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# MILITARY STANDARD

## Corrective Action and Disposition System for Nonconforming Material



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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
Washington, DC

Corrective Action and Disposition System for Nonconforming Material

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FOREWORD

The premises upon which this standard is based have not changed and are stated as follows. It is Department of Defense (DOD) policy to reject material and supplies that do not conform to all contractual requirements. Deviation from this policy is permissible only when the Government determines that acceptance of such material and supplies is in its best interests. Acceptance of nonconforming material is the sole prerogative of the Government. The act of offering nonconforming material to the Government should be an exception and the consistent offering of nonconformances is indicative of a degradation in the contractor's control over quality.

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## 1. SCOPE

1.1 Purpose. This standard sets forth the requirements for a cost-effective corrective action and disposition system for nonconforming material. It defines requirements relative to the interface between the contractor and the contract administration office on nonconforming material. This standard sets forth the DOD contracting activity requirements for a properly constituted Material Review Board. The primary purposes of the corrective action and disposition system are to identify and correct causes of nonconformances, prevent the recurrence of wasteful nonconforming material, reduce the cost of manufacturing inefficiency, and foster quality and productivity improvement.

1.2 Application. When referenced in a contract, this standard applies to material and supplies (excluding computer software) to be delivered to the Government which fail to conform to contractual requirements. Requests for specification changes, engineering changes, and major and critical waivers and deviations are not applicable to this standard.

1.3 Change notices and revisions. Whenever this standard is changed or revised subsequent to its contractually effective date, the contractor may follow or authorize its suppliers to follow the changed or revised standard provided no increase in price or fee is required. The contractor shall not be required to follow the changed or revised standard except as a change in contract. If the contractor elects to follow the changed or revised standard, the contractor shall notify the contracting officer in writing of this election. When the contractor elects to follow the provisions of a change or revision, the contractor must follow them in full unless otherwise authorized in writing by the contracting officer.

## 3. DEFINITIONS

3.1 Control charts. A graphic representation of data used to detect, identify, analyze, and eliminate unacceptable variation in a given characteristic, process, or product. Computer software programs may be used for this purpose without a need to display the control chart itself. Commonly used control charts include variables or attributes process data and associated control limits, scatter plots of trends, histograms, and graphic displays of nonconformances by category. Control charts facilitate analysis of the process yield leading to potential changes in processes, methods, machines, and requirements documentation; evaluation of defect distributions to focus on significant causes of nonconformance; analysis to distinguish between chance and assignable causes of variation; and monitoring of the effectiveness of corrective action.

3.2 Control limits. Control limits are criteria that establish maximum variation beyond which action must be taken to investigate and when feasible correct the cause(s) of nonconformance. Control limits do not preclude corrective action when abnormal patterns of variation occur without any individual data exceeding the control limits. Control limits are developed using standard statistical methods or other approved techniques and are based on documented process history. They are established to assist in fulfilling the contractor's responsibility for submitting a conforming item, identifying necessary corrective actions, and reducing nonconformance levels.

3.3 Corrective action. Changes to processes, work instructions, workmanship practices, training, inspections, tests, procedures, specifications, drawings, tools, equipment, facilities, resources, or material that result in preventing, minimizing, or eliminating nonconformances.

3.4 Corrective Action Board (CAB). A contractor board consisting of management representatives of appropriate contractor organizations with the level of responsibility and authority necessary to ensure the prevention of nonconformances, to manage quality improvement efforts as appropriate, to assess and manage nonconformance cost elimination, to ensure that causes of nonconformances are identified, and that corrective actions are effected throughout the contractor's organization.

3.5 Material Review Board (MRB). A board consisting of representatives of contractor departments necessary to review, evaluate, and determine or recommend disposition of nonconforming material referred to it.

3.6 Nonconformance. The failure of a characteristic to conform to the requirements specified in the contract, drawings, specifications, or other approved product description.

3.6.1 Minor nonconformance. A nonconformance which does not adversely affect any of the following:

- a. Health or safety.
- b. Performance.
- c. Interchangeability, reliability, or maintainability.
- d. Effective use or operation.
- e. Weight or appearance (when a factor).

NOTE: Multiple minor nonconformances, when considered collectively, may raise the category to a major/critical nonconformance.

3.6.2 Major/critical nonconformance. A nonconformance other than minor that cannot be completely eliminated by rework or reduced to a minor nonconformance by repair.

NOTE: Where a classification of defects exists, minor defects are minor nonconformances. Major and critical defects which cannot be completely eliminated by rework or reduced to a minor nonconformance by repair are major/critical nonconformances.

