1. Question: Why do I need a CAD Standard?

Answer: The National CAD Standard (NCS) provides the following response to this question:

“For anyone faced with organizing (or simply understanding the organization of) electronic building design data for CAD produced in a multitude of formats, the value of organizing the data in a consistent format is immediately apparent. In the absence of a single national CAD standard, many companies and organizations have developed internal "office standards" as a way of consistently organizing their own electronic CAD data. The value of such office standards is limited to their realm of influence. For design firms, that realm may not extend beyond the firm itself, except in cases where design sub-consultants can be compelled to adopt it. Large building and property owners may require adoption of a "company standard" as a condition for providing design services to them, and thus influence a realm well beyond their immediate organizations. However, the effort required to develop office standards is a now an unnecessary cost of doing business, and the duplication of effort required to develop multiple office standards is a gross and blatant inefficiency.”

Prior to the release of the A/E/C CAD Standard or National CAD Standard, each DoD agency maintained their own CAD standard. Oftentimes, each District/Office within each agency had individual internal standards. It was also possible that each Branch within each District/Office developed their own standard! This resulted in a nightmare when exchanging files between branches/Districts/agencies. Standards cut down the confusion over where items should go in a CAD files and what those items should look like. Only within the past year, the CAD/BIM Technology Center received complaints for A-Es performing work for USACE over the number of border sheets they had to maintain. Once A-E provided examples of 9 different border sheets they had to keep up with from 9 different Districts. Why? Same thing with text heights. One District required the A-E to develop drawings using 3/32” high text, while another District required 1/8” high text. Why?

Standards are not just an option for agencies as large as USACE, NAVFAC, Army, Air Force, NASA, or GSA, they are a necessity. Following a standard has been proven to save not only time in the development of CAD drawings, but also money. Developing standards for CAD also allows tools to be developed to further assist in the implementation of standards. The release of tools within the A/E/C Work Structure
takes all of the guesswork out of the Standard (as well as reducing the time in looking up in the Standard how things should look).

2. Question: Is Back-Referencing within the Drawing Area Title for details/sections/elevations allowed?

Answer: The practice of Back-Referencing is not explicitly allowed or disallowed in the NCS. The NCS defines the Drawing Area Title symbol, for the detail ID, as a circle with 1/4" text height (however, see Question #3 below). The fact that the NCS does not include Back-Referencing as an option, or provide any mention of Back-Referencing, implies that Back-Referencing is not allowed (however, it is never explicitly stated).

The Work Structure committee (WSC) working with the CAD/BIM Center, has developed a method of adding Back-Referencing to the Drawing Area Title tool, that is not in conflict with the NCS convention. This method of adding text that identifies what sheet and where, in the border sheet grid, the detail/section/elevation callout is located will be included in the next release of the A/E/C Graphics Standard. See the A/E/C Work Structure User’s guide for details on the Drawing Area Title tool. (Supplement to the A/E/C Graphics Standard)

3. Question: The NCS Drawing Area Title (DAT) symbol requirements do not work with sheet sizes above a D-size sheet because of additional grid modules being available. Are adjustments to the DAT allowed to accommodate larger size sheets?

Answer: The NCS requires that the DAT be sized to the following specifications

The problem that was discovered after the A/E/C CAD Standard R6.0 was published was that for E-size sheets and above, the 1/4” text height requirement within the “bubble” is too large. When placing a detail/section/elevation in grid column 10 or higher, the text spills over the bubble (see figure below).
Also, it has been commented that with the majority of the rest of the drawing text set to 3/32", 1/4" text within the DAT looks disproportional to the rest of the drawing. To fix this problem, the text within the DAT bubble and the DAT title text will be reduced from 1/4" to 3/16". All other settings specified by the NCS for the DAT will still be in effect. 

**This fix will be made to the A/E/C Work Structure and is an official allowed deviation from A/E/C CAD Standard R6.0. Furthermore, this fix will be submitted as a ballot item for NCS V7 when ballot items are requested. (Revision to the A/E/C CAD Standard)**

4. **Question:** Our District has a reviewer that wants to enforce all aspects of the Graphic Standard to the letter. I really do not want to override associative dimensioning to address this issue (i.e., manually editing metric dimension text from 45000 to 45 000).

