CHAPTER 42

HVAC COMMISSIONING

COMMISSIONING implements a quality-oriented process for achieving, verifying, and documenting that the performance of facilities, systems, and assemblies meets defined objectives and criteria. The defined objectives and criteria are often referred to as the **owner's project requirements (OPR)**, which involve achieving, verifying, and documenting the performance of each assembly or system to meet the building's operational needs. The commissioning process uses the owner's project requirements as the reference to determine acceptance of the design. Commissioning includes verifying and documenting that the project operational and maintenance documentation and training of operation and maintenance personnel occur. The result should be fully functional systems that can be properly operated and maintained throughout the life of the building.

This chapter gives an overview of the general commissioning process, plus best practices from the July 2004 working draft of ASHRAE *Guideline* 0-2005, The Commissioning Process, developed for the National Institute of Building Sciences' total building commissioning program. Although this chapter provides less detail and is less prescriptive, it provides more narrative discussion on some issues than the cited commissioning guideline draft.

Recommissioning applies commissioning to a project that has been previously delivered using the commissioning process. This may be a scheduled recommissioning developed as part of ongoing commissioning, or it may be triggered by use change, operational problems, or other needs. **Existing building commissioning** (often called **retrocommissioning**) applies commissioning to an existing facility that may or may not have been not previously commissioned. It consists of systematically investigating, analyzing, and adjusting performance of existing building equipment, systems, and assemblies to ensure that required performance (including energy, comfort, and IAQ) is achieved. Buildings require maintenance and tuning to prevent performance degradation. Existing building commissioning should be performed as part of ongoing efforts to maintain a comfortable and efficient environment within the building. It has broad application to virtually every building type and vintage with excellent cost/benefit results and payback ratios.

Applicability

The commissioning process described here applies to new construction, major renovations, and all systems and assemblies. Although this chapter focuses on HVAC commissioning, commissioning can be applied to the building as a total system, which includes structural elements, building envelope, life safety features, electrical systems, communication systems, plumbing, irrigation, controls, and HVAC systems (ASHRAE *Guideline* 0). Which building systems should be commissioned varies with the systems and assemblies used, building size, project type, and objectives. Owners and commissioning providers often focus on systems and assemblies under the commissioning umbrella that have (1) historically not performed well at turnover (e.g., outside air economizers and variable-speed drives), (2) are mission-critical (e.g., air cleanliness in a cleanroom, emergency power in a hospital), (3) will be costly to fix during occupancy if they fail (e.g., chilled-water piping, window flashing assemblies), or (4) present a life-safety risk if they fail (e.g., fire alarm, smoke control, moisture penetration). Recommendations in this chapter should be appropriately tailored to each project. Although commissioning may begin at any time during the project life cycle, owners obtain the highest benefits when commissioning begins at the conceptual or predesign phase.

Background

Equipment, components, systems, and assemblies have become more complex. More specialization has occurred in the disciplines and trades, with increased interactions between all elements. This increased specialization and interaction requires increased integration between disciplines and specialized systems by the delivery team. Owners often use low-bid policies, and scopes of design professionals are often narrowed. The result has been buildings that do not meet owner expectations and often do not work as intended because of design and construction deficiencies. Commissioning helps overcome these infrastructure inadequacies and fundamentally improve the performance of building systems and living conditions for occupants.

Benefits

The primary benefits of commissioning include improvements in all of the following areas:

- **Predesign and design**
  - Owners develop better understanding of what they want and need through clear, documented OPR
  - Designers understand better what owner is requesting
  - Designers reduce their risk with better communication and input from owner
  - Owners understand better what designers are proposing through a clear, documented basis of design
  - Experts review and improve commissioning documents
- **Construction (including system and assembly performance)**
  - Improved specifications and drawings, resulting in improved coordination between all groups
  - Specifying systems that can be properly commissioned and tested, and are within owner's ability to maintain
  - Tools to help contractors perform better installations (e.g., construction checklists)
  - Performance accountability through construction observation, issue management, and testing
  - Documented verification of system and assembly performance
  - Thorough training requirements in construction documents
  - Verifying training completion

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  - Formal acceptance testing at completion
- **Occupancy and operations (including maintenance)**
  - Thorough documentation in construction documents
  - Verifying documentation submittals

Commissioning also reduces potential change orders, contractor callbacks, and time required to fine-tune and debug systems during occupancy, and smooths turnover. Building performance improvements give better building and system control, enhance indoor environmental quality, and contribute to increased occupant productivity.

Key Contributors

- Owner
- Engineer/architect
- Commissioning authority (CA)
- Operations and maintenance personnel
- Occupants and users
- Design professionals
- Contractors
- Suppliers

Definitions

Basis of Design (BOD). The basis of design is a document that records how the designer has met the owner's project requirements. It includes the concepts, calculations, system selection decisions, and product selections and how applicable regulatory requirements, standards, and guidelines have been met. The document includes both narrative descriptions and lists of individual items that support the design process.

Commissioning Authority (CA). Retained by the owner, the commissioning authority acts as the owner's advocate, and leads, plans, schedules, and coordinates the commissioning team to implement the commissioning process.

Commissioning Plan. The commissioning plan is a document that outlines the organization, schedule, allocation of resources, and documentation requirements of the commissioning process. This is an overall plan, developed during the predesign, design, and construction phases, that provides the structure, schedule, and coordination planning for commissioning. As construction progresses, the CA updates the plan, which includes details of

- Commissioning scope
- Systems to be commissioned
- Rigor of commissioning
- Team contact information
- Roles and responsibilities of all parties
- Communication and reporting protocols
- Commissioning overview and details of submittal activities
- Construction observation, checklisting, and start-up activities
- Process for dealing with deficiencies
- Test procedure development and execution
- Operation and maintenance (O&M) manual review
- Warranty period activities
- Operation training procedures
- Systems manual development
- Description of summary report, progress and reporting logs, and initial schedule (including phasing, if applicable)

Construction Checklists. Construction checklists are forms used by the contractor to verify that specified systems and components are on site, ready for installation or correctly installed, and functional.

Owner's Project Requirements (OPR). Also referred to as the **design intent**, this document details a project's functional requirements and the expectations of how it will be used and operated. This includes project goals, measurable performance criteria, cost considerations, benchmarks, commissioning, training, documentation, and supporting information.

Systems Manual. The systems manual includes the operation manual, maintenance manual, and additional information of use to the owner during occupancy and operations. This manual expands the scope of traditional operating and maintenance manuals to include other project information such as plans and specifications, approved submittals, operating and optimization procedures, training/commissioning records, and additional information developed and gathered during commissioning.

Test Procedures. This written protocol defines methods, personnel, and expectations for tests conducted on components, equipment, assemblies, systems, and interfaces among systems. Tests clearly describe the test prerequisites, required test conditions, individual systematic test procedures, expected system response and acceptance criteria for each procedure, actual response or findings, and any pertinent discussion. Test procedures differ from **testing requirements** found in the specifications, which describe *what* modes and features are to be tested and verified and under what conditions. Test procedures describe the step-by-step method of *how* to test. Simple checklists may be appropriate for testing simple components, but dynamic testing of interacting components requires more detailed procedures and forms.