3.7 Nonconforming material. Any item, part, supplies, or product containing one or more nonconformances.

3.8 Occurrence. The first time a nonconformance is detected on a specific characteristic of a part or process. All nonconformances attributed to the same cause and identified before the date, item, unit, lot number, or other commitment for effective corrective action are also considered occurrences.

3.9 Recurrence. A repeat of a nonconformance other than provided for in paragraph 3.8 above.

3.10 Preliminary Review (PR). An evaluation by contractor-appointed Quality personnel, assisted by other personnel as required, to determine the disposition of nonconforming material after its initial discovery and prior to referral to the MRB. PR may result in an authorized disposition of the nonconforming material without referral to the MRB for final disposition.

3.11 Quality Improvement Project (QIP). An activity chartered and monitored by the CAB (or other contractor group senior to the CAB) to investigate technology, methods, and procedures, which is aimed at finding more efficient and effective means of carrying out contractual responsibilities with the objective of enhancing quality and productivity.

3.12 Repair. A procedure which reduces but not completely eliminates a nonconformance and which has been reviewed and concurred in by the MRB and approved for use by the Government. The purpose of repair is to reduce the effect of the nonconformance. Repair is distinguished from rework in that the characteristic after repair still does not completely conform to the applicable drawings, specifications, or contract requirements. Except for SRPs (see paragraph 3.15 below), proposed repairs approved by the Government are authorized for use on a one-time basis only.



3.13 Rework. A procedure applied to a nonconformance that will completely eliminate it and result in a characteristic that conforms completely to the drawings, specifications, or contract requirements.

3.14 Scrap. Nonconforming material that is not usable for its intended purpose and which cannot be economically reworked or cannot be repaired in a manner acceptable to the Government.

3.15 Standard Repair Procedure (SRP). A documented technique for repair of a type of nonconformance which has been demonstrated to be an adequate and cost-effective method for repair when properly applied. SRPs are developed by the contractor, reviewed and concurred in by the MRB, and approved by the Government for recurrent use under defined conditions. Defined conditions shall include an expiration date or a finite limit on the number of applications, or both.

3.16 Statistical Process Control (SPC). SPC is a methodology used to measure the average and variability of any given characteristic within a contractor area, department, part, or process, including but not limited to, machine shop, bonding process, heat treat, and assembly. SPC techniques include control charts and control limits. Properly implemented, SPC offers the ability to improve manufacturing yield and lower production, inspection, and nonconformance costs.

3.17 Supplier. The terms subcontractor, supplier, vendor, seller, or any other term used to identify the source from which the prime contractor obtains support are considered to be synonymous for the purpose of this standard.

3.18 Use-as-is. A disposition of material with one or more minor nonconformances determined to be usable for its intended purpose in its existing condition.

3.19 Definitions of acronyms used in this standard. Acronyms used in this standard are listed and defined as follows:

- a. CAB - Corrective Action Board.
- b. DOD - Department of Defense.
- c. FAR - Federal Acquisition Regulation.
- d. MRB - Material Review Board.
- e. PR - Preliminary Review.
- f. QIP - Quality Improvement Project.
- g. SPC - Statistical Process Control.
- h. SRP - Standard Repair Procedure.

## 4. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

4.1 Corrective action and disposition system. The contractor shall establish and maintain a system which shall identify, segregate (or control if segregation is not practical), and properly dispose of nonconforming material and shall ensure that cost-effective, positive corrective action is taken to prevent, minimize, or eliminate nonconformances. The system shall work toward continual improvement of quality and productivity through the initiation and monitoring of OIPs.

4.2 Statistical Process Control (SPC). SPC techniques including control limits and control charts shall be used when appropriate. Control limits must be established statistically or by other methods acceptable to the Government and be based upon the documented history of the process capability.

4.2.1 Control limit standards. Nonconformances due to chance causes can occur that may not warrant individual corrective action. As an alternative to individual corrective action the contractor may develop and recommend to the Government the use of a standard(s) to control such nonconformances. Contractor-recommended standards shall specify the control limits at which corrective action must be taken; describe criteria for determining the control limits; and provide for the accumulation and maintenance of data for monitoring processes and obtaining corrective actions as dictated by collective analyses, trend reviews, or other means acceptable to the Government.

4.3 Quality improvement. The contractor shall institute actions to prevent nonconformances and initiate OIPs throughout the contractor's organizations. The contractor shall assign organizational elements, teams, or individuals to investigate technology, methods, and procedures to increase efficiency and conformance to requirements. The contractor shall monitor the QIP progress toward established goals at regular intervals. The requirements of this paragraph shall be the responsibility of the CAB or, at the discretion of the contractor, of a contractor group senior to the CAB.

