

**Section 32 32 23**

**MODULAR CONCRETE RETAINING WALL**

**PART 1: GENERAL**

**1.1 Description**

- A. Work shall consist of furnishing and construction of a KEYSTONE Standard Unit Retaining Wall System or equal in accordance with these specifications and in reasonably close conformity with the lines, grades, design, and dimensions shown on the plans.
- B. Work includes preparing foundation soil, furnishing and installing leveling pad, unit drainage fill and backfill to the lines and grades shown on the construction drawings.
- C. Work includes furnishing and installing geogrid soil reinforcement of the type, size, location, and lengths designated on the construction drawings.

**1.2 Related Sections**

- A. Section 31 20 00 – Earthwork Moving

**1.3 Reference Documents**

- A. American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM)
  - 1. ASTM C140 Sampling and Testing Concrete Masonry Units
  - 2. ASTM C1372 Specification for Dry-Cast Segmental Retaining Wall Units
  - 3. ASTM D422 Particle-Size Analysis of Soils
  - 4. ASTM D698 Laboratory Compaction Characteristics of Soil -Standard Effort
  - 5. ASTM D1557 Laboratory Compaction Characteristics of Soil -Modified Effort
  - 6. ASTM D3034 Polyvinyl Chloride Pipe (PVC)
  - 7. ASTM D4318 Liquid Limit, Plastic Limit and Plasticity Index of Soils
  - 8. ASTM D4475 Horizontal Shear Strength of Pultruded Reinforced Plastic Rods
  - 9. ASTM D4476 Flexural Properties of Fiber Reinforced Pultruded Plastic Rods
  - 10. ASTM D4595 Tensile Properties of Geotextiles - Wide Width Strip
  - 11. ASTM D5262 Unconfined Tension Creep Behavior of Geosynthetics
  - 12. ASTM D5818 Evaluate Installation Damage of Geosynthetics
  - 13. ASTM D6637 Tensile Properties of Geogrids – Single or Multi-Rib
  - 14. ASTM D6638 Connection Strength - Reinforcement/Segmental Units
  - 15. ASTM D6706 Geosynthetic Pullout Resistance in Soil
  - 16. ASTM D6916 Shear Strength Between Segmental Concrete Units
- B. American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO)
  - 1. AASHTO M 252 Corrugated Polyethylene Drainage Pipe
- C. Geosynthetic Research Institute (GRI)
  - 1. GRI-GG4 Determination of Long Term Design Strength of Geogrids
  - 2. GRI-GG5 Determination of Geogrid (soil) Pullout
- D. National Concrete Masonry Association (NCMA)

1. NCMA SRWU-1 Test Method for Determining Connection Strength of SRW
2. NCMA SRWU-2 Test Method for Determining Shear Strength of SRW

#### **1.4 Submittals/Certification**

- A. Contractor shall submit a Manufacturer's certification, prior to start of work, that the retaining wall system components meet the requirements of this specification and the structure design.
- B. Contractor shall submit construction drawings and design calculations for the retaining wall system prepared and stamped by a Professional Engineer registered in the state of the project. The engineering designs, techniques, and material evaluations shall be in accordance with the Manufacturer's Design Manual, NCMA Design Guidelines For Segmental Retaining Walls, or the AASHTO Standard Specifications for Highway Bridges (whichever is applicable to designer).
- C. Contractor shall submit a test report documenting strength of specific modular concrete unit and geogrid reinforcement connection. The maximum design tensile load of the geogrid shall be equal to the laboratory tested ultimate strength of geogrid / facing unit connection at a maximum normal force limited by the "Hinge Height" of the structure divided by a safety factor of 1.5. The connection strength evaluation shall be performed in accordance with ASTM D6638 (NCMA SRWU-1).

#### **1.5 Quality Assurance**

- A. Contractor shall submit certification, prior to start of work, that the retaining wall system (modular concrete units and specific geogrid):
  - 1) Has been successfully utilized on a minimum of five (5) similar projects, i.e., height, soil fill types, erection tolerances, etc.; and
  - 2) Has been successfully installed on a minimum of 1 million (1,000,000) square feet of retaining walls.
- B. Contractor shall submit a list of five (5) previously constructed projects of similar size and magnitude by the wall installer where the specific retaining wall system has been constructed successfully. Contact names and telephone numbers shall be listed for each project.
- C. Owner shall/may provide soil testing and quality assurance inspection during earthwork and wall construction operations. Contractor shall provide any quality control testing or inspection not provided by the Owner. Owner's quality assurance program does not relieve the contractor of responsibility for quality control and wall performance.

