



# **Ask Our Clients!**

## **Results of the CoMET Survey**

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# Why Conduct a Survey?

- To seek ways for optimizing performance
- To find out what clients think about CoMET services
- What do they like and dislike?
- How knowledgeable are they about CoMET?
- How/what can we improve?

# Survey Process

- Emailed directions and survey link to ASFE/GBA members
- Members then emailed clients asking them to complete the survey

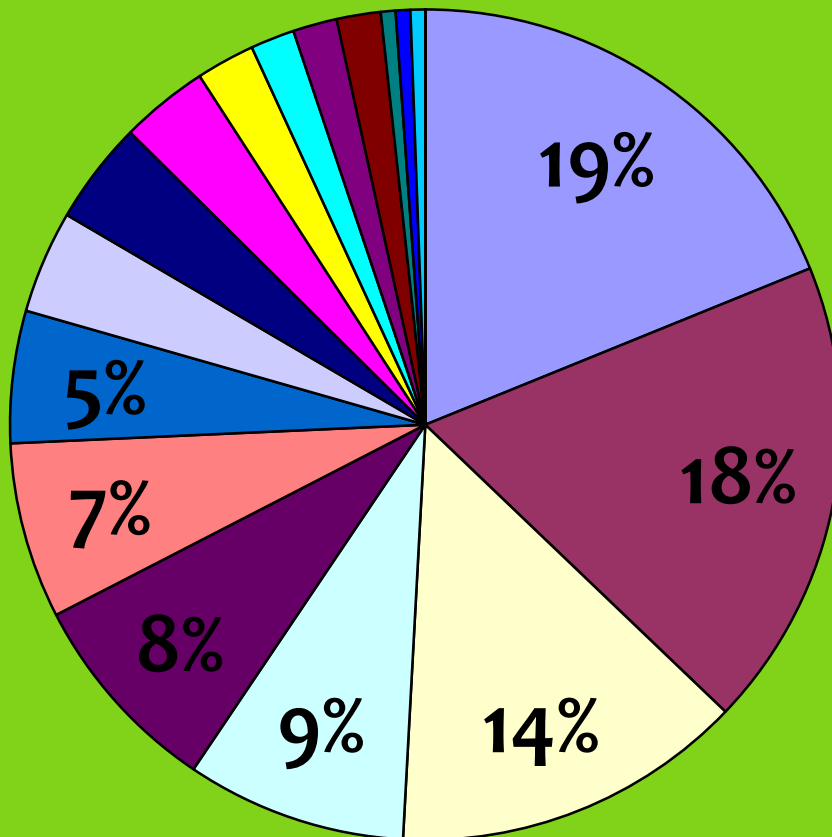


# Some Lessons Learned

- Tough to rely on others to push the survey
- Plan on everything taking longer than expected
- When to conduct the survey? For how long?
- Biased results introduced because of clients that were selected to participate?