COMMISSIONING OBJECTIVE

The commissioning objective focuses on documented confirmation that a facility fulfills the specified performance requirements for the building owner, occupants, and operators. To reach this objective, it is necessary to (1) clearly document the owner's project requirements, including performance and maintainability; and (2) verify and document compliance with these criteria throughout design, construction, acceptance, and initial operation phases.

Specific goals for commissioning include

- Providing documentation and tools to improve quality of deliverables (e.g., forms, tracking software, performance calculation tools)
- Verifying and documenting that systems and assemblies perform according to OPR by end of construction
- Verifying that adequate and accurate system and assembly documentation is provided to owner
- Verifying that operation and maintenance personnel and occupants are properly trained
- Providing a uniform and effective process for delivery of construction projects
- Using quality-based sampling techniques to detect systemic problems
- Verifying proper coordination among systems and assemblies, and among all contractors, subcontractors, vendors, and manufacturers of furnished equipment and assemblies

MANAGEMENT AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Management Strategies

In each project, a qualified party should be designated as the commissioning authority.

Predesign and Design. Commissioning during predesign and design is most often managed by an independent CA who is not part of the formal designer-of-record team. An independent, objective view is critical. The CA normally provides input to the owner and designers but does not have ultimate authority over design decisions. The CA should also coordinate, conduct, or approve activities such as assisting in development of the OPR, conducting statistical sampling reviews, and developing commissioning specifications and test procedures. The CA may also review plan designs. In some projects, commissioning is the designer's responsibility, using either their own staff or a consultant.

Construction. During construction, because of the variety of players, construction management scenarios, and the owner's

objectives, numerous methods are used to manage the commissioning process. To maintain objectivity, the CA should be independent. If the contractor or designer hires the CA, the potential conflict of interest must be carefully managed. The two primary methods to manage commissioning during construction are commissioning-authority-managed and contractor-managed. In the **commissioning-authority-managed approach**, the CA performs many of the planning and technical tasks, like writing the commissioning plan and test procedures and directing, witnessing, and documenting execution of tests, performed by either the contractor or themselves. In the **contractor-managed approach**, the contractor may write the commissioning plan, write test procedures, and direct and document testing, with the CA witnessing selected tests and reviewing completed test reports. The CA should report to the owner on the adequacy of a contractor-managed commissioning plan. The contractor may assign staff, subcontractor, or subconsultant to manage and coordinate commissioning responsibilities. This approach gives the contractor more responsibility. Some view this method as less objective, but others consider it more integrated into the building delivery process than the CA-managed approach.

Some project plans use both management approaches, particularly when a substantial amount of electrical equipment is being tested. HVAC and controls follow the commissioning-authority-managed approach, and electrical system commissioning follows the contractor-managed approach, but the entire process is still overseen by the single CA.

Team Members

Effective building commissioning requires a team effort. The size and makeup of the team depends on the size and complexity of the project and the owner's desire for quality assurance. Team members include the owner, occupants, design professionals, construction manager, general contractor, subcontractors, operation and maintenance (O&M), suppliers, equipment manufacturers, and the CA. All members, particularly the O&M manager, need to be brought into the commissioning process early, preferably during predesign.

The level of effort of team members changes during the different project phases. For example, during design, the designer is a key player in the commissioning process, whereas the contractor may not have been selected. During construction, the general contractor's and installing subcontractors' roles increase.

The scope of work of the CA, design professionals, and contractors should be clearly and completely identified in their contracts. Without this, change orders, incomplete or missed tasks, and otherwise dysfunctional commissioning may result.

Roles and Responsibilities

The commissioning team's responsibilities are to conduct commissioning activities in a logical, sequential, and efficient manner using consistent protocols and forms, centralized documentation, clear and regular communications and consultations with all necessary parties, frequently updated timelines and schedules, and appropriate technical expertise. The following sections summarize the responsibilities of each party. Additional detail is found in the Commissioning Process section.

Commissioning Authority. Specific responsibilities vary with the management scenario and the CA's specific scope of services. Ideally, the same party or firm acts as CA through all project phases. The CA organizes and leads the commissioning team throughout the project.

Design Phase (Including Predesign). During predesign, the CA develops the predesign and design-phase commissioning plan and ensures the OPR is developed.

During design, the CA develops detailed commissioning activities. The core CA responsibilities are

- Reviewing designer's BOD, plans, and specifications, ensuring they meet the OPR
- Developing initial construction-phase commissioning plan
- Ensuring that commissioning, training, and documentation requirements for all contractors and suppliers are reflected in construction contract documents.

Construction and Acceptance. During construction, the CA is in charge of the commissioning process and makes the final recommendations to the owner about functional performance of commissioned building systems and assemblies. The CA directs commissioning activities, possibly performing many of them, depending on the management scenario in place. The CA is an independent and objective advocate for the owner. The core commissioning activities during construction involve

- Reviewing selected construction submittals to ensure conformance with OPR, with updates in commissioning plan as needed
- Observing installations and start-up, including documenting any conditions that require correction
- Organizing, planning, developing, and executing or observing testing
- Developing or assisting with systems manual
- Reviewing O&M manual submissions
- Verifying operator and maintenance personnel training and documentation
- Submitting documented results to owner on all commissioning performed

These tasks may vary (e.g., some commissioning scopes involve preparing the O&M or electronic facility's manuals, preparing detailed maintenance management plans, or conducting operator and maintenance personnel training).

Occupancy and Operations. During occupancy and operations, the CA helps resolve commissioning issues and directs opposite-season testing. Often, the CA participates in a near-warranty-end review of system and assembly performance.

Independence. If the CA's firm has other project responsibilities, a potential conflict of interest exists. Wherever this occurs, the CA should disclose in writing the nature of the conflict and the means by which it will be managed. If the CA is not under direct contract to the owner, the owner's interests need to be protected through appropriate oversight of the CA's work.

Qualifications. The CA should fully understand commissioning, design, and construction processes and have technical design, operations, maintenance, and troubleshooting knowledge of the systems and assemblies being commissioned. Excellent written and verbal communication skills are critical. The CA may represent an individual or a team of commissioning experts, depending on system complexity, the number of disciplines involved, and commissioning scope. Thus, the ability to manage diverse disciplines over long timelines is also important.

Construction Manager. The construction manager's role varies with construction responsibilities. When they have significant oversight for the owner (e.g., schedule management, submittal review, change order authority), their commissioning role is more like the owner's: they ensure the contractor is executing their commissioning responsibilities according to the commissioning plan and help resolve issues.

General Contractors.

Design. The general contractor (if yet selected) reviews commissioning requirements and performance criteria for coordination, schedule, and cost implications.