**Answer:** This metric dimension requirement cannot be achieved through a dimension style setting in AutoCAD. The only way to do it is by manually editing the dimension (which does override the associativity of the dimension). For R3.0 of the Graphic Standard, this Note will be changed to:

**Note:** The automatic dimensioning features of AutoCAD do not allow users to replace commas with spaces in dimension text, otherwise the associative properties of the dimension to the object being dimensioned would have to be overridden. Until AutoCAD includes a dimension setting to allow this, AutoCAD users are not mandated to follow this requirement. *(Revision to the A/E/C Graphics Standard)*
5. **Question:** In Table 2-3 of the A/E/C CAD Standard (Sheet File Discipline Designators), for all the disciplines with an “S” Level 2 Designator denoting “Site”, this typically follows the *D “Demolition” and *- “All or any portion of subjects in the following Discipline Designators” in sequence. However, in the Mechanical part of the table, “Site” is more than halfway through the sequence. Is this correct?

**Answer:** Mechanical Site “MS” should immediately follow “MD” and “M-“ in the sequence in Table 2-3. This will be fixed in R7.0 of the A/E/C CAD Standard. **This fix will be made to the A/E/C Work Structure and is an official allowed deviation from A/E/C CAD Standard R6.0. (Revision to the A/E/C CAD Standard)**

6. **Question:** All section, elevation, and detail indicators in the A/E/C Standard and Work Structure are 5/8” diameter. The National CAD Standard V6 does not give a diameter size for the detail indicator, 1/2” diameter for an exterior elevation indicator, 3/8” diameter for an interior elevation indicator, and 1/2” diameter for a section indicator. Why the deviation in the Standard and all the variations in the NCS?

**Answer:** The NCS made the change to the interior elevation indicator for V6 because they felt a 5/8” diameter circle was too large. However, 3/8” is now too small for some potential sheet numbers (see figure below). Even 7/16” diameter is potentially too small. A 1/2” bubble seems to be the best case to fit all text that could be used. So, for all section, elevation (interior and exterior), and detail indicators in the A/E/C Standard and Work Structure, the bubble will be changed to 1/2” diameter. This will bring the Standard and Work Structure in conformance with NCS section and exterior elevation indicators, but will conflict with NCS interior elevation indicators (and unknown for NCS detail indicators, since no size is provided). **(Note: upon looking at the symbols provided by the NCS, the interior elevation symbols are set to 5/8” diameter, so NCS does not follow what is in the documentation.)**
This fix will be made to the A/E/C Work Structure (to be released in September 2016) and will be an official allowed deviation from A/E/C CAD Standard R6.0. Through the end of FY16, the 5/8” diameter bubble is allowed. Furthermore, this fix will be submitted as a ballot item for NCS V7 when ballot items are requested. (Revision to the A/E/C CAD Standard)

7. Question: A lot of the text and drawing items in the A/E/C CAD Standard Level/Layer Assignment Tables are yellow (RGB 255, 255, 0). I realize this choice was made to make these items stick out on a color monitor. However, this is a real problem when you make a color print of your drawing. The yellow is too bright when printed on a white paper background. Could this color be toned down so it becomes more visible?

Answer: With more and more agencies moving to color plots vs black & white, this is a problem. To solve this problem, all yellow (255, 255, 0) items have been changed to more of a “dirty yellow” (255, 200, 0), in order to make them more visible on a color plot. This fix has been made to the A/E/C Work Structure and is an official allowed deviation from A/E/C CAD Standard R6.0. (Revision to the A/E/C CAD Standard)

8. Question: In the A/E/C CAD Standard, there is a section about how an "A" or a "B" can be appended to the end of a file name, in order to insert the new file into a pre-existing set. This is allowed to help reduce the work load for a large number of sheets, and having to rename and reorganize a set of plans.

What about the opposite situation? During a review, things change and sheets are needed to be removed from the contract set. Is it true that once an ID is created for a given sheet then that ID should stay with that sheet regardless if it is no longer in the contract? Also, should a history of the sheet being created or deleted from the contract be retained in an Excel file?

Answer: The key question is: when is the addition or the removal of the sheet occurring?

Schedule permitting, if a sheet is being added or removed before advertisement, then sheets should be renumbered in sequence. Otherwise, questions will pop up as to “where is the sheet X-XXX?” If the schedule doesn't permit, the sequence numbers can be left as they are.

If a sheet is being removed after advertisement, then removal of the sheet should be documented in the index with an amendment or a mod symbol.

If you do need to reuse the sheet ID, then this needs to be noted on the sheet with a revision triangle and a Description in the Revision (Issue) Block to the effect of “Reissued by Amendment (or Modification) XXXXX”.