#### **1.6 Delivery, Storage and Handling**

- A. Contractor shall check all materials upon delivery to assure that the proper type, grade, color, and certification has been received.
- B. Contractor shall protect all materials from damage due to jobsite conditions and in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations. Damaged materials shall not be incorporated into the work.

## **PART 2: PRODUCTS**

### **2.1 Definitions**

- A. Modular Unit - a concrete retaining wall element machine made from Portland cement, water, and aggregates.
- B. Structural Geogrid - a structural element formed by a regular network of integrally connected tensile elements with apertures of sufficient size to allow interlocking with surrounding soil, rock, or earth and function primarily as reinforcement.
- C. Unit Drainage Fill - drainage aggregate, which is placed within and immediately behind the modular concrete units.
- D. Reinforced Backfill - compacted soil, which is placed within the reinforced soil volume as outlined on the plans.

### **2.2 Modular Concrete Retaining Wall Units**

- A. Modular concrete units shall conform to the following architectural requirements:
  - 1. The Owner may specify standard manufacturers' color.
  - 2. Face finish - sculptured rock face in angular tri-planer configuration or approved equal.
  - 3. Bond configuration - running with bonds nominally located at midpoint vertically adjacent units, in both straight and curved alignments.
  - 4. Exposed surfaces of units shall be free of chips, cracks or other imperfections when viewed from a distance of 10 feet under diffused lighting.
- B. Modular concrete materials shall conform to the requirements of ASTM C1372 - Standard Specifications for Segmental Retaining Wall Units.
- C. Modular concrete units shall conform to the following structural and geometric requirements measured in accordance with ASTM C140 Sampling and Testing Concrete Masonry Units:
  - 1. Compressive strength:  $\geq 3000$  psi (21 MPa);
  - 2. Absorption: 8 % (6% in northern states) for standard weight aggregates;
  - 3. Dimensional tolerances:  $\pm 1/8$ " (3 mm) from nominal unit dimensions not including rough split face,  $\pm 1/16$ " (1.5 mm) unit height - top and bottom planes;
  - 4. Unit size: 8" (203 mm) (H) x 18" (457 mm)(W) x 18" (457 mm)(D) minimum;
  - 5. Unit weight: 100 lbs/unit (45 kg) minimum for standard weight aggregates.
- D. Modular concrete units shall conform to the following performance testing:
  - 1. Inter -unit shear strength in accordance with ASTM D6916 (NCMA SRWU-2): 1500 plf (21 kN/m) minimum at 2 psi (13 MPa) normal pressure;
  - 2. Geogrid/unit peak connection strength in accordance with ASTM D6638 (NCMA SRWU-1): 900 plf (13 kN/m) minimum at 2-psi (13 MPa) normal force.
- E. Modular concrete units shall conform to the following constructability requirements:

1. Vertical setback: 1/8" (3 mm) ± per course (near vertical) or 1" (25 mm) + per course per the design;
2. Alignment and grid positioning mechanism - fiberglass pins, two per unit minimum;
3. Maximum horizontal gap between erected units shall be ≤ 1/2 inch (13 mm).

### 2.3 Shear Connectors

- A. Shear connectors shall be 1/2-inch (12 mm) diameter thermoset isophthalic polyester resin-pultruded fiberglass reinforcement rods or equivalent to provide connection between vertically and horizontally adjacent units with the following requirements:
1. Flexural Strength in accordance with ASTM D4476: 128,000 psi (882 MPa) minimum;
  2. Short Beam Shear in accordance with ASTM D4475: 6,400 psi (44 MPa) minimum.
- B. Shear connectors shall be capable of holding the geogrid in the proper design position during grid pre-tensioning and backfilling.

### 2.4 Base Leveling Pad Material

- A. Material shall consist of a compacted crushed stone base or non-reinforced concrete.

### 2.5 Unit Drainage Fill

- A. Unit drainage fill shall consist of clean 1" (25 mm) minus crushed stone or crushed gravel meeting the following gradation tested in accordance with ASTM D-422:

<u>Sieve Size</u>	<u>Percent Passing</u>
1 inch (25 mm)	100
3/4-inch (19 mm)	75-100
No. 4	0 - 10
No. 50	0 - 5

- B. One cubic foot (0.028 m<sup>3</sup>), minimum, of drainage fill shall be used for each square foot (0.093 m<sup>2</sup>) of wall face. Drainage fill shall be placed within cores of, between, and behind units to meet this requirement.