Construction and Acceptance. The contractor's role and responsibilities are

- Ensuring subcontractors' commissioning work is completed and cooperating with CA in executing the commissioning plan
- Providing input into commissioning plan

- Integrating commissioning schedule into overall project schedule
- Participating in commissioning meetings
- Responding to questions and issues raised by CA
- Resolving issues identified during commissioning and coordinating correction of identified deficiencies
- Providing equipment, system, and assembly data needed by CA
- Performing specified training
- Submitting required portions of systems manuals

In the contractor-managed approach, the general contractor is often required to hire a party with direct commissioning skill to manage and execute the contractor commissioning requirements.

Trade Contractors.

Design. Trade contractors of specialty or complex systems or designs should review commissioning requirements and performance criteria of their systems for coordination, schedule, and cost implications.

Construction and Acceptance. The responsibilities of the installing trade contractors (and vendors, as appropriate) include

- Participating with CA (and the contractor's commissioning manager, when applicable) in executing commissioning plan
- Providing input into commissioning plan
- Coordinating with other trades as necessary to facilitate a smooth and complete commissioning process
- Participating in commissioning meetings
- Responding to questions and issues concerning their work raised by CA
- Executing and documenting tasks in construction checklist and start-up process
- Performing and documenting tests when in their scope
- Participating in resolving issues within their scope identified during commissioning
- Correcting identified deficiencies within their scope
- Providing required documentation for systems manuals and commissioning reports

Commissioning-related activities of trade contractors are to prepare O&M manuals and submissions to the systems manual and provide training on commissioned systems and assemblies. To avoid confusion, the OPR should specify which commissioning activities are the trade contractor's responsibility, and which are the CA's.

Architect and Engineers (Designers).

Design. The design professionals should develop complete basis-of-design (BOD) documentation, including design narratives, rationale, and criteria, according to their scopes of services, and update this document with each new design submission. They provide input to the commissioning plan, respond to questions and concerns by the CA and others, respond to design review comments, and incorporate commissioning requirements in construction contract documents.

Construction and Acceptance. During construction, designers

- Review the commissioning plan
- Attend selected commissioning meetings
- Answer questions about system design and intended operation
- Update design narratives in the BOD to reflect as-built conditions
- Respond to or incorporate CA comments on construction submittals and O&M manuals
- Help resolve design-related issues raised during commissioning
- Perform specified training
- Submit required portions of systems manuals

Additional tasks sometimes required are to present system description overviews for primary systems during O&M staff training, review and approve testing plans and procedures, review completed test forms, or witness selected tests.

Owner's Project Management Staff. The owner's project management staff's ultimate responsibility is to see that the commissioning plan is executed. The owner should include commissioning responsibilities in all commissioning team members' scopes of services, make sure there is sufficient time for commissioning in the project schedule, ensure the CA is receiving cooperation from other team members, and ensure that other owner responsibilities (e.g., developing the OPR, having O&M staff participate during construction) are fulfilled. The owner ensures that all design review and construction-phase issues identified through commissioning are resolved in a timely manner.

Owner's Representatives. The owner's representatives are individuals or firms hired to represent the owner's interest during specified phases of the building process. The owner typically retains the CA as an owner's representative.

Owner's Operations Staff.

Predesign. The owner's O&M staff should participate in the development of the OPR during predesign.

Design. During design, O&M staff may contribute to reviews of the designer's BOD, plans, and specifications.

Construction and Acceptance. During construction, the owner's O&M staff should

- Assist in reviewing selected submittals
- Assist in construction observation, verifying completion of construction checklists and observing start-up
- Participate in or witness testing, within pre-established lines of responsibility and authority
- Review O&M and systems manual
- Participate in training

COMMISSIONING PROCESS

Commissioning should begin during predesign, and formally continue through the first year of occupancy and operations. Although circumstances may require owners to begin commissioning at the design or construction stage of a project, this later implementation should, when possible, capture the same information and verifications developed when commissioning begins at project inception.

PREDESIGN-PHASE COMMISSIONING

Objectives

The primary activities and objectives of commissioning during predesign are as follows:

- Develop owner's project requirements (OPR)
- Identify scope and budget for commissioning process
- Develop initial commissioning plan
- Accept predesign-phase commissioning process activities
- Review and use lessons learned from previous projects

Activities

Commissioning Team and Management. During the predesign phase, a team is formed to oversee and accomplish commissioning. Responsibility for leadership of the commissioning team should be defined and assigned to the CA at the beginning of predesign.

Owner's Project Requirements (OPR). The OPR forms the basis from which all design, construction, acceptance, and operational decisions are made. It describes the functional requirements of the facility and expectations of how it will be used and operated. It includes project and design goals, budgets, limitations, schedules, owner directives, and supporting information, as well as necessary information for all disciplines to properly plan, design, construct, operate, and maintain systems and assemblies (ASHRAE *Guideline* 0).

The OPR is generally a set of concise objective qualitative statements, each with one or more quantitative performance metrics or criteria. The following information should be included:

- Functional requirements, needs and goals for building use, operation, maintenance, renovation, and expansion, including user requirements
- Occupancy schedules and space plan requirements
- Sustainability, reliability, durability, and aesthetic goals
- Quality of materials and construction
- Warranty, project documentation, and training requirements
- Goals for the process and outcome of design and construction (e.g., budgets, schedules, change orders, safety, aesthetics, effects on adjacent or integral occupied spaces and tenants)
- General commissioning scope and objectives
- General statements about codes and standards to be followed
- Limitations likely to affect design decisions
- Specific features, systems, assemblies, or brands the owner requires (these will be repeated in the design narrative)
- Instructions to designers on types of design tools and aids expected to be used

The CA ensures that the OPR is developed and is clear and complete. The CA may develop or help develop the OPR with the owner or provide direction and review of the OPR developed by others. Facilitated workshops, surveys, and questionnaires are useful for developing the OPR. Later during design, additional OPR statements with performance criteria may be added to the formal list, as desired by the owner and commissioning team. The OPR should still be developed, even if not originally generated in predesign, and included in the systems manual.

Scope and Budget for Commissioning. During predesign, the owner (with the aid of experience from previous similar projects or with the CA) develops a scope and a rough budget for commissioning. At minimum, design-phase activities should be initially scoped. Once a design-phase commissioning plan is developed, the scope and budget may need to be adjusted. The scope and budget should reflect the commissioning objectives in the OPR.

Selecting areas to commission is typically based on the budget, systems or assemblies where the owner has experienced previous problems, complexity of systems and assemblies, and criticality of the system or assembly in meeting the OPR. During predesign and design, the list of areas to be commissioned may be general (e.g., electrical lighting controls, emergency power, general electrical equipment, HVAC, domestic water system, and envelope fenestration). Later in design and before scoping construction-phase commissioning, additional detail should be added to each of these categories, and others added as needed to ensure the scope of commissioning is clear. Adding this detail adds to the cost of commissioning, and needs to be specified early in the design phase.

Historically, commissioning focused on HVAC. Owners are now asking for more systems to be commissioned, including lighting controls, fire and life safety systems, vertical and horizontal transport systems, envelope, plumbing, landscaping, sustainability features, structural elements, many electrical equipment components, security, data, and communications. Refer to the section on Commissioning Costs for budgeting guidelines.