(Revision to the A/E/C CAD Standard)
For how the history is retained, this is up to the site. However the Index Sheet is the primary document holder of the sheet IDs and the sequence. *(Supplement to the A/E/C CAD Standard)*

9. **Question:** The A/E/C Graphics Standards says in the SHEET IDENTIFICATION BLOCK section on page 11 that: "The height of the sheet identifier shall be 1/4" high”. If so, why does the delivered Sheet ID cell/block have this height set to 9/32"?

**Answer:** The text height of the sheet identifier was increased to differentiate this information in the Sheet Identification Block when the Building ID option was added. The text in the Graphics Standard was copied from an older release and failed to get updated. The text should read:

**SHEET IDENTIFICATION BLOCK:** The Sheet Identification Block (Figure 2-9) contains, at a minimum, the sheet identifier and the "SHEET ID" title. The sheet identifier is composed of the discipline designator, the sheet type designator, and the sheet sequence number (e.g., A-101). The height of the sheet identifier shall be 9/32" high. The "SHEET ID" title shall be 1/8" high. *(Revision to the A/E/C Graphics Standard)*

10. **Question:** The wording of the General Notes section of the A/E/C Graphics Standards (p. 41) is confusing and conflicts with the National CAD Standard with regard to sheet-specific notes.

**Answer:** There is a conflict currently in the sentence below, which leads to confusion:

“General notes applicable to specific sheets shall be worded GENERAL NOTES: THIS SHEET ONLY or GENERAL NOTES: SHEETS ____ THRU ____.”

To conform to the NCS, the sentence will be revised to state:

“General notes applicable to a range of sheets shall be worded GENERAL NOTES: SHEETS ____ THRU _____. Sheet-specific notes shall be located on the applicable sheet and titled "GENERAL SHEET NOTES". The following figures will also be added for clarification:
GENERAL NOTES
1. THESE ARE GENERAL NOTES.
2. THEY ARE LOCATED NEAR THE BEGINNING OF A SET OF DRAWINGS ON A G-00# SHEET
3. GENERAL NOTES START IN THE UPPER LEFT CORNER AND CONTINUE DOWN AND TO THE RIGHT AS NEEDED
4. GENERAL NOTES APPLY TO ALL SHEETS IN THE SET

GENERAL (DISCIPLINE) NOTES
1. THESE ARE GENERAL (DISCIPLINE) NOTES.
2. THEY ARE LOCATED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE (DISCIPLINE) DRAWINGS ON A X-00# SHEET
3. GENERAL (DISCIPLINE) NOTES APPLY TO ALL (DISCIPLINE) SHEETS IN THE SET

GENERAL (DISCIPLINE) NOTES: SHEETS X-102 THRU X-109
1. THESE ARE GENERAL (DISCIPLINE) NOTES.
2. THEY ARE LOCATED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE (DISCIPLINE) DRAWINGS
3. THESE GENERAL (DISCIPLINE) NOTES THAT APPLY TO SPECIFIC SHEETS IN THE SET
**GENERAL SHEET NOTES**
1. THESE ARE GENERAL SHEET NOTES
2. THEY ARE LOCATED IN THE UPPER RIGHT CORNER ON THIS SHEET ONLY
3. GENERAL SHEET NOTES APPLY ONLY TO THE SHEET THEY ARE LOCATED ON

**SHEET KEYNOTES**
1. THESE ARE SHEET KEY NOTES
2. THEY ARE LOCATED IN THE UPPER RIGHT CORNER BELOW GENERAL SHEET NOTES IF APPLICABLE
3. SHEET KEYNOTES APPLY TO THE KEYED VALUES IN THE DRAWING ON THIS SHEET ONLY

**LEGEND**
1. THIS IS A SHEET LEGEND
2. IT IS LOCATED ALONG THE RIGHT SIDE BELOW KEY NOTES AND/OR GENERAL SHEET NOTES IF APPLICABLE

(Revision to the A/E/C Graphics Standard) Note: While this answer solves the NCS compliancy question, comment has been made on the use of “GENERAL SHEET NOTES” for titling sheet-specific text. Specifically, if the notes are
specific, why is the word “GENERAL” included in the title? For the next version of the NCS, it will be recommended in a voting ballot that this wording be revised.

11. **Question:** Section 5.3 Downloadable Resources under the A/E/C CAD Standard: Release 6.0 refers to a link to download the entire symbology library (https://cadbim.usace.army.mil/aeccadstandard). This link appears to be broken, is there another way to access these files?

**Answer:** The CAD/BIM Technology Center’s website was revised after publication of both Standards documents. The revised link is https://cadbimcenter.erdc.dren.mil/aeccadstandard *(Revision to the A/E/C CAD Standard)*