### 2.6 Reinforced Backfill

- A. Reinforced backfill shall be free of debris and meet the following gradation tested in accordance with ASTM D-422:

<u>Sieve Size</u>	<u>Percent Passing</u>
2-inch (50 mm)	100
3/4-inch (19 mm)	100-75
No. 40	0-60
No. 200	0-35

Plasticity Index (PI) <15 and Liquid Limit <40 per ASTM D-4318.

- B. The maximum aggregate size shall be limited to 3/4 inch (19 mm) unless field tests have been performed to evaluate potential strength reductions to the geogrid design due to damage during construction.
- C. Material can be site-excavated soils where the above requirements can be met. Unsuitable soils for backfill (high plastic clays or organic soils) shall not be used in the backfill or in the reinforced soil mass.
- D. Contractor shall submit reinforced fill sample and laboratory test results to the Resident Engineer for approval prior to the use of any proposed reinforced fill material.

## **2.7 Geogrid Soil Reinforcement**

- A. Geosynthetic reinforcement shall consist of geogrids manufactured specifically for soil reinforcement applications and shall be manufactured from high tenacity polyester yarn or high-density polyethylene. Polyester geogrid shall be knitted from high tenacity polyester filament yarn with a molecular weight exceeding 25,000 Meg/m and a carboxyl end group values less than 30. Polyester geogrid shall be coated with an impregnated PVC coating that resists peeling, cracking, and stripping.

- B. Ta, Long Term Allowable Tensile Design Load, of the geogrid material shall be determined as follows:

$$Ta = Tult / (RFcr \cdot RFd \cdot RFid \cdot FS)$$

Ta shall be evaluated based on a 75-year design life.

- 1. Tult, Short Term Ultimate Tensile Strength shall be determined in accordance with ASTM D4595 or ASTM D6637.  
Tult is based on the minimum average roll values (MARV).
  - 2. RFcr, Reduction Factor for Long Term Tension Creep  
RFcr shall be determined from 10,000-hour creep testing performed in accordance with ASTM D5262. Reduction value = 1.45 minimum.
  - 3. RFd, Reduction Factor for Durability  
RFd shall be determined from polymer specific durability testing covering the range of expected soil environments. RFd = 1.10 minimum.
  - 4. RFid, Reduction Factor for Installation Damage  
RFid shall be determined from product specific construction damage testing performed in accordance with ASTM D5818 (GRI-GG4). Test results shall be provided for each product to be used with project specific or more severe soil type. RFid = 1.05 minimum.
  - 5. FS, Overall Design Factor of Safety  
FS shall be 1.5 unless otherwise noted for the maximum allowable working stress calculation.
- C. The maximum design tensile load of the geogrid shall not exceed the laboratory tested ultimate strength of the geogrid/facing unit connection as limited by the "Hinge Height" divided by a factor of safety of 1.5. The connection strength testing and computation

procedures shall be in accordance with ASTM D6638 Connection Strength between Geosynthetic Reinforcement and Segmental Concrete Units (NCMA SRWU-1).

- D. Soil Interaction Coefficient,  $C_i$   
 $C_i$  values shall be determined per ASTM D6706 (GRI:GG5) at a maximum 0.75-inch (19 mm) displacement.
- E. Manufacturing Quality Control  
The geogrid manufacturer shall have a manufacturing quality control program that includes QC testing by an independent laboratory.  
The QC testing shall include:
  - Tensile Strength Testing
  - Melt Flow Index (HDPE)
  - Molecular Weight (Polyester)

## **2.8 Drainage Pipe**

- A. If required, the drainage pipe shall be perforated or slotted PVC pipe manufactured in accordance with ASTM D-3034 or corrugated HDPE pipe manufactured in accordance with AASHTO M252.

## **2.9 Geotextile Filter Fabric**

- A. When required, Geotextile filter fabric shall be 4.0 oz/sy, polypropylene, needlepunched nonwoven fabric.

# **PART 3: EXECUTION**

## **3.1 Excavation**

- A. Contractor shall excavate to the lines and grades shown on the construction drawings. Owner's representative shall inspect the excavation and approve prior to placement of leveling material or fill soils. Proof roll foundation area as directed to determine if remedial work is required.
- B. Over-excavation and replacement of unsuitable foundation soils and replacement with approved compacted fill will be compensated as agreed upon with the Owner.

## **3.2 Base Leveling Pad**

- A. Leveling pad material shall be placed to the lines and grades shown on the construction drawings, to a minimum thickness of 6 inches (150 mm) and extend laterally a minimum of 6" (150 mm) in front and behind the modular wall unit.
- B. Soil leveling pad materials shall be compacted to a minimum of 95 % Standard Proctor density per ASTM D-698 or 92% Modified Proctor Density per ASTM D1557.
- C. Leveling pad shall be prepared to insure full contact to the base surface of the concrete units.