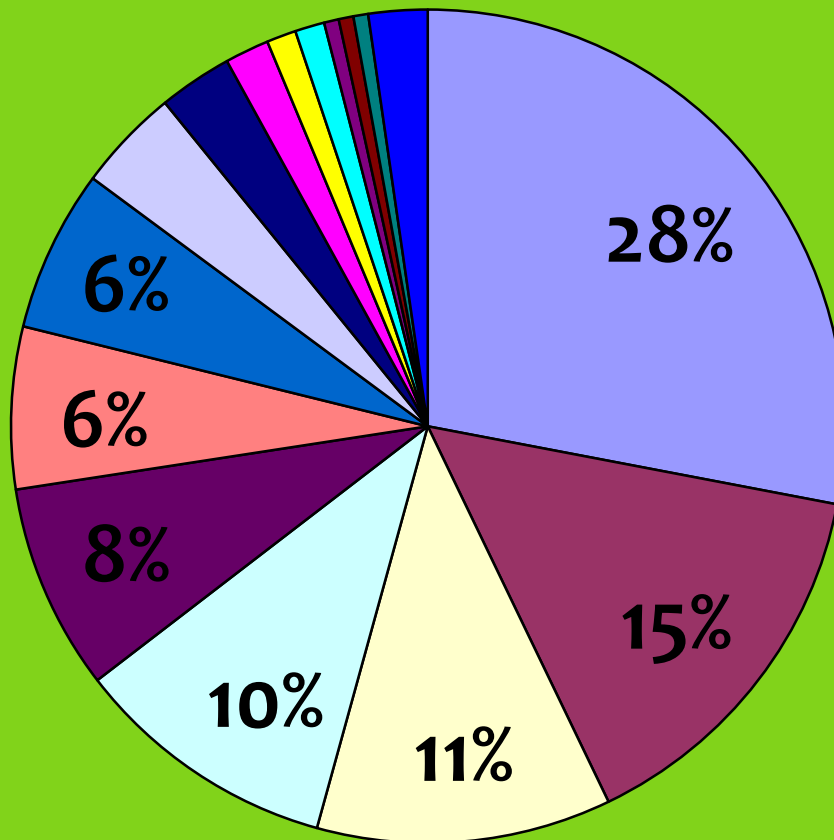
**The**  
**Survey**  
*says...*

# Q1: What type of company do you work for?



- Civil Design Engineering
- Contractor
- Construction Management
- Structural Engineering
- Architecture
- Local Government
- Commercial Developer
- Retail Company
- State Government
- School District
- Residential Developer
- Health Care Provider
- Utility District
- Construction Materials Supplier / Manufacturer
- Industrial Facility
- Railroad

## Q2: What is your job title or role?



- Project Manager
- Construction Manager
- Civil Engineer
- Owner
- Structural Engineer
- Architect
- Inspector of Record / QC
- Owner's Representative
- Facilities Manager
- Plant Manager
- Asset Manager
- Land Developer
- Construction Superintendent
- Project Superintendent
- Procurement Officer
- Other

## Q3: Where are the majority of your projects located?

Answer Options	Response
Southeast	23%
Southwest	20%
New England	16%
Midwest	14%
Mid-Atlantic	11%
Pacific Northwest	7%
Nationwide	7%
Canada	0%
Other International	1%



# A Lesson Learned

- Identify Geographic Areas

Not as good: Southwest

Better: Southwest (AZ, CA, NM, NV, UT)

## Q4: Select up to 3 of the top types of projects you frequently own/build/work on.

Answer Options	Response
Commercial buildings	35%
Roads, streets, and highways	27%
Schools (primary through secondary education)	26%
Large retail facilities	22%
Local government (counties/cities/reclamation dist.)	22%
Small retail facilities	19%
Residential development	16%
Health care	16%

## Q4: Select up to 3 of the top types of projects you frequently own/build/work on.

Answer Options	Response
State government	14%
Industrial facilities	14%
Manufacturing facilities	12%
Water and waste water treatment plants	10%
Federal government	7%
Local utilities	6%
Power generation	4%
Gas and oil	3%

## Q4: Select up to 3 of the top types of projects you frequently own/build/work on.

Answer Options	Response
Dams and levees	3%
Rail	2%
Airports	2%
Power transmission	2%
Ports and harbors	1%
Other	2%

## Q5: What is the cost of the projects you typically own/build/construct?

Answer Options	Response
Less than \$2 million	22%
\$2 to \$5 million	22%
\$5 to \$50 million	47%
\$50 to \$250 million	8%
More than \$250 million	1%

## Q6: How important are the following when making your decision to engage the services of a CoMET consultant?

- Important factors (in order of priority) :
  - **Speed of reporting/electronic reporting**
  - **Prior working relationships**
  - Having a local office (especially in New England and SW)
  - Being up to date with current technology
  - Laboratory accreditations
  - Having a consistent report image
  - Personnel certifications

