

ITEM 400

STRUCTURAL EXCAVATION AND BACKFILL

400.1 Description. This item shall govern for all excavation required for the construction of all structures, except pipe or box sewers for the disposal of all excavated material; and for backfilling around completed structures to the original ground level or as required by the plans. The work shall include all necessary pumping, bailing, sheathing, drainage, and the construction and removal of any required cofferdams. Unless otherwise provided, the work included herein shall provide for the removal of old structures or portions thereof (abutments, wingwalls, piers, etc.), trees and all other obstructions to the proposed construction.

Excavation will not be classified, but will be considered as "Structural Excavation", which will include the removal of all materials encountered regardless of their nature or the manner in which they are removed as well as any required backfill, and as approved by the Design Engineer.

400.2 Structural Excavation. Unless specified on the plans, or approved otherwise by the Engineer, structural excavation shall be designated as follows:

- A. Width and Length - From a vertical plane outside the structure equal to the thickness of the footing or slab.
- B. Depth - From bottom of footing or slab to the finished groundline or natural groundline, whichever is lower in elevation.
- C. When caissons are provided, excavation is not permitted outside the outer face of the caissons.

By definition, a cofferdam is a temporary or removable structure to keep surrounding earth, water, or both out of the excavation and may be earth, timber, steel, concrete or a combination thereof.

A caisson is a permanent part of the substructure which sinks gradually into place as material is excavated within the area protected by its sidewalls. It may be either open well type or a pneumatic type caisson.

400.3 Construction Methods. Excavation shall be done in accordance with the lines and grades indicated on the plans, or as established by the Engineer.

The final elevation to which a foundation is to be constructed shall be as shown on the plans or as raised or lowered by written order of the Engineer when such alterations are judged proper to satisfactorily comply with the design requirements for the structure. Should it be found necessary, in the judgment of the Engineer to increase or decrease the depth of footings from that shown on the plans, the necessary alterations in the details of the structure shall be accomplished as directed by the Engineer. Harris County shall have the right to substitute revised details resulting from a consideration of the changes in the design condition.

When a structure is to rest on an excavated surface, special care shall be taken not to disturb the bottom of the excavation, and the final removal of the foundation material to grade shall not be performed until just before the footing is to be placed.

Protect excavations from rainfall and surface water. If the supporting soil is exposed to adverse wet or dry conditions, excavate deeper and/or wider to sound material at no additional cost to Harris County. Prior to such activity, the Contractor shall notify the Engineer.

Excavated material required to be used for backfill may be deposited, by the Contractor, in storage piles at points convenient for rehandling of the material during the backfilling operations. The location of storage piles shall, however, be subject to the approval of the Engineer, who may require that the survey centerline of the structure and the transverse or hub line of any unit of the structure be kept free of any obstruction.

Excavated material required to be wasted shall be disposed of as directed by the Engineer, and the disposal shall be in such manner as not to obstruct a stream or otherwise impair the efficiency or appearance of the structure or other parts of the work.

400.4 Cofferdams and Caissons. The term cofferdam wherever used in this specification designates any temporary or removable structure which is constructed to hold the surrounding earth, water, or both out of the excavation, whether such structure is formed of earth, timber, steel, concrete, or a combination of these. It thus includes earthen dikes, timber cribs, any type of sheet piling, removable steel sheets and the like and all necessary bracing; and it shall also be understood to include the use of pumping wells or well points for the same purpose. The cost of cofferdams shall be included as an incidental cost to excavation.

The term caisson, wherever used in this specification, designates a permanent part of the substructure, so constructed as to sink gradually into place as material is excavated within the area protected by its

sidewalls. Such caisson may be of either the open-well or pneumatic type and quantities for same will always be included as bid items separate from excavation.

In addition to interior dredging, the lowering of caissons may be facilitated by the following methods:

- A. Addition of weight by increasing the thickness of caissons, where such increase is permitted by the type of design, shall be requested by the Contractor prior to beginning the work. Increased quantities due to this change shall be at the Contractor's expense.
- B. By the addition of removable loads to the caisson.
- C. The use of water or air jets placed around the caisson.
- D. Steel shell caissons may be driven with a drop or air hammer if the Contractor, at his own expense, provides a suitable driving ring. The driving ring shall be of sufficient strength and the manner of driving shall be regulated to preclude damage to the caisson.

When no provisions for caissons is shown on the plans, it shall be the intent of this specification to require that a suitable cofferdam be provided for all excavations where such cofferdam may be necessary to control water conditions or to preclude sliding and caving of the walls of the excavation. Where no ground or surface water is encountered, the cofferdam needs to be sufficient only to protect the workmen and to avoid cave-ins or slides extending beyond the excavation limits.

