMS and DOCR is taking place this year.

TUMS has been completely upgraded to the new **Spring** application framework in Production. DOCR is being tested right now and plans are to stage the DOCR update into Production in mid-July.

Again, **Spring** is a common application development framework for enterprise Java applications and is considered "current and supported" in the technology marketplace. The update will improve code design – making it easier to work with and more flexible.

This update doesn't involve a lot of new features. "You can think of this update more like 'updating the transmission' or 'replacing the engine.' We can't see the changes, but they'll make a profound difference to the performance and longevity of the system," says Lynn Fiore, business area expert for TUMS.

A special thank you goes out to the testing team. The members of this team are: Margaret Liedtke, Dylan Gates and Rabi Bista, all from the SE Region, and Jeff Orr from the NE Region. "Their help is greatly appreciated. They have many other responsibilities, yet they find the time to help with TUMS and DOCR testing so the system updates continue to move forward," says Fiore.

UN #09-12

Utility Coordination Training Available



Work Zone Training

Work zone traffic control training is available through WisDOT's LearnCenter. To set up an account and register for training, follow the instructions at this link:

<https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/contractors/cnrctr-trng/default.aspx>

UN #09-13





To subscribe, submit questions, suggestions, comments or potential newsletter articles, please send an email to DOTDTSDCOUtilityCoordination@dot.wi.gov . BTS/U will review each submission prior to publication.

This bulletin has been developed to provide updates, clarifications, job aids and news pertaining to WisDOT utility coordination and related WisDOT programs, policy and services. Information published in this bulletin will be of interest to those who work closely with utility coordination.