## Q6: How important are the following when making your decision to engage the services of a CoMET consultant?

- Somewhat important factors:
  - Using new test equipment
  - Level of insurance coverage
  - Ease of contract negotiations
  - Geotechnical and CoMET by same firm
  - Sophisticated appearing reports (very important in Pacific NW)
  - Having a local laboratory

## Q6: How important are the following when making your decision to engage the services of a CoMET consultant?

- Not important factors:
  - Employee uniforms
  - Having new trucks/vehicles



**Q7: Do you ever seek to verify the certifications of CoMET personnel that are presented to you?**

Answer Options	Response
Yes	37%
No	63%

## Q8: Do you know which tests a CoMET laboratory is accredited for?

Answer Options	Response
Yes	29%
No	71%

## Q9: Have you visited your CoMET laboratory in the last 5 years?

Answer Options	Response
Yes	35%
No	65%

**Q10: Are you aware there is no such thing as a blanket or overall laboratory accreditation?**

Answer Options	Response
Yes	29%
No	71%

**Q11: Are you aware laboratory accreditations apply to only one specific location and only to specific tests?**

Answer Options	Response
Yes	43%
No	57%

## Q12: What type of CoMET services do you typically engage for your projects?

(select all that apply)

Answer Options	Response
Concrete	71%
Foundations	65%
Earthwork	59%
Structural Steel/Welding	58%
Quality Control of Contractor	53%
Product/Material Evaluation	51%
Materials Engineering	49%
Masonry	48%

## Q12: What type of CoMET services do you typically engage for your projects?

(select all that apply)

Answer Options	Response
Quality Assurance of Contractor	45%
Materials Selection	33%
Fireproofing	27%
Post-Installed Anchors	22%
Forensic Investigation/Forensics	18%
Project Planning	14%
Plan and/or Specification Review	14%
Stormwater Pollution Plan Inspection/Sampling	13%

## Q12: What type of CoMET services do you typically engage for your projects?

(select all that apply)

Answer Options	Response
Failure Analysis	12%
Project Management	9%
Preparation of Plans and/or Specifications	9%
Project Controls	8%
Stormwater Pollution Plan Implementation	8%
Project Scheduling	6%
Project Safety	3%
Contractor Selection	1%

## Q13: Why do you use a CoMET consultant?

(select all that apply)

Answer Options	Response
To Improve the Quality of the Project	75%
Required by Project Specifications	57%
To Watch the Contractor's Work	43%
Required by Owner/Lender	42%
Required by Building Department	40%

➤ Provide additional project personnel

## Q14: How do you choose your CoMET consultant? (select top three choices)

Answer Options	Response
Previous Successful Working Relationship	88%
Local Reputation of Firm	49%
Geographic Proximity to Your Project	43%
Perceived Qualifications of the Firm	22%
Perceived Value the Firm Can Bring to Your Project	20%
Firm's Proposal along with Statement of Qualifications	18%
Recommendation from CM, Architect, SE, or CE	16%
Lowest Price	8%
Promotional Ads Placed in Technical Publications	1%
National Firm	1%
Size of the Firm	1%



## Q14: Choosing CoMET consultants:

### Further insight

- Previous working relationships:
  - Important on small sized projects
  - **Very important** on medium sized projects (\$2M-\$50M)
  - Slightly less important on large projects
- Geographic proximity of office to projects:
  - Importance increases as projects get larger

## Q14: Choosing CoMET consultants:

### Further insight

- Lowest price:
  - Becomes less important as the project size increases
  - Not important on large projects
- Large projects:
  - Qualifications, proposal, and SOQ are all very important
  - Recommendation from CM, Architect, SE, and CE mean very little

**Q15: Do you prefer to have CoMET services obtained/paid for by the contractor?**

Answer Options	Response
Yes	20%
No	80%

**Q16: Do you believe there could be a potential for conflict when the contractor pays for CoMET services?**

Answer Options	Response
Yes	78%
No	22%

# Q17: How do you perceive your CoMET consultant providing value to your project?

(select all that apply)