4.4 Contractor's written procedures. The requirements of this standard shall be implemented by the contractor through the preparation, publication, and maintenance of detailed written procedures. The contractor shall identify personnel appointed PR authority and those to act on the MRB and CAB, and shall indicate in the procedures the scope or extent of their authority. The contractor's procedures shall also indicate the manner in which documentation is maintained.

4.5 Material Review Board (MRB). The MRB shall be chaired by a representative of the contractor's Quality organization and shall include, as required, personnel representing other contractor organizations necessary to determine appropriate disposition of nonconforming material. As a minimum, the MRB shall include the chairman and a representative of the contractor's engineering organization responsible for product design.

MRB members shall be selected on the basis of their technical competence. MRB members may call upon other contractor personnel for technical advice. If warranted by the volume of nonconforming material or the diversity of work operations, more than one MRB may be established.

4.5.1 MRR authority and responsibilities.

- a. The MRB shall investigate, in a timely manner, all nonconforming material (except material previously disposed of in PR authorized in paragraphs 5.2 a, b, c, or d) in sufficient depth to determine proper disposition.
- b. The MRB shall review and concur in all proposed use-as-is and repair dispositions prior to submission to the Government for approval.
- c. The MRB shall review and concur in all proposed SRPs prior to submission to the Government for approval for recurrent use under defined conditions.
- d. A written engineering analysis shall accompany proposed use-as-is and repair (excluding SRP) dispositions if requested by the Government. The MRB shall ensure that the Government is kept informed of its investigation and deliberations on these potential dispositions so that the Government may act upon the MRR recommendations in a timely manner.
- e. The MRB shall dispose of nonconforming material in accordance with paragraph 5.3.

4.6 Corrective Action Board (CAB). The CAB shall ensure that an effective corrective action system is functioning throughout the contractor's organization. This function shall be performed through review and analysis of nonconformance data. The CAB shall ensure that records of causes of nonconformances, trends, and individual causes acted upon are maintained and that individual records and summaries of actions taken are prepared. If warranted by the diversity of work operations, more than one CAB may be established.

4.6.1 CAB authority and responsibilities.

- a. The CAB shall have authority to ensure implementation of corrective actions throughout the contractor's organization. The corrective actions shall extend to all contractor operations affecting product quality.
- b. The CAB shall have the authority to require investigations and studies by other contractor organizations necessary to define essential corrective actions which will result in reducing nonconformance costs and reducing the amount of nonconformances.
- c. The CAB shall ensure that documentation required by paragraphs 5.7, 5.7.1, 5.7.2, 5.7.3, 5.7.4, and 5.8 is maintained.
- d. The CAB shall ensure that summary data of nonconformances and associated costs are analyzed and areas of high potential

- payoff, adverse trends, exceeding control limits, or out-of-control recurrence of nonconformances are thoroughly investigated to identify appropriate corrective actions and to identify potential QIPs.
- e. The CAB is responsible for ensuring that follow-up systems are maintained to ensure that timely and effective corrective actions are taken.
  - f. The CAB shall ensure that reviews of nonconformance data and PR and MRB disposition decisions are conducted periodically to determine that PR and MRB actions are effective and in compliance with the requirements of this standard.
  - g. When control limit techniques are used and analysis of cumulative data for an applicable nonconformance reveals that the established limits are being or will be exceeded, the CAB shall ensure that a process evaluation is accomplished and that specific corrective actions are taken to bring the process back into acceptable limits.
  - h. When corrective action is required due to inadequate process controls or control limit techniques and until such time as it has been demonstrated that the corrective action has been effective, the CAB shall ensure that the contractor documents nonconformances and monitors: yield requirement development, documentation, and evaluation; the process control system for compliance; process improvement activity as it relates to trends; and recurrences of nonconformances.
  - i. The CAB shall be responsible for the initiation and monitoring of QIPs unless this function has been assigned by the contractor to a group senior to the CAB.

4.7 Government rights. The Government reserves the right to: review all contractor procedures developed to implement this standard; disapprove the procedures if they do not accomplish their objectives; observe PR, MRB, CAB, and QIP activities; and review documents or other data required by this standard. Acceptance or rejection of nonconforming material presented to the Government is the sole prerogative of the Government. Acceptance of nonconforming material by the Government may involve a monetary adjustment or other consideration. The right of Government disapproval specifically applies but is not limited to the following:

- a. Procedures, activities, organization, and reports of PR, the MRB, and the CAB.
- b. Contractor standards establishing control limits.
- c. Contractor-proposed repair procedures including SRP expiration dates, limits, and extensions.
- d. Records and analyses of nonconformances and corrective actions related to those nonconformances.
- e. The right to withdraw approval of previously approved SRPs.
- f. MRB and CAB members and personnel appointed PR authority at the time of selection or anytime thereafter.