## **3.3 Modular Unit Installation**

- A. First course of units shall be placed on the leveling pad at the appropriate line and grade. Alignment and level shall be checked in all directions and insure that all units are in full contact with the base and properly seated.
- B. Place the front of units side-by-side. Do not leave gaps between adjacent units. Layout of corners and curves shall be in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations.
- C. Install shear/connecting devices per manufacturer's recommendations.
- D. Place and compact drainage fill within and behind wall units. Place and compact backfill soil behind drainage fill. Follow wall erection and drainage fill closely with structure backfill.
- E. Maximum stacked vertical height of wall units, prior to unit drainage fill and backfill placement and compaction, shall not exceed two courses.

### **3.4 Structural Geogrid Installation**

- A. Geogrid shall be oriented with the highest strength axis perpendicular to the wall alignment.
- B. Geogrid reinforcement shall be placed at the strengths, lengths, and elevations shown on the construction design drawings or as directed by the Engineer.
- C. The geogrid shall be laid horizontally on compacted backfill and attached to the modular wall units. Place the next course of modular concrete units over the geogrid. The geogrid shall be pulled taut, and anchored prior to backfill placement on the geogrid.
- D. Geogrid reinforcements shall be continuous throughout their embedment lengths and placed side-by-side to provide 100% coverage at each level. Spliced connections between shorter pieces of geogrid or gaps between adjacent pieces of geogrid are not permitted.

### **3.5 Reinforced Backfill Placement**

- A. Reinforced backfill shall be placed, spread, and compacted in such a manner that minimizes the development of slack in the geogrid and installation damage.
- B. Reinforced backfill shall be placed and compacted in lifts not to exceed 6 inches (150 mm) where hand compaction is used, or 8 - 10 inches (200 to 250 mm) where heavy compaction equipment is used. Lift thickness shall be decreased to achieve the required density as required.
- C. Reinforced backfill shall be compacted to a minimum of 95 % Standard Proctor density per ASTM D-698 or 92% Modified Proctor Density per ASTM D1557. The moisture content of the backfill material prior to and during compaction shall be uniformly distributed throughout each layer and shall be dry of optimum, + 0%, - 3%.
- D. Only lightweight hand-operated equipment shall be allowed within 3 feet (1m) from the tail of the modular concrete unit.

- E. Tracked construction equipment shall not be operated directly upon the geogrid reinforcement. A minimum fill thickness of 6 inches (150 mm) is required prior to operation of tracked vehicles over the geogrid. Tracked vehicle turning should be kept to a minimum to prevent tracks from displacing the fill and damaging the geogrid.
- F. Rubber tired equipment may pass over geogrid reinforcement at slow speeds, less than 10 MPH (15 KPH). Sudden braking and sharp turning shall be avoided.
- G. At the end of each day's operation, the Contractor shall slope the last lift of reinforced backfill away from the wall units to direct runoff away from wall face. The Contractor shall not allow surface runoff from adjacent areas to enter the wall construction site.

### **3.6 Cap Installation**

- A. Cap units shall be glued to underlying units with an all-weather adhesive recommended by the manufacturer.

### **3.7 As-built Construction Tolerances**

- A. Vertical alignment:  $\pm 1.5"$  (40 mm) over any 10' (3 m) distance.
- B. Wall Batter: within 2 degrees of design batter.
- C. Horizontal alignment:  $\pm 1.5"$  (40 mm) over any 10' (3 m) distance.  
Corners, bends & curves:  $\pm 1$  ft (300 mm) to theoretical location.
- D. Maximum horizontal gap between erected units shall be  $\leq 1/2$  inch (13 mm).

### **3.8 Field Quality Control**

- A. Quality Assurance - The Owner shall/may engage inspection and testing services, including independent laboratories, to provide quality assurance and testing services during construction. This does not relieve the Contractor from securing the necessary construction control testing.
- B. Quality assurance should include foundation soil inspection. Verification of geotechnical design parameters, and verification that the contractor's quality control testing is adequate as a minimum. Quality assurance shall also include observation of construction for general compliance with design drawings and project specifications. Quality assurance is best performed by the site geotechnical engineer.
- C. Quality Control – The Contractor shall engage inspection and testing services to perform the minimum quality control testing described in the retaining wall design plans and specifications. Only qualified and experienced technicians and engineers shall perform testing and inspection services.
- D. Quality control testing shall include soil and backfill testing to verify soil types and compaction and verification that the retaining wall is being constructed in accordance with the design plans and project specifications.