Predesign-Phase Commissioning Plan

One predesign-phase commissioning task should be drafting the commissioning plan for the design phase. The CA develops this plan with review and comment by the owner and designer, and the plan is updated as the project progresses. The design-phase commissioning plan should include the following:

- Objectives and scope
- Overview of the process
- Detailed commissioning process activities for design phase
- General commissioning process activities for construction and operations/occupancy phases
- Roles and responsibilities
- Deliverables
- Communication protocols
- Acceptance and verification procedures
- Schedule
- Checklist of requirements and formats

Acceptance of Predesign Commissioning

The owner's project requirements and commissioning plan should be formally accepted during predesign, after review and comment by the CA.

DESIGN-PHASE COMMISSIONING

Objectives

Design-phase commissioning objectives include the following:

- Update the design-phase commissioning plan developed during predesign
- Update the owner's project requirements (OPR)
- Verify basis of design (BOD) document against OPR
- Verify plans and specifications against BOD and OPR
- Develop commissioning plan for construction and occupancy/operations phases, including draft construction checklist
- Develop and incorporate commissioning requirements into project specifications
- Begin developing systems manual
- Define training requirements for O&M personnel
- Perform commissioning-focused design reviews
- Accept design-phase commissioning

Activities

Update Design-Phase Commissioning Plan. The initial design-phase commissioning plan is developed during predesign. As more becomes known about systems and assemblies likely to be a part of the project and as project objectives are clarified, the commissioning plan may need to be updated with additional detail. The CA must participate in value engineering and constructability review sessions to ensure that commissioning can be performed. The owner and designer then review and comment on the updated plan, which then becomes the guide for the rest of the design phase.

Update the OPR. As design progresses, additional OPR and performance criteria are likely to be identified. Other criteria may need to be altered as more detailed budget and design data become available.

Verify the Basis of Design. All BOD elements can be grouped under one of two terms: design narrative or design rationale. These two terms provide a useful separation when writing the design basis.

The **design narrative** is the written description and discussion of the concepts and features the designers *intend* (during schematic design phase) to incorporate into the design or what they *have* incorporated (during the balance of design) to meet the project requirements and associated performance criteria. This narrative should be understandable by all parties of the building construction and operation process, though it may address fairly technical and specialized issues. The design narrative needs to be updated with each phase of design.

The **design rationale** is the reasoning and underlying assumptions for calculations, decisions, schemes, and system and assemblies selected to meet the OPR and to satisfy applicable regulatory requirements, standards, and guidelines. It includes design assumptions needed to make design calculations and other decisions, such as

- Diversity and safety factors used in sizing

- Classes of systems and components (duct class, cleanroom class, etc.)
- Level of redundancy
- Occupant density
- Limitations and restrictions of systems and assemblies
- Inside and outside conditions (space temperature, relative humidity, lighting power density, glazing fraction, U-value and shading coefficient, wall and ceiling R-values, ventilation and infiltration rates, etc.)
- Summary of primary HVAC load calculations and the methods used

The rationale also gives the reasons for system selection; facility, system and assembly performance assumptions; analytical and design tools used; any limitations and restrictions; operational and use assumptions, including assumptions about level of expertise of operating personnel; guidelines and owner polices; directives; and interpretations of codes.

Development and Use. The BOD is written by the designer and increases in detail as design progresses. The CA may need to obtain this explanatory information from the designer. An updated BOD with increased detail should be submitted with each new design submission. Each submission is reviewed by the owner and CA as part of design reviews.

Develop Commissioning Plan for Construction and Occupancy/Operations Phases. The commissioning plan (CP) includes specifications detailing the scope, objectives, and process of commissioning during the construction and occupancy/operations phases of the project. The CP must specify the scope of work, roles, responsibilities, and requirements of the construction contractor. The commissioning plan for the construction and occupancy/operations phases describes the following:

- Commissioning process
- Scope of commissioning effort, including systems, assemblies, and components being commissioned
- Roles and responsibilities of each team member
- Communication protocols between team members, including documentation requirements
- Procedures for documenting commissioning activities and resolving issues
- Preliminary schedule for commissioning activities
- Detailed procedures for all required tests

The commissioning plan developed during predesign is updated to include construction-phase activities. At the beginning of the design phase, the plan is general and is used primarily to guide development of commissioning specifications. The owner and designer review and comment on the plan. As design progresses, the CA updates and finalizes the plan when the construction documents are completed. The commissioning plan can be issued with the bid documents for reference.

Develop and Incorporate Commissioning Requirements into Project Specifications. The specifications in the CP are needed by contractors so they can include commissioning responsibilities in pricing and understand how to execute the work. Because commissioning is still relatively new to the building industry, descriptive process language should be included, rather than just delineating requirements. Frequently, for reference, the responsibilities of other team members not bound by the specifications (e.g., owner, CA, construction manager, architect) are given in the commissioning specifications to ensure clarity and put the contractor's responsibilities in context.

The specification should include definitions, a list of equipment and systems to be commissioned, submittal, construction checklist, testing and documentation requirements, and sample checklists and test forms. If the project uses contractor-managed commissioning, the specification should identify skills and qualifications required of the contractor's commissioning lead.

The OPR, along with as much BOD information as possible, should be included in the construction documents and labeled as "Informational Purposes Only" to differentiate from the contractor's contractual obligations. Training and O&M manual requirements of the contractor also should be included.

It is critical that the project specifications in the CP clearly define how the quality control and testing functions that have traditionally been a part of many construction projects (e.g., fire alarm, elevator, duct pressure, emergency power testing) will be integrated with HVAC commissioning. Responsibility for checkout and test procedures, including test procedure review, direction, execution, witnessing, documentation, and approval, must all be clearly described.

The CA ensures that contractor responsibilities for commissioning are appropriately incorporated into the project specifications. Placing the general commissioning requirements, process descriptions, and specifications in a single section ensures that all parties know where to look for their responsibilities and find common terminology.

Often, the commissioning authority writes the commissioning specifications and then works with the designer to integrate them into the project specifications. Alternatively, the designer can develop the commissioning specifications, with the CA reviewing and recommending revisions.

Begin Developing Systems Manual. During design, the systems manual contains the OPR, design basis, and drawings and specifications, updated at each design submission and during and after construction. The CA is often responsible for assembling and maintaining the systems manual; however, the contract documents for the CA or design professionals should delineate who is responsible for assembling the systems manual.

The systems manual differs significantly from traditional O&M manuals. This manual expands the scope to include other project information developed and gathered during commissioning, such as traditional equipment O&M data, design and construction documents (OPR, BOD, plans, specifications, and approved construction submittals), system schematics, final commissioning report, training records, commissioning test procedures (filled-in and blank), and optimization and diagnostic data (which can include operational procedures for specific emergency situations, seasonal changeover procedures, fire and emergency power response matrix, energy efficiency recommendations, troubleshooting guide, recommissioning frequency, and diagnostic building automation system trend logs). Scopes of work should clearly identify whether the systems manual includes all project systems and assemblies or just commissioned ones. For more information, see ASHRAE *Guideline* 4.