## 5. DETAILED REQUIREMENTS

5.1 Identification and segregation of nonconforming material. When material is found to be nonconforming, nonconforming items shall be conspicuously marked or tagged (or otherwise identified if marking or tagging is not practical) and positively controlled to preclude its unauthorized use in production. Nonconforming material to be submitted to the MRB shall be moved to a controlled area designated for storage of nonconforming material unless not practical due to size, configuration, environmental requirements, or other conditions authorized by the Government. The designated area shall be protected to preclude unauthorized removal of nonconforming material.

5.2 PR disposition. When material is initially found to be nonconforming, it shall be examined by contractor-appointed Quality personnel, assisted by other contractor personnel if necessary, to determine if the nonconformance:

- a. Requires scrapping of the material because it is obviously unfit for use and cannot be economically reworked or repaired.
- b. Can be eliminated by rework.
- c. Requires return of the material to the supplier.
- d. Can be repaired using SRPs which have been concurred in by the MRB and approved by the Government.
- e. Meets none of the above criteria and shall be referred to the MRB.

PR action does not negate the requirement for identification, documentation, and corrective action associated with nonconformances. It does recognize that some nonconformances do not warrant referral to the MRB and can be handled more economically at the location of initial detection.

5.3 MRB disposition. All nonconforming material not disposed of in PR shall be disposed of by an MRB decision to:

- a. Scrap.
- b. Rework.
- c. Return to supplier.
- d. Repair by an approved SRP.
- e. Recommend to the Government for repair by other than an SRP.
- f. Recommend to the Government for use-as-is.
- g. Request a waiver from the contracting officer.

5.4 Use-as-is dispositions. Requirements pertaining to use-as-is dispositions are as follows:

- a. All use-as-is dispositions must be approved by the Government.
- b. Until the use as-is disposition has been approved, the nonconforming material shall not be further processed nor used without prior Government authorization, or unless controlled by methods approved by the Government.

- c. All use-as-is dispositions shall include a determination of the appropriateness of a documentation change and the method for accomplishing any recommended change (i.e., design change, changes to technical documentation including drawings, specifications, and Technical Orders, or recommended changes to Government specifications).

5.5 Repair dispositions. Requirements pertaining to repair dispositions are as follows:

- a. SRPs shall be submitted to the Government for approval prior to implementing the SRP.
- b. Proposed repair methods (other than previously approved SRPs) shall be submitted to the Government for approval prior to accomplishing the repair action.
- c. The Government act of approving the repair technique does not compromise the Government's right to reject the material after completion of the repair. Use of all repair procedures is at the contractor's risk.
- d. Prior to any repair disposition decision a judgment shall be made by the contractor that the repair will be cost-effective relative to other disposition alternatives.
- e. Instructions for reprocessing of material after completion of repair and before its release shall be included in the SRP or other repair procedure. These procedures shall include the requirement for contractor inspection and test.
- f. The contractor shall maintain records detailing the dates of use and number of applications of SRPs.
- g. The contractor shall review SRPs periodically to ensure that they are complete, up-to-date relative to current process capability and state-of-the-art, and are being properly applied under the conditions defined for their use.
- h. Nonconforming material to which an SRP has been satisfactorily applied is subject to Government inspection when specified in the SRP or as otherwise directed by the Government. All other repaired material shall not be further processed nor used without prior Government authorization or unless controlled by methods approved by the Government.

5.6 Scrapped material. Scrapped material shall be conspicuously identified and controlled to preclude its subsequent use in a contract item unless approved by the Government.

5.7 Nonconforming material documentation. The contractor system shall maintain records of all nonconforming material, dispositions, assignable causes, corrective actions, and effectiveness of corrective actions. These records shall be organized to permit efficient retrieval for summarization required by paragraph 5.8, knowledge of previous dispositions, and corrective action monitoring. The contractor shall ensure that documentation of nonconformances includes the following:

- a. Contract number.
- b. Initiator of the document.
- c. Date of the initiation.
- d. Identification of the document for traceability purposes.
- e. Specific identification (e.g., part number, name, National Stock Number) of the nonconforming material.
- f. Quantity of items involved.
- g. Number of occurrences.
- h. The place in the manufacturing process where the nonconformance was detected.
- i. A detailed description of the nonconformance.
- j. Identification of the affected specification, drawing, or other document.
- k. A description of the cause(s).
- l. Disposition of the nonconforming item (return to supplier, rework, use of an SRP, scrap, or refer to MRB).
- m. Identification of personnel responsible for making the disposition decision.