The Contractor shall submit, to the Engineer, upon request, drawings showing his proposed method of cofferdam construction and other details left open to this choice, or not fully shown on the plans. All shoring designs must meet the requirements of OSHA Standard 1926.650.

The type and clearance of the cofferdam, insofar as such details affect the character of the finished work, will be subject to the approval of the Engineer, but other details of design will be left to the choice of the Contractor, who will be responsible for the successful completion of the work. The interior dimensions shall be such as to provide sufficient clearance for the construction and removal of any required forms and the inspection of their exteriors and to permit pumping outside of the forms.

In general, sheet piling cofferdams shall extend well below the bottom of the footings and shall be well braced and as water-tight as practicable.

When foundation pilings are to be driven inside a caisson or cofferdam and when it is judged impractical to dewater the caisson or cofferdam before placing a concrete seal, the excavation may be extended below the footing grade to a depth sufficient to allow for swell of the material during pile driving operations. After the pilings have been driven, all foundation material that has risen to a level above the footing grade shall be

removed. It is the intention of this provision to establish a construction tolerance to be applied when a foundation is being constructed under water. Where it is possible to dewater the caisson or cofferdam before a seal is placed, it is considered practicable to remove the foundation material to the exact footing grades after foundation pilings are driven. Backfilling in a foundation to compensate for excavation which has been extended below grade, will not be permitted. Such areas below grade shall be filled with concrete at the time the seals or base courses are placed, and the concrete quantities involved shall be at the Contractor's expense. All caisson and cofferdam designs must meet the requirements of OSHA Standard 1926.650.

Caissons or cofferdams which tilt or move laterally during the process of sinking shall be righted or enlarged, as necessary, at the sole expense of the Contractor.

Unless otherwise provided, cofferdams shall be removed by the Contractor after the completion of the substructure. The removal shall be affected in such a manner as not to disturb or mar the structure. In lieu of the entire removal of the cofferdams, the Engineer may require the Contractor to remove any portion of them or to leave them entirely in place.

400.5 Pumping or Bailing. Pumping or bailing from the interior of any foundation enclosure shall be done in such a manner as to preclude the possibility of the movement of water through or alongside any concrete being placed. No pumping or bailing will be permitted during the time of the placing of concrete or for a period of at least 24 hours thereafter, unless it is done from a suitable sump separated from the concrete work by a water-tight wall. Pumping or bailing to dewater a sealed cofferdam or caisson shall not be started until the seal has set for at least 36 hours.

400.6 Backfilling. All backfills shall be constructed in layers approximately parallel to the finished grade. After completion of the backfill, it shall be continuously maintained to its finished grade, until the project is accepted.

Backfill for retaining walls, headwalls, bridge abutments, and other special structures, shall be as shown on the plans.

Each layer of backfill shall be uniform as to material, density and moisture content before beginning compaction. Water required to bring the material to the moisture content necessary for the required compaction shall be the responsibility of the Contractor.

Unless otherwise indicated, backfill compacted mechanically shall be in loose lifts not exceeding 8-inches. Backfill shall be clean bank sand, unless otherwise directed by the Engineer, free from clay and clay lumps, shale, loam, organic matter, salts and other deleterious materials and having a plasticity index less than 3. Backfill shall be compacted to ninety-five (95) percent of Standard Proctor Density (ASTM D698) at a moisture content ranging from optimum to +3 percentage points above optimum.

Do not place backfill against walls for a minimum of 7 days after structure has been in place. Place backfill against walls of partially completed structure only after approval of the Engineer. Backfill around abutments and piers shall be deposited on both sides to approximately the same elevation at the same time.

Care shall be taken to prevent any wedging action or backfill against the structure and the slopes bounding the excavation shall be stepped or serrated to prevent such wedge action.

No backfilling shall be done except in the presence of the Engineer, or his authorized representative.

- 400.7 Quality Assurance. The Testing Laboratory's representative will determine the moisture density relationship for each material proposed for use as backfill, in accordance with ASTM D698. In place density will be determined in accordance with ASTM D6938 or D1556, and with each type of construction.

For walls and trenches, determine the in place density at minimum for each 100-foot of wall or trench, for each lift of fill placed.

For building pads and parking areas, determine the in place density for each 4,000 square feet for each lift of fill placed.

- 400.8 Measurement and Payment. Will not be paid for directly, but will be considered subsidiary to the bid for structures requiring excavation and/or backfilling.

There are line code(s), description(s), and unit(s) for this item.

END OF ITEM 400