

AIA Contract Documents

FACT SHEET

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INTRODUCTION: In 1888, the AIA published its first contract document. Called the Uniform Contract, the document was for use between an owner and a contractor.

Today, there are 96 agreements and administrative forms available from the AIA in both paper and software. Over the years, owners, architects, contractors, attorneys, insurance experts, and many others have contributed to the development and revision of these documents.

The AIA contract documents enjoy a wide reputation for fairness to all parties. They reflect the latest changes in law and the construction industry, based on industry practices, not theory.

**STANDARD vs.
MODEL FORMS:**

The AIA Contract Documents are standard forms. A standard form is intended to be used with modifications clearly indicated to alert the non-drafting party to variations from the baseline. Changes to a standard form are always identified so those who have gained a familiarity with the document through repeated use may quickly measure the risks of a particular adaptation of the document to a specific situation.

Standard documents contrast with model forms, which are repositories of sample text. Model language is intended to be excerpted and blended with other text to create custom-made documents. Standard documents may also lower legal costs.

**DRAFTING
PRINCIPLES:**

The AIA Contract Documents are developed and revised based on a set of Drafting Principles. Among the principles are:

- To establish and maintain, for nationwide application, standardized legal forms in order to enhance the stability and order of design and construction legal transactions.
- To provide assistance to users who otherwise could not obtain knowledgeable legal counsel in a timely or economical fashion.
- To strive for balanced and fair documents.
- To express unambiguous intentions in language comprehensible to the users and interpreters (courts and lawyers) of the standard documents.

**REVISION
POLICY:**

The AIA revises its documents on a periodic basis, ceasing publication of prior editions. The purpose of revisions is to ensure that users have state of the art legal tools to be more productive and profitable. Reasons for revisions include changes in industry practice, changes in economics of the profession, and development of legal issues. Other revisions might be attributed to new participants in the construction industry that need to be acknowledged.

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