5.7.1 Additional documentation for MRB items. If nonconforming material is referred to the MRB for disposition, the MRB shall add the following information to the documentation:

- a. Reference to or attachment of the written engineering analysis when performed.
- b. Final disposition of the nonconforming items.
- c. Signature (or personal identification stamp) of disposition authorities.

5.7.2 Additional documentation for corrective action. If corrective action is required on an individual nonconformance, the following information shall be recorded:

- a. An analysis of the recorded cause(s) and identification of the true (or root) cause.
- b. The actions taken (or planned) to correct the cause(s) of the nonconformance and thereby preclude recurrence.
- c. Identification of the individual(s) and contractor functional area(s) responsible for taking the corrective action.
- d. Date, serial number, or lot number when corrective action will be completed or is estimated to be completed.

5.7.3 Recurring nonconformances. If corrective action is not warranted on an individual nonconformance but collective or trend analyses of recurrences of the nonconformance indicate that the process is not within acceptable limits and corrective action is necessary, the contractor shall document the information required by paragraph 5.7.2. This information need not be included on the individual nonconformance records.

5.7.4 Nonconformance costs. The contractor shall determine and record the costs associated with nonconformances. The objective of generating

this cost data is to provide current and trend data to be used by the contractor in determining the need for and effectiveness of corrective action. The resultant cost data shall serve as a basis for necessary CAB and QIP action when appropriate. Nonconformance cost summaries shall, upon request, be furnished to the Government. The cost collection shall consist of scrap, rework, repair, use-as-is, and return to supplier costs, plus other costs as determined appropriate by the contractor.

5.8 Minimum data summarization requirements. Nonconformance data shall be recorded to enable summarization of the quantity of nonconforming items, number of recurrences, cause determinations, corrective actions, dispositions, and nonconformance costs as described in paragraph 5.7.4. Nonconformance data shall be used by the CAB to determine the need for and effectiveness of corrective action. The format of the data and the frequency of preparation shall be at the discretion of the contractor but in no case shall the preparation be less frequent than quarterly. As a minimum, the following data shall be included:

- a. Quantity of nonconforming items.
- b. Number and type of nonconformances.
- c. Number and type of dispositions.
- d. Cause determinations.
- e. Type of corrective actions and status.
- f. Delinquent corrective actions.
- g. Nonconformance costs.
- h. Trend information and analysis thereof.

5.9 Control of material review and disposition system at suppliers. The prime contractor has the option to delegate to suppliers the authority for material review and disposition of nonconforming material. If the prime contractor elects to delegate such authority, the procedures of this standard shall apply either in full, or as appropriately tailored, to the suppliers. Tailored requirements applied to suppliers shall be in consonance with the requirements of this standard and must be acceptable to the Government. Furthermore, the authority to present nonconforming material to the Government for approval of recommended dispositions is limited to the prime contractor's MRB unless specific authority has been delegated to the Government agency having contract administration responsibility for the subcontract by the Government agency having contract administration responsibility for the prime contract. The prime contractor shall review and approve material review and disposition systems of suppliers.

5.9.1 Corrective action at supplier facilities. Supplier organizations shall be notified of material nonconformances and the requirement, when necessary, for corrective actions. The contractor shall perform follow-up review of the corrective action taken by suppliers.

5.9.2 Records of nonconforming material received from suppliers. The contractor shall maintain a record of any nonconforming material received from each supplier. This information shall be used in the contractor's vendor or supplier rating system.



5.10 Audits. The contractor shall periodically audit, or have audited, the corrective action and disposition system for nonconforming material (both in-house and at suppliers where appropriate) for compliance with the requirements of this standard and to ensure effectiveness. If an audit is conducted by a party other than the prime contractor, the contractor should notify the Government and remain primarily responsible for that performance.

6. NOTES

6.1 Intended use. This standard is for use on production contracts. It also applies to developmental and limited production contracts with appropriate tailoring. It is not meant to be a "stand alone" document but should be used in conjunction with a higher-level contract quality requirement as described in FAR 46.202-3.

6.2 Changes from previous issue. Asterisks or vertical lines are not used in this revision to identify changes with respect to the previous issue due to the extensiveness of the changes.

Custodians:

Army - AR  
Navy - OS  
Air Force - 05

*Preparing Activity:*

Air Force - 05

Review Activities:

Army - AV, ME, GL, CR  
Navy - SH, EC, AS, SA, TD  
Air Force - 10, 23  
Marine Corps - MC  
DLA - DH

(Project QCIC 0070)