The owner, designer, contractor, and commissioning authority each have development responsibilities for parts of the systems manual. Construction documents should list the contents and requirements for the systems manual and the responsible party for generating, compiling, and finishing each part of the required documentation. Systems manuals should be available for and used in operator training. Much of the systems manual can be put into electronic media format. The ability to search and auto-update enhances the usability and accessibility of the data.

Define Training Requirements. During the design phase, the training requirements of O&M personnel and occupants are identified relative to the systems and assemblies to be installed in the facility. O&M personnel must have the knowledge and skills required to operate the facility to meet the OPR. Occupants also need to understand their effect on the use of the facility and the ability to meet project requirements. Both groups require training.

Training needs can be identified using a group technique workshop, interviews, or surveys with the owner and occupant representatives after the systems and assemblies have been specified, and before issuing the construction documents. The contractor's

training responsibilities need to be incorporated into the project specifications and should include requirements for the number of training hours for each item of equipment or assembly and submittals of training plans and qualifications of trainers. Training will likely require participation of the designer (for system overviews), the CA (for system overviews, recommissioning, optimization, diagnostics, and using and maintaining the systems manual), and possibly the contractor, and should be included in their scopes of work. Because turnover in O&M and occupants will occur, training materials should be reusable (e.g., video, written manuals, computer presentations).

Perform Design Reviews. Design review by parties not part of the formal designer-of-record team should be conducted to provide an independent perspective on performance, operations, and maintenance. These document reviews, conducted by experts in the field, should start as early as possible, when options and issues can be more easily resolved. The reviews may be coordinated by the CA and should include the owner's technical staff. The CA may attend some design team meetings, and formally reviews and comments on the design at various stages of development [ideally, at least once during schematic design (predesign), design development, and construction document phases].

A targeted design review may cover the following:

- General quality review of documents, including legibility, consistency, and level of completeness
- Coordination between disciplines
- Specification applicability to project and consistency with drawings
- Verification that BOD assumptions and rationale are reasonable
- Verification that system and assembly narrative descriptions are clear and consistent with OPR and the BOD is updated with resolved issues
- Verification that plans and specifications are consistent with BOD and OPR, and plans and specifications are updated with resolved issues

Potential system performance problems, issues likely to result in change orders, areas where correct installation is difficult, energy efficiency improvements, environmental sustainability, indoor environmental quality issues, operation and maintenance issues, and other issues may be addressed in these design reviews, depending on the owner's desires and CA's scope. Required reviews ensure that training and systems manual requirements are adequately reflected in construction documents.

Some reviews use sampling, giving 10 to 20% of the drawings and specifications an in-depth review; if only minimal issues are identified, the owner accepts the submission. If significant issues are identified in the sample, the submittal is either sent back to the designer for revamping and a thorough review, or the CA may perform a thorough review, depending upon the scope of work defined in the CA's contract. After the design team has addressed the issues, the CA performs a new review. In this type of review, the design team is still responsible for their traditional peer review of construction documents for accuracy. The CA makes recommendations to facilitate commissioning and improve building performance, without approving or disapproving either design or documents. The design team is ultimately responsible for design. The CA should be able to justify all of the recommendations made. It is the responsibility of the owner or project manager to evaluate all review findings with the design team and see that the responsible team member implements the approved ones. All issues are tracked to resolution and verified in later reviews to have been incorporated as agreed.

Accept Design-Phase Commissioning Activities. Commissioning should include the owner's formal acceptance of the BOD, updated OPR, CP, and the design, after review and comment by the CA.

Additional Commissioning Team Tasks. Additional design-phase responsibilities of the commissioning team (led by the CA, who is frequently responsible for these requirements) include the following:

- Build and maintain cohesiveness and cooperation among the project team
- Assist owner in preparing requests for project services that outline commissioning roles and responsibilities developed in the commissioning plan
- Ensure that commissioning activities are clearly stated in all project scopes of work
- Develop scope and budget for project-specific commissioning process activities
- Identify specialists responsible for commissioning specific systems and assemblies
- Conduct and document commissioning team meetings
- Inform all commissioning team members of decisions that result in modifications to the OPR
- Integrate commissioning into the project schedule
- Track and document issues and deviations relating to the OPR and document resolutions
- Write and review commissioning reports

CONSTRUCTION-PHASE COMMISSIONING

Objectives

Commissioning activities should take place throughout the construction phase to include verification and documentation that

- All acceptance testing requirements are documented
- All systems and assemblies are provided and installed as specified
- All systems and assemblies are started and function properly
- The systems manual is updated and provided to facility staff
- Facility staff and occupants receive specified training and orientation
- Acceptance testing occurs

Activities

The following primary commissioning activities (in approximately sequential order) address commissioning objectives. The CA coordinates and ensures that all activities occur successfully.

Bidding and Contract Negotiation. A member of the commissioning team (usually the CA) may attend the prebid conference to present an overview of commissioning requirements and answer questions. Changes that occur during bidding and contract negotiations related to commissioned systems and assemblies are also reviewed to ensure they agree with the OPR.

Commissioning Planning and Kickoff Meetings. The CA coordinates construction-phase planning and kickoff meetings. The planning meeting held with the contractor, owner, designer, and CA focuses on reviewing requirements and establishing specific communication and reporting protocols. The commissioning plan is updated from this meeting. The kickoff meeting is held with additional construction team members, who generally include the mechanical, controls, electrical, and test and balancing contractors. At this meeting, the commissioning provider outlines the roles and responsibilities of each project team member, specifies procedures for documenting activities and resolving issues, and reviews the preliminary construction commissioning plan and schedule. Team members provide comments on the plan and schedule, and the CA uses these suggestions to help finalize the commissioning plan and schedule.

Commissioning Plan Update. The planning and kickoff meetings usually result in an updated commissioning plan. Later, any project phasing or other schedule and scope-related issues (e.g., testing and training plans and schedules) are clarified in further updates.

Submittal Reviews.

Construction Submittals. The CA reviews equipment and material submittals of commissioned systems and assemblies to obtain information needed to develop construction checklists, make meaningful observations of construction progress, and aid in developing comprehensive tests. Submittals are also reviewed to identify construction-related performance issues before construction progress makes them more difficult and expensive to address. Submittals should be reviewed concurrently by the design team to allow any discrepancies to be identified and communicated to the design team before formal approval.

Controls Submittal and Integration Meeting. Before the contractor develops the controls submittal, the CA coordinates a controls integration meeting to discuss and resolve methods for implementing performance specifications or strategies, interlocks between systems, priority of control between packaged controls and the central control system, the control system database, point names, graphic details and layout, access levels, etc.

Coordination Drawings. The CA may help the owner monitor the development of coordination and shop drawings to ensure synchronization between trades.

Early O&M Data. Information beyond typical construction submittals requested by the CA includes installation and start-up procedures, operation and maintenance information, equipment performance data, and control drawings before formal O&M manual submittals. This information allows the CA to become familiar with systems and assemblies to develop construction checklists, start-up plans, and test procedures.

Contract Modifications Review. Construction documentation issued during this phase, including requests for information, construction field directives, and change orders, should be reviewed by the CA to identify issues that may affect commissioning and compliance with construction documents, BOD, or OPR.

Schedule Commissioning Field Activities. The CA works with the contractors and construction manager to coordinate the commissioning schedule and ensure that commissioning activities are integrated into the master construction schedule.

Construction and Commissioning Meetings. The CA attends periodic planning and job-site meetings to stay informed on construction progress and to update parties involved in commissioning. During initial construction, the CA may attend regular construction meetings and hold a line item on the agenda. Later, the CA may convene entire meetings devoted to commissioning issues, with more frequent meetings as construction progresses. Attendees vary with the purpose of the meeting. Team members should be represented at meetings by parties with technical expertise who are authorized to make commitments and decisions for their respective organizations. The CA should distribute minutes from these meetings.

Progress Reports. The CA provides periodic progress reports to the owner and contractor with increasing frequency as construction progresses. These reports indicate current progress, next steps, and critical issues affecting progress and construction schedule.

Update Owner's Project Requirement and Basis of Design. When contract negotiations and/or changes and clarifications made during construction alter or add to the OPR or BOD, these documents should be updated. Normally, the CA updates the OPR and the designer the BOD. Final construction updates to these documents are made at the end of testing, typically a few months into occupancy.

Coordinate Owner's Representatives Participation. The commissioning plan should describe participation of the owner's representatives in work such as submittal review, construction checklist verification, construction observation, test procedure review and execution, and O&M manual review. The CA normally coordinates this participation with the contractor.

Construction Observation. The CA should make planned, systematic visits to the site to observe installation of systems and assemblies. The owner's staff may assist in construction observation. The CA should verify that the first few of any large-quantity items (e.g., variable-air-volume terminal units) are installed properly and used as a mock-up or standard to judge the rest of the installation. Any conditions not in compliance with the construction documents or BOD or that may affect system performance, commissioning, operation, or other project requirements should be documented. These observations normally focus on areas where observers have found problems before, or spot-check items on construction checklists. Less often, practitioners are tasked with validations or detailed inspections verifying that equipment or assemblies have been installed properly in every detail. Some practitioners make formal construction observation reports, whereas others merge findings into the regular issue logs and progress reports. Site visits should be used to verify completion of construction checklists.

The CA normally witnesses many of the contractor's start-up activities for major equipment to ensure checklists and start-up are documented properly and to gain additional feature and function information from installing technicians.

Construction Checklists and Start-up. At the beginning of construction, construction checklists are developed (usually by the CA, but sometimes by the contractor or equipment manufacturer) for most commissioned systems and equipment. They are attached to or integrated with manufacturer's installation and start-up procedures. In most projects, contractors fill out the checklists during installation, start-up, and normal checkout of equipment and systems, though some commissioning practitioners fill out the checklists themselves. The contractor fully documents start-up and initial checkout, including the construction checklists, and submits them to the CA, who reviews the forms and spot-checks selected items in the field later in the project, to ensure systems are ready for testing.

Some CA practitioners statistically sample items on checklists to verify proper completion (typically random or targeted sampling 2 to 20%). If an inordinate fraction of the sampled items are deficient (typically more than 10%), the contractor is required to check and document all remaining items. The contractual documents need to contain details of the sampling and actions based on the results.

Commissioning Issues Management. The CA keeps a record of all commissioning issues that require action by the design team, contractor, or owner. The issues should remain uniquely identified, be tied to equipment and systems, and prioritized relative to performance, cost, and schedule. Issues are tracked to resolution and completely documented. The CA distributes the updated log to the owner, contractor, and construction manager at construction and commissioning meetings. This log can also be placed on project Web sites. In the contractor-managed scenario, the contractor's commissioning manager or subconsultant may manage the contractor's issues log. In that case, to minimize conflicts of interest, the commissioning authority is often required to report all issues simultaneously to the contractor and to the owner.

Developing Test Procedures. Step-by-step test procedures and project-specific documentation formats are used for all commissioned equipment and assemblies. **Manual tests** evaluate systems with immediate results. **Monitoring testing** uses the building automation system or data loggers to record system parameters over time and analyze the data days or weeks later. **Automated testing** gathers or analyzes system performance data completely electronically, or with significant help from software.

Test procedure writing begins immediately after the submittal, because test procedures need to be reviewed and approved before testing occurs, which is generally scheduled about three to six weeks after the submittal review. Test procedures may be based on specifications, applicable standards and codes, submittal data, O&M data, data shipped with the equipment, approved control drawings, and existing test procedures of similar equipment or components. Tests should cover all functions and modes.

The CA is responsible for verifying that the test procedures are written and appropriate for determining that equipment, assemblies, and systems function correctly. Test procedures are written by the equipment manufacturer, contractor, engineer, CA, or a combination thereof, depending on their scopes of work. All parties should have input into the final test procedures to ensure that equipment, assemblies, systems, or people will not be endangered or warranties voided. Industry standard test procedures [e.g., ASHRAE, Air-Conditioning and Refrigeration Institute (ARI), American Composites Manufacturers Association (ACMA)] should be referenced whenever possible.

Testing and Verification.

Responsibilities and Management. Not all testing and verification falls under HVAC commissioning. Traditional air and water testing, adjusting, and balancing is often the sole responsibility of the contractor or by independent contract to the owner. Building envelope, elevators, and electrical system testing are also generally excluded from HVAC commissioning. There is some movement in the industry to centralize coordination for quality assurance/quality control (QA/QC) functions under the commissioning team. Each project is unique, and different approaches can be warranted.

Critical issues include ensuring that

- Appropriate testing rigor is applied
- Technically qualified parties execute and document the testing
- Objectivity is maintained
- Testing is well documented

For systems not usually thoroughly tested by the contractor [e.g., HVAC systems and controls, lighting controls, specialty plumbing, and envelope and interfaces between systems (security, communications, controls, HVAC, emergency power)], the CA may write test procedures that go beyond HVAC tests. The CA then directs, witnesses, and documents each test executed by the contractor. For these systems, the controls subcontractor usually executes the tests, although the CA may test some equipment with or without the contractor present.

Testing that has traditionally been conducted by the contractor (e.g., fire alarm, fire protection, elevator, duct and pipe tests, emergency power, some electrical equipment) ideally should be centrally coordinated. This can be the responsibility of the contractor or of the CA. The specifications should clearly establish testing and documentation requirements and define the responsible party. The level of confidence and objectivity can be increased by requiring experts in specific disciplines to witness tests, particularly in some electrical system and envelope assembly field testing. Increasing the required amount of field witnessing by the CA also improves the confidence that commissioning was correctly performed.

Within a given discipline, there may be differing levels of autonomy. For example, in tests of electrical equipment (e.g., circuit breakers), the contractor may conduct and document the bolt torque tests, and also be required to hire an independent certified testing agency to conduct other necessary tests that require more specialized expertise and test equipment.

