# How 5,000+ Specification Questions Exposed a Hidden Threat to Every Electrical Bid

# How 5,000+ Specification Questions Exposed a Hidden Threat to Every Electrical Bid

**After examining thousands of specifications reviews with our construction and trade experts, one thing became clear. Specs aren't the problem. The blind spots inside  processes are, and they're costing *clarity, time, and margin* on every bid.**

Every day, electrical contractors across hundreds of projects use Document Crunch's CrunchAI-powered Chat tool with their specifications to ask questions, search for requirements, and prepare bids. **We  anonymized and aggregated those interactions, revealing data and insights the industry has never had access to before.** Then, we went one step further.

**Our team analyzed patterns to understand how teams approach spec review in practice.** Across roles, experience levels, and geographies, we saw what electrical teams look for, where they get stuck, and most importantly what they *don't* search for.

And it showed up everywhere. The same requirement types kept getting overlooked. Not because estimators weren't skilled but because certain types of requirements consistently show up in unpredictable places. And traditional reviews aren't built to catch them.

- Training requirements defined outside Division 26
- Extended warranties introduced without clear cost visibility
- Electrical contractor obligations assigned through other divisions

Repetitive Chat questions showed where teams rely on habit. The questions teams asked far less often about responsibility, process and added requirements revealed where the process often breaks down.

The issues that derail electrical bids aren't always one-off surprises. Sometimes it's a single miss. More often, it's the small gaps that compound when reviews aren't consistent.

**Our analysis revealed five gaps that consistently leave electrical bids exposed to risk. And they're not what most people expect.**

# What the Data Shows:
## The 5 Gaps That Cost You

### 01.  Testing Requirements: Who Pays vs. What's Required

**What's asked:** "Is testing required?"

**What gets missed:** Who performs it? Who pays? What does it actually cost?

**Why it matters:** Questions about whether testing exists outnumber questions about who's responsible 6:1 and outnumber cost questions 3:1. Teams confirm testing is required. They don't confirm who's paying for it.

### 02.  Submittals: The List vs. The Process

**What's asked:** "What submittals are required?"

**What gets missed:** Review cycles, rejection triggers, and how Division 01 can shift what counts as an "approved equal."

**Why it matters:** Questions about what submittals are required outnumber questions about the review process 4:1. Teams focus on compiling the list. The cost shows up later in delays, rework, and resubmittals that weren't planned for.

### 03.  Who Owns It? The Responsibility Gap

**What's asked:** "Who is responsible for this requirement?"

**What gets missed:** Which specific trade owns testing, commissioning coordination, temporary facilities, cutting and patching, and who pays when work falls between trades.

**Why it matters:** Nearly 5% of ALL specification questions ask "who is responsible?" When responsibility isn't clear upfront, teams either miss scope (and perform unbudgeted work they can't recover) or include scope that isn't theirs (and lose margin to overbidding).

# What the Data Shows:
## The 5 Gaps That Cost You

### 04. The Questions Nobody Asks: Quantity Drivers

**What's asked:** "Is it required?"

**What gets missed:** Percentages, spare materials, attic stock, minimums, and other spec-defined requirements that add material and effort beyond the drawings.

**Why it matters:** Only 1 in 42 questions across all topics asks about cost or quantity. Teams move quickly to confirm requirements, but without a consistent way to surface these details, small additions compound into real budget and margin impact.

### 05. Division 01: High Impact, Low Attention

**What gets checked:** Division 26 scope.

**What gets missed:** Division 01 requirements that add obligations, coordination requirements, documentation or sourcing constraints.

**Why it matters:** Teams generate 115x more questions about specific requirements than about Division 01. Whether Division 01 requirements get applied depends on memory and experience, not a repeatable process.

# Why This Matters

Arcadis has tracked construction disputes for nine years. Six times, **errors and omissions in contract documents** ranked as the #1 cause, followed closely by teams failing to fully understand or comply with their contractual obligations. Not unforeseen site conditions. Not scope creep. Breakdowns in clarity.

That's where disputes take shape.

- Testing responsibility that wasn't clarified
- Submittal processes that weren't budgeted
- Division 01 requirements that weren't applied
- Quantities that were assumed instead of confirmed

Those disputes now average **$60 million** and take **more than a year** to resolve.

The takeaway is simple: these problems aren't unpredictable, they're preventable. Not because teams suddenly have more time, but because AI-powered review helps catch gaps when reviews have to move fast.That's why we believe the construction industry can move toward zero disputes.

# Why Generic AI Falls Short

It's no surprise electrical contractors are turning to AI to review specs faster. It feels like the right response to shrinking bid windows and expanding spec books. But fast ≠ accurate.

**The problem: Generic AI reads text. It doesn't drive a structured spec review.**

It doesn't understand trade-specific construction language or how it's used in specs. It misses how requirements are connected across the document. And when it gets an answer wrong, it does it confidently. The most expensive kind of wrong.

# The Gaps Aren't Random.
# The Fix Can't Be Either.

Solving these gaps requires two things electrical teams have never had in one place before: AI purpose-built to accurately process large construction specifications and a consistent, repeatable way to review them.

**That's why we built CrunchAI for Specifications and the Electrical Specifications Checklist.**

**CrunchAI for Specifications** interprets construction language the way seasoned construction professionals do with responsibility, context, cross-division impacts, not just text. It finds requirements and presents them in clear, plain-spoken language, with the context needed to review them confidently.

**The Electrical Specifications Checklist** transforms industrywide data patterns into 40+ targeted checks for electrical work. It gives every team a structured, repeatable, defensible way to review specs from day one.

Together, they provide what traditional reviews can't:

- Clarity across divisions
- Responsibility surfaced early
- Cost-critical requirements identified
- A consistent method that scales across teams and offices

The gaps are systemic. Your solution has to be, too.

# See How This Applies to Your Specs

**In 30 minutes, we'll show you:**

✓ How these blind spots show up in your actual specifications
✓ What CrunchAI catches that typical reviews miss
✓ How the Electrical Specifications Checklist works in practice

**Schedule a Demo**

***Want to learn more first?*** *See the Electrical Specifications Checklist*

> *"It's a great opportunity for our precon teams across all locations to standardize how we review specifications to ensure everyone's following the process."*
>
> **— Rick Allard, Corporate Advisor, Watson Electric**