Answer Options	Response
They make sure job is being built per plans and specs	82%
They are the our eyes and ears on the job	70%
They are looking out for our best interests	63%
They are proactive and seek to find potential problems before they get out of control	44%
They record data that I really don't understand and present it in an understandable manner	20%
We only use CoMET services because it's required	6%
I'm not really sure	1%
CoMET firms do not provide much value	0%

## Q18: Are CoMET consultants part of your project team during the planning and design phases?

Answer Options	Response
Yes	32%
No	18%
Sometimes	50%

## Q19: If CoMET consultants are not always part of your project team during the planning and design phases, why not? (select all that apply)

Answer Options	Response
Too early in project to select a CoMET consultant	51%
No payment mechanism exists at design stage	32%
Not sure what input they could provide	26%
Never gave it a thought to include them	23%
Would just increase their fee	14%

## Q20: What do you most like about the CoMET consultants you have worked with?

- Knowledge/experience/judgment of staff
- Responsive/dependable/professional
- Personal and professional relationships
- Increased quality on projects
- Identify and help correct potential problems

## Q21: What are your frustrations with CoMET consultants?

- Late arriving reports
- Failing results not reported at time of test
- Switching personnel on projects
- Personnel with limited knowledge
- Confusing or incomplete reports
- Invoices wrong, incomplete, or lack details
- Personnel who arrive without proper equip.



## Q21: What are your frustrations with CoMET consultants?

- Not meeting schedules/deadlines
- Inability to adjust to schedule changes
- Difficulty communicating with CoMET firm and staff
- Using personnel lacking correct certifications
- Minimum daily charges
- Contracting difficulties

## Q22: What do you like the least about some of the CoMET consultants you have worked with in the past?

- Poor communication
  - Late and/or incomplete reports
  - Not reporting failures quickly
  - Not proactive when problems are encountered
- Switching personnel on projects

## Q22: What do you like the least about some of the CoMET consultants you have worked with in the past?

- Lacking skills/knowledge
  - Unqualified/inexperienced staff
  - Ultra-conservative
  - Struggles with unfamiliar items
- Submitting change orders at end of jobs

## Q23: Do you frequently have billing issues with CoMET consultants?

Answer Options	Response
Yes	10%
No	90%

## Q24: If you frequently have billing issues with CoMET consultants, what are the most common types of problems?

- Budget overruns
- Lack of details on invoices
- Submitting change orders at end of jobs
- Hours that do not match DFRs

## Q25: What are your preferred method(s) of report receipt? (select all that apply)

Answer Options	Response
E-mail	98%
Web portal	13%
Regular mail	11%
Fax	1%

➤ Hard copy of DFR left at site

## Q26: Please provide any additional comments or suggestions:

- PMs need to check in with clients more often
- Engineers need to visit projects more often
- “How can firms put all their trust in technicians without an engineer ever visiting the project?”

**What does**

**It All**

*mean?*



# Overall Survey Impressions

- CoMET firms are respected and appreciated
- Clients see a benefit and value to CoMET services, and improved project quality
- Relationships and communication are key
- The speed of reporting is very important
- Electronic reporting is desired

# Overall Survey Impressions

- Communicate failures and cost overruns early and proactively
- Do not switch staff on projects
- Use certified and knowledgeable staff
- Clients have no idea what laboratory accreditations are

# Overall Survey Impressions

- Clients will use CoMET firms for much more than just traditional testing and inspection work
- PMs and engineers need to visit clients and project sites more often

# What's Next?

- Educate ourselves
- Accept client's feelings
- Need to educate our clients
- All firms are not equal
- Have clients visit our facilities
- **CoMET Committee will continue/begin to develop materials to assist you in optimizing performance**



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# Any Questions?

## How are you going to optimize your performance?