The owner's technical staff can assist in and benefit from participation in any of the above scenarios. The designer and owner's project management staff may witness selected tests.

Verification Testing Scheduling. Verification testing should be performed after equipment and assemblies are complete, started up, and checked out; construction checklists submitted; and air and water balancing complete. The contractor is then ready to turn the system over to the owner. Some practitioners require a certificate of readiness from the contractor certifying that the system has been thoroughly checked out and verified to be completely functional. Ideally, manual testing occurs before substantial completion, but schedule slippage may require testing to occur after this milestone. Some short-term monitoring may be completed with manual testing, but most is postponed until early occupancy. Opposite-season and other deferred testing should be conducted during seasonal changes or peak seasonal conditions.

Testing Scope. At a minimum, testing includes observing and documenting system operation and function during normal operation, through each of their sequences of operation, and all other modes of operation and conditions, including manual, bypass, emergency, standby, high and low load, and seasonal extremes, and comparing actual performance to that specified in the construction documents. Testing may also be conducted to verify performance criteria found in the BOD and OPR, including system optimization, though deficiencies in these areas are not normally the contractor's responsibility.

Manual Testing Methods. Testing includes observing normal operation; changing set points, schedules, and timers; and exercising power disconnects, speed controls, overwriting sensor values, etc., to cause perturbations in the system. System response and results are recorded on test procedure forms, and any issues are documented. Small corrections are often made during testing. Less pressing corrections or issues with unknown solutions are investigated later, corrected, and retested.

Building automation systems (BAS), when present, can be the backbone for conducting much of the testing, collecting, and archiving data. Before using the BAS, critical sensors, actuators, and features should be verified as calibrated so the system readouts are reliable (although all sensors and actuators should have been calibrated by the contractor and documented on construction checklists). The results are viewed on the building automation system screen or at the equipment. Other tests may require handheld instruments or visual verification (e.g., evaluating caulking and flashings on window installations).

Monitoring. Some testing requires monitoring (trending) system operation over time through the BAS or data loggers (when the BAS does not monitor desired points). Monitoring can be used to document that systems are performing properly during test conditions over the monitoring period. However, this is not a substitute for manual testing, which can cover a wide range of conditions. Monitoring provides a view of system interactions over the course of normal, start-up, shutdown, and weekend operation. Normally, the CA analyzes monitored data and submits a report, with any concerns added to the issues log.

Automated Testing. Various semiautomated testing is conducted in permanent onboard equipment controllers. Currently, most truly automated testing focuses on identifying electrical faults in controller components and is used during vendor start-up and troubleshooting activities. Some use logic to identify parameters outside limits, which indicate component malfunctions such as hunting and calibration issues. Different types of automated testing intended to help commissioning are under development. Some are primarily tools to gather and display monitored data; others help the analyzer make diagnoses. Equipment manufacturers often integrate automated commissioning testing capabilities into onboard controllers on their equipment.

Training. Training should include, as appropriate, (1) the general purpose of the system; (2) use and management of the systems manual; (3) review of control drawings and schematics; (4) start-up, shutdown, seasonal changeover, and normal, unoccupied, and manual operation; (5) controls set-up and programming; (6) diagnostics, troubleshooting, and alarms; (7) interactions with other systems; (8) adjustments and optimizing methods for energy conservation; (9) relevant health and safety issues; (10) special maintenance and replacement sources; (11) tenant interaction issues; and (12) discussion of why specific features are environmentally sustainable. Occupants may also need orientation on certain systems, assemblies, and features in the building, particularly sustainable design features that can be easily circumvented.

The CA helps the owner ensure that adequate training plans are used by the contractor and that training is completed according to the construction documents. (See the discussion of defining training

requirements in the section on Commissioning During Design.) Some CAs conduct testing with a sample of trainees to verify the efficacy of the training.

Most training should be accomplished during construction, before substantial completion. However, for complex systems (e.g., control systems), multiple training sessions should occur before and after substantial completion. Training for systems that will not come into operation until the next season may be delayed. A meaningful training program typically includes using the operation and maintenance components of the systems manual, which must be submitted before training begins. Selected training materials can be video-recorded as desired by the owner.

Commissioning Record. The CA compiles all commissioning documentation and project data, which are submitted and become part of the systems manual. The commissioning record contains the salient documentation of commissioning, including the commissioning final report, issues log, commissioning plan, progress reports, submittal and O&M manual reviews, training record, test schedules, construction checklists, start-up reports, tests, and trend log analysis, grouped by equipment.

Final Commissioning Report. The CA should write (or review) and submit a final commissioning report detailing, for each piece of commissioned equipment or assembly, the adequacy of equipment or assemblies meeting contract documents. The following areas should be covered: (1) installation, including procedures used for testing equipment with respect to specifications; (2) functional performance and efficiency, including test results; (3) O&M manual documentation; and (4) operator training. Noncompliance items should be specifically listed. A brief description of the verification method used (manual testing, trend logs, data loggers, etc.) and observations and conclusions from the testing should be included. The CA updates the final commissioning report after occupancy/operations-phase commissioning.

Systems Manual Submittal. The CA usually compiles the systems manual and provides it to the owner. At the end of construction, the designer, contractor, owner, and CA provide elements of the systems manual generated during the construction phase. The systems manual should include commissioning test procedures, results of commissioning tests, issue logs and resolution, system schematics, O&M information, record drawings, construction checklists, start-up reports, and trend log analysis, grouped by equipment. The CA normally reviews and approves systems manual submissions by the contractor and designer, similar to traditional O&M manual reviews. Electronic systems manuals, now developed occasionally, will likely become standard in the future.

OCCUPANCY- AND OPERATIONS-PHASE COMMISSIONING

Occupancy- and operations-phase commissioning typically begins with resolving the findings from performance monitoring over the first month or two into occupancy, and ends with the completion of the first year of occupancy.

Objectives

Commissioning during this phase should ensure the following:

- Initial maintenance and operator training is complete.
- Systems and assemblies received functional opposite-season verification.
- Outstanding performance issues are identified and resolved before warranty expiration.
- Commissioning process evaluation conducted and satisfactorily resolved.

Activities

Verifying Initial Training Completion. The CA ensures that any remaining training is conducted according to the contract documents, either by reviewing documentation of the training or through witnessing portions of the training. This normally applies to control systems and training on major systems for which peak season is not near the end of the construction phase.

Opposite-Season Testing. Opposite-season testing verifies proper operation of those systems for which peak load conditions are not available before substantial completion. For example, when completion occurs in winter, final full-load cooling system testing must wait until the following summer. Testing should be performed by the appropriate contractor and witnessed by the CA and building operators. However, the owner's operations staff and the CA, if sufficiently proficient with the controls system, can execute the tests and recall contractors only if there are problems.

Near-Warranty-End Review. The CA may also be asked to return a few months before the contractor's one-year warranty expires, to interview facility staff and review system operation. By acting as the owner's technical representative, the CA assists facility staff address any problems or warranty issues.

