

# Project Implementation FAQs

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## **What if I need to start work before I have a signed BPA contract?**

BPA is working to shorten the time between project selection and contract award by providing tools such as [Pisces](#) to help contractors prepare and submit required contract documentation online. In those rare cases where BPA and the contractor are unable to obtain a signed contract before project work must begin, the BPA Contracting Officer may grant a pre-award authorization. Not sure which BPA Contracting Officer has been assigned to the project? Contact [support@cbfish.org](mailto:support@cbfish.org).

## **How do I request a change to my contract or project budget?**

Changes that do not affect the contract value may be made by BPA and the contractor. Contact your BPA Contracting Officer or Contracting Officer's Technical Representative (COTR) to initiate a request. Budgetary line item transfers totaling less than 5% of the total contract budget are within the discretion of the contractor, and do not require BPA approval or action. Budget increases of any amount, and rescheduling of work from one fiscal year to the next, must be approved by BPA, the Council, and CBFWA via the Budget Oversight Group (BOG), which typically reviews requests quarterly.

## **What kinds of contract changes require BPA approval? What kinds of changes require Council approval?**

Changes to a project or contract's scope, increases to a project or contract's budget, and rescheduling work from one fiscal year to another all require Council and BPA approval. Changes that are budget-neutral, such as budgetary line item transfers, or changes to contract terms, such as payment schedule, may be made between BPA and the contractor. Contact your BPA Contracting Officer or Contracting Officer's Technical Representative for guidance. Most changes cannot proceed without written authorization from the BPA Contracting Officer. See the [making changes](#) page for more information.

# Pisces FAQs

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## **What is Pisces?**

Pisces is a software tool for improving the reporting capabilities of the Fish and Wildlife Program. Pisces provides a collaborative environment, where contractors and BPA project managers can create Statements of Work based on work elements, and manage project scope, budget, work schedule, deliverables, and milestones, thus

shortening the time between project selection and contract implementation. Program partners will be able to access reports on all aspects of program projects.

### **Do I need an internet connection to use Pisces?**

Yes. Pisces is a web-enabled software tool. After installing the Pisces application, users must have an internet connection and a Pisces account in order to access program information.

### **How do I get a Pisces account?**

Please go to <https://pisces.bpa.gov> and under "Want to use Pisces?" click "request a Pisces account" link.

### **How do I get the Pisces software?**

With a valid Pisces account, go to <https://pisces.bpa.gov> and under "Want to use Pisces?" click "Download Pisces now" link.

### **Pisces Support**

Email us at [support@cbfish.org](mailto:support@cbfish.org) if you need help with Pisces installation or when you run into an issue with the application.

- For project-related matters, please contact the BPA Project Manager directly.
- For contract-related matters, please contact the BPA COTR directly.

## **Pisces Technical FAQs**

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### **Is this a web browser/HTML application and how is it installed?**

Pisces is a PC-based, Windows application that uses the Internet to access Fish and Wildlife program data. Pisces requires installation by someone with Administrator rights using a setup program provided by BPA. The setup program can be downloaded via the Internet.

### **On which versions of Windows will Pisces run?**

See [Pisces Technical Requirements](#).

### **What other programs do I need to have on my computer in order to run Pisces?**

See [Pisces Technical Requirements](#).

### **Can I install and run Pisces from my home computer or laptop?**

Yes, if your home computer meets the minimum [technical requirements](#) and you have an active Internet connection.

**Since Pisces uses the Internet to connect to a central database is there any threat of a virus being passed to my computer when using the Pisces program?**

Yes. Any application that uses the Internet has the potential to pass a virus. We recommend that you always have a current anti-virus program installed on your computer to protect your system at all times. BPA has taken the normal security measures to protect the data from outside attacks by hackers and viruses.

**Are there any issues with firewalls and/or port restrictions?**

Firewalls that restrict outbound TCP/IP traffic by port, may need configuration changes. If you are unsure about this, please have a firewall/security technician coordinate with [support@cbfish.org](mailto:support@cbfish.org) to determine if firewall changes are needed.

**Can't log in – Pisces says it can't verify if there are updates and then closes. How do I log in?**

Check your internet connection. Use your internet browser and go to a well-known site such as [www.google.com](http://www.google.com). If you cannot reach other sites, there is a problem with your connection. Start by checking the physical wire or wireless connection. Next check with your service provider or local IT administrator – there may be a problem with the local network. If you can reach other sites, there may be an issue with your local network's firewall settings. If you are unsure about this, please have a firewall/security technician coordinate with [support@cbfish.org](mailto:support@cbfish.org) to determine if firewall changes are needed.

**How do I get technical support/help for questions I have about Pisces?**

First, check with your local IT person or network administrator. BPA has made efforts to train at least one person on local IT staff on some of the more technical aspects of Pisces. They may be the best way to get quick answer. If they are not available, or unable to answer your question, send an email to [support@cbfish.org](mailto:support@cbfish.org) and be sure to include your contact information. We strive to answer emails as soon as we get them.

## **Work Elements FAQs**

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**What is a work element?**

Work elements are standard tasks used to build Statements of Work (SOW) in the Fish and Wildlife program. The [list of work elements](#) (PDF) was compiled by Fish and Wildlife project managers to describe all of the work the F&W program does,

such as *Install Fence*, *Maintain Vegetation*, *Produce Fish*, etc. Formerly, SOWs were written with objectives and tasks. Now, the same information is described using work elements and milestones in Pisces. [Guidance and usage examples](#) are available for every work element.

### **What is a milestone?**

Milestones are the steps involved in completing a work element. Milestones and their start and end dates make up the work schedule. For more information, see [Understanding Milestones and Deliverables](#) (PDF).

### **What if work elements change?**

It is expected that work elements will change. In fact, flexibility in the work elements is one of the most important tools to allow the Fish and Wildlife program to adapt to changing business requirements or simply improve how projects are described based on lessons learned. For this reason, Pisces will keep track of how work elements change over time, including:

- Addition of new work elements.
- Phasing out of work elements that are no longer needed.
- Merging of multiple work elements into one.
- Splitting of one work element into many.
- Changes in our interpretation (definition) of a work element.
- Changes to the name of a work element.

The work element database in Pisces will never completely delete any work element. Obsolete work elements may be "hidden" to Pisces users creating new SOWs, but will still be accessible when viewing SOWs created in the past. Pisces will keep a historical record of all changes to work elements, including lineage data that highlights where work elements have split or merged, with the date and rationale for each change.

### **Why use work elements?**

Work elements arose of basic program needs: to achieve greater consistency across contracts, to support reporting requirements, and to shorten the time between project selection and contract award. Through work elements, BPA and its contractors use the same terminology to describe similar work across the program. For example, in order for regional stakeholders to generate a report showing how many fish screens have been installed in a given year, in which geographic areas, every contractor doing screen installation identifies tasks in their Statement of Work using the "Install Fish Screen" work element so that Pisces, BPA's Fish and Wildlife project management software, can identify them quickly and easily. Also, using work elements in Pisces

saves time: users select the work elements that describe their work, and Pisces automatically generates a SOW to which the user can add more detailed information. By using common components, contractors can draw upon the descriptions used by other professionals in their field when writing their SOWs, rather than having to reinvent the wheel.