

Foreword

Reliable, well-maintained highway transportation facilities are essential to the well being of the state, its citizens, and its commerce. The Washington Department of Transportation's Maintenance and Operations personnel are essential to the state's transportation backbone – the state highway system. Public safety and the safety of our employees is a high priority and must be considered in every decision and activity affecting the highway facilities. The goal of Maintenance and Operations is to retain the highway system in a condition as near as possible to the condition of its initial construction or subsequent improvement. We all take pride in and strive for excellence in the maintenance and operations of our highway system.

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Introduction

Purpose of this Manual

The purpose of this Maintenance Manual is to provide Maintenance personnel with guidance on how to conduct a wide variety of activities performed within the Maintenance Programs. The focus is on types of equipment, materials, techniques, and other information needed to properly carry out basic maintenance activities such as patching a pothole or removing snow from a roadway. Although this guidance does not establish absolute standards, it helps to promote uniform operating procedures and performance guidelines. Highway maintenance is carried out in a dynamic environment where varying factors can lead to different solutions to maintenance problems. Maintenance and Operations personnel need flexibility to match the appropriate solutions to different conditions. The Maintenance Manual is one of many resources that are available for trained maintenance personnel to utilize in applying their professional judgment to their daily work.

Performance Measurement

The extent to which maintenance activities are conducted is primarily determined by the level of funding provided each biennium by the Washington State Legislature. By placing their trust, in the form of a two hundred fifty million dollar appropriation per biennium, both the Legislature and the public are expecting the Departments Maintenance organizations to deliver their program in a timely and efficient manner. To better communicate the outcomes of the maintenance program, the Maintenance Accountability Program (MAP) has been developed and integrated into the Highway Maintenance Program. The MAP uses performance measures to communicate in easily understood terms the Level of Service (LOS) Maintenance delivers for various maintenance activities. A comprehensive MAP manual has been developed and is available for use by maintenance personnel. The MAP manual is available by visiting the Headquarters Maintenance organizations internet web site.

LOS is based on a letter-grade scale of “A” (highest level of funding) to “F” (lowest level of funding). The LOS for each activity is determined by conducting field condition assessments at highway locations randomly-selected throughout the state during the fall and spring of each year. The LOS targets, by MAP activity, are determined by statewide Maintenance staff utilizing both funding and Legislative guidance to provide the appropriate emphasis. The semