
METS/GS Directive

Number: METS/GS-05

Materials Engineering and Testing Services and
Geotechnical Services

Effective Date: April 23, 2014

Supersedes: NEW

TITLE METS/GS Strategic Direction Towards Use of National Testing Standards

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Directive is to outline the METS/GS policy towards the greater use of national testing standards for the California Department of Transportation's (Caltrans) specifications.

BACKGROUND

Since 1912, Caltrans' Transportation Laboratory (Translab) has been at the forefront in developing innovative testing methods and other practices to improve product quality on our Transportation facilities. In many cases, the California Test Methods (CTMs) developed by Caltrans have served as the foundation for the comparable national testing standards subsequently developed by various organizations.

Over the past several decades, we have seen many other State Departments of Transportation (DOTs) and local California Implementing Agencies transition toward the greater use of national testing standards. Testing and accreditation standards from organizations such as ASTM International, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), the American Association for Laboratory Accreditation (A2LA), and the National Ready Mixed Concrete Association (NRMCA) have been tried, tested, and proven on various public works projects.

The sampling and testing standards produced by these organizations are regularly evaluated and maintained by testing experts and academia, providing additional assurance that material quality can be accurately bench-marked and compared across various agencies and DOTs. In addition, these standards receive proficiency test data from thousands of laboratories across the nation, helping to deliver inter-laboratory variations that can be used in verification testing and QA programs.

Furthermore, independent laboratories, Industry organizations and other DOTs have also developed greater familiarity with these national testing procedures. As more transportation agencies chose to perform construction administration activities themselves, and as Caltrans streamlines its oversight of local project delivery in accordance with the 2014 Caltrans Program

Review, the use of national testing standards allows for a more consistent level of Quality Control (QC), QA, and IQA, regardless of the procurement mechanism or the implementing agency.

POLICY

Whenever possible, Caltrans will change its CTMs to reference appropriate national standards. This will ensure consistency and ease of project delivery amongst Local Agency, Caltrans, and Contractor stakeholders.

PROCEDURE

In all cases where Caltrans staff are involved in the development or refinement of test methods, both through functional unit responsibility or through committee involvement, these employees are to implement the use of quality standards from nationally-recognized organizations. When a national standard is being considered, the procedures needed to certify testers to the national standards must be evaluated to determine any impacts to Caltrans internal procedures to certify testers to materials testing procedures.

When updating any CTM, all staff are to modify the CTM to refer to its corresponding national standard where appropriate.

If a stakeholder or CTM reviewer feels that a transition to a national testing standard is not warranted for a certain activity, then it is the responsibility of that activity stakeholder to provide justification as to why the CTM is the more feasible alternative. The stakeholder must present technical justification and material quality benefits as part of this reasoning. This justification should be incorporated into the revision documents, once approved by the State Materials Engineer.

RESPONSIBILITIES

METS/GS Deputy Division Chief

Ensures all METS/GS managers and supervisors are aware of this Directive and any revisions to this Directive. Acts as the State Materials Engineer and has the authority to modify CTMs. Only the State Materials Engineer or his designees may modify existing CTMs where necessary.

METS/GS Managers

Ensures all METS employees are aware of this Directive and any revisions to this Directive. Monitors and assesses the need for any additional changes to CTMs and specifications based on feedback from Caltrans stakeholders, Industry organizations, and partner DOTs.

CTM Coordinator

Responsible for documentation and routing of all CTM changes for approval. Makes determination of future CTM updates needed. Maintains a record of all changes to CTMs, as well as reasoning or justification for changes. Records and uploads information into the appropriate METS/GS database, and also records changes on appropriate routing documents.

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IHS Coordinator

The IHS Coordinator within the METS New Products Group is responsible for ensuring that all Caltrans employees have access to national standards.

These standards can be found at the following website:

<http://specs4.ihserc.com/?PROD=SPECS4&sess=672515910&workFlow=1>

METS/GS Staff

Ensures compliance with all requirements of this Directive. Monitors and assesses the need for any additional changes to CTMs and specifications based on feedback from Caltrans stakeholders and Industry organizations, and reports recommendations to Managers. Staff members are also responsible for seeking supervisor approval prior to specialty testing work.

APPROVED



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4-23-14

Date Signed