Documentation Update. Any identified operations-phase concerns are added to the issues log and the final commissioning report is amended to include occupancy/operations-phase commissioning activities. Changes to the BOD, OPR, or record documents are documented by updating the systems manual near the end of the warranty. Changes to sequences of operation require particular care in ensuring that these updates occur.

Commissioning Process Evaluation. The CA should meet briefly with the owner; general, controls, mechanical, and electrical contractors; and mechanical and electrical designers to discuss the commissioning process for this project. Topics to be addressed include what went well, what could be improved, what would best be done differently next time, etc. This will benefit all parties in commissioning future projects. The CA will submit a report on this meeting to the owner.

The occupancy/operations phase typically begins with resolving the findings from monitoring a month or two into occupancy, and ends when the one-year equipment warranties expire.

Additional Activities. The CA may also be given other responsibilities during the warranty period, such as helping develop a maintenance management program, optimizing system performance, and developing electronic facility manuals.

Ongoing or Recommissioning. Ongoing monitoring and periodic retesting and calibration of selected systems and assemblies is recommended to ensure they comply with the OPR, operating and functioning optimally throughout their life. This is sometimes called recommissioning. Some recommissioning methods rely more on semicontinuous monitoring of primary system performance parameters with periodic analysis. Other approaches consist of recalibrating and retesting targeted systems and components on a regular schedule, including both manual testing and monitoring. Calibration and test frequency vary with equipment and its application.

COMMISSIONING COSTS

Commissioning costs vary considerably with project size and building type, equipment type, scope, and traveling requirements (Mills 2004; Wilkenson 2000). Historically, commissioning focused on HVAC and controls, and started during construction. However, QA/QC for increasing numbers of systems is being included in commissioning, and the process now frequently begins in the design phase. Currently, the commissioning industry is not mature; budget estimates, even for relatively detailed scopes of work, vary widely.

Clear definition of tasks, deliverables, systems and components to be commissioned, rigor, and testing methods must be provided for comparative pricing. The costing guidelines that follow must be used with great caution and are provided only for rough planning purposes. Understanding what is and what is not included in each cost number is critical. *Owners should consult commissioning*

providers with their planned projects to obtain budget estimates, and practitioners should use detailed cost breakdowns for their pricing.

DESIGN-PHASE COSTS (INCLUDING PREDESIGN AND DESIGN)

Predesign-phase costs include the CA's efforts in attending predesign meetings and design reviews with the architect's consulting team and owner's representatives. This portion of work may range from 8 to 12% of the CA's contract. Design-phase costs include the CA's reviewing design submittals, coordinated with the designer, and developing sections of the systems manual (design intent and basic operations from the control submittal). This portion of the work may range from 15 to 20% of the CA contract.

For a project that includes the discussed tasks for all HVAC and controls components, a moderate level of electrical systems commissioning, and minor plumbing and envelope commissioning, the total commissioning costs (CA cost plus the additional work of the designers) may range from 0.2 to 0.6% of the total construction cost for a typical office building. This estimate assumes two moderate design reviews. Different types of buildings or more complex buildings with larger scopes of design review may cost considerably more.

CONSTRUCTION- AND OCCUPANCY/ OPERATIONS-PHASE COSTS

Table 1 estimates the CA's costs for the construction and occupancy/operation phases under the CA-managed approach. It includes construction- and occupancy/operations-phase commissioning for the HVAC system (including fire, life, safety and controls) and electrical system (including lighting controls, emergency power, and limited connection and grounding checks). It does not include specialty testing such as full infrared scanning, power quality, switch gear, transformer, or low-voltage-system testing. Complex systems and critical applications have higher costs. *For a given building type and complexity,* larger buildings tend to come in at the lower end of the range and smaller buildings at the higher.

The listed costs cover only the CA fees; there are also costs to the contractor, designers, and owner's staff. For the CA-managed approach, costs for the mechanical contractor attending meetings, documenting construction checklists, and assisting with testing will approximate 10 to 20% of the CA's mechanical commissioning costs. The electrical contractor's costs may equal the CA's electrical commissioning costs for electrical commissioning (because contractors are usually responsible for hiring their own electrical testing company to perform electrical tests). International Electrical Testing Association (NETA) tests are often already part of the normal construction program, and the only additional commissioning costs are for the CA to coordinate testing, spot-witness, and review reports.

Commissioning costs for the contractor-managed approach are similar overall, but more costs are shifted from the CA to the contractor and their commissioning manager and staff.

EXISTING BUILDINGS

Existing building commissioning (also called retrocommissioning) involves commissioning building HVAC equipment after the equipment has been installed, and the facility is running and occupied. HVAC equipment performance normally degrades with use and time, at a rate depending on the quality of maintenance and operations. Quality of maintenance also affects equipment life expectancy. A facility retrocommissioning effort should include developing an owner's project requirements or owner's intent, documentation of the existing system, a survey identifying operational inefficiencies for the facility, quantifying and prioritizing the inefficiencies found, determining how to best optimize the equipment or operation, implementing the change, and then reverifying with ongoing measurements that the retrocommissioning activities produced and continue to produce the desired effect (Claridge et al. 2000). Other definitions specify it as a one-time event with a different set of project phases (Haasl and Sharp 1999; Thorne and Nadel 2003). All of these approaches provide methodologies to improve operation and lower a facility's energy use with direct consideration given to the current operational requirements.

Table 1 Estimated Commissioning Authority Costs to Owner for Construction and Occupancy/Operations Phases

Commissioned System	Total Commissioning Cost
HVAC and controls[a]	2.0 to 3.0% of mechanical
Electrical system[a]	1.0 to 2.0% of electrical
HVAC, controls, and light electrical[b]	0.5 to 1.5% of construction

Sources:
[a]Wilkinson (2000).
[b]PECI (2000).

Existing building commissioning activities include reviewing utility bills and building documents, optimizing chiller and boiler systems, implementing various equipment operational scheduling, optimizing air delivery systems, setting up temperature resets for the water- and air-side operations, optimizing indoor air quality control, and verifying control systems are functioning as needed. When existing systems may not have the capacity to meet the owner's project requirements, system deficiencies need to be documented with a decision on when (or whether) upgrading will be done. For example, indoor air quality objectives may not be met because a system was designed under an older standard or code. Temperature objectives may not be met because additional computer equipment loads have been added to some spaces, and the original system was designed to handle a lower load. In each case, a documented recommendation should be provided to the owner on the options available.

RCx has been shown to be a very cost-effective way to improve occupant comfort and lower costs. Energy savings of over 20% with a two-year payback have been reported (Claridge 2004). Also, Kats et al. (1999) showed that RCx typically achieved 40% or more savings than was estimated during a range of audits.

Buildings with systems ranging from older pneumatic controls to newer energy management and control systems (EMCSs) have been successfully retrocommissioned. Pneumatic controls limit the number of RCx options that can be implemented, and also require separate data logging for monitoring parameters used to calculate energy savings. Modern EMCSs enable lower-cost RCx and also allow trend logging of various parameters to sustain the achieved savings.

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