

Early Project Coordination (EPC) Meeting Process

An EPC Meeting is a chance for WSDOT to present a project to the Corps and Ecology Permitting Liaisons and get early technical and regulatory feedback from them before the design is solidified and permit applications are developed. EPC meetings are usually scheduled between 30% and 60% design. To schedule an EPC meeting fill out the Permitting Liaison and Early Project Coordination Meeting request form or contact the Liaison Program Coordinator.

EPC Meeting

An EPC Meeting is strongly recommended for projects that:

- Require an Individual Permit from either the Corps or Ecology.
- Have unusual circumstances or complex contracting and construction work associated with aquatic resources.
- Have complex permitting needs associated with in-water work.
- Are unsure of permitting level required (e.g. Nationwide Permit versus Individual Permit, etc.).

The EPC Meeting allows the Corps and Ecology Permitting Liaisons to work with WSDOT before the permit application is developed to evaluate the following:

- Project's aquatic resources impacts.
- WSDOT's design effort to avoid and minimize impacts to aquatic resources.
- Wetland and stream mitigation concepts or plans.
- Fish passage concepts or plans, for compliance with Corps stream stimulation requirement.
- Project permitting schedule.
- Anticipated construction methods.

At the EPC Meeting, the WSDOT Regional Environmental Coordinator should provide a hardcopy of the meeting agenda and other handout materials to the Liaison Program Manager and Liaison Program Coordinator before the meeting.

WSDOT must fill out the Permitting Liaison and Early Project Coordination Meeting Request form to request a meeting.

For an EPC Meeting:

- Meetings are held the 1st Monday of the month.
- Contact the Liaison Program Coordinator to request a meeting.
- Email a meeting agenda one week before the meeting, to the Liaison Program Coordinator.

Early Project Coordination (EPC) Letter

Usually within 30 days after the EPC Meeting date, the Liaison Program Manager sends a detailed EPC Letter to the WSDOT Regional Environmental Coordinator.

Major goals of the EPC Letter are:

- Assist WSDOT in making critical design and environmental decisions before the project footprint is completely set and construction methods solidified.
- Assist WSDOT in selecting and designing project mitigation sites.
- Assist WSDOT in developing complete permit applications to increase permitting predictability.

The EPC Letter will go over the Corps and Ecology Permitting Liaison's evaluation of the project as proposed during the EPC Meeting and:

- Identify which permits are required from the Corps and Ecology.
- Identify any permitting risks or deficiencies with the project proposal and provide suggestions for reducing such risks or deficiencies.
- Identify how many application packages to submit to the Corps and Ecology and what information to include in each permit application package and what can be submitted electronically and what needs to be as a hardcopy.
- Identify whether the proposed permitting schedule is possible and provide a timeframe for how long the permit review process is likely to take.
- Provide other permitting guidance materials or examples, as applicable to the project.

Roles

Liaison Program Manager:

The Liaison Program Manager is the facilitator of the EPC meeting. They lead the meeting and make sure the agenda is followed. They will help keep the meeting on track in order to make sure the goals and objectives of the meeting are met. They review and approve the EPC letter which is sent from the Liaison Program Manager to the Regional Environmental Coordinator.

Liaison Program Coordinator:

The Liaison Program Coordinator is responsible for scheduling, organizing, and coordinating the information before the EPC meeting. They also take meeting notes which include action items. They are also responsible for making sure they have the necessary information for the EPC letter. If follow up meetings are necessary they will help coordinate those meetings. The Liaison Program Coordinator drafts the EPC letter and reviews comments to make sure they do not conflict and then provides it to the Liaison Program Manager to review. The Liaison Program Coordinator may facilitate the EPC meeting if the Liaison Program Manager is unavailable.

Corps and Ecology Liaisons:

The Liaisons from the Corps and Ecology are responsible for providing technical and regulatory guidance and feedback. The Liaisons will provide feedback to the Liaison Program Manager and Coordinator 2 weeks after the EPC Meeting to be incorporated into the EPC Letter. The Liaisons will notify the WSDOT Regional Environmental Coordinator as soon as possible if resource agency expectations or policies have changed that will affect the project.

WSDOT Environmental Coordinator:

The WSDOT Environmental Coordinator is responsible for providing the completed request form, agenda, and any additional handouts that will be used in the EPC meeting. They are also responsible for anticipating Liaisons questions and making sure appropriate WSDOT expertise is available to answer questions. The WSDOT Environmental Coordinator should notify the Liaisons if the project design changes that will affect permitting or mitigation (e.g. schedule or impacts). They will also provide the Liaison Coordinator with the current information for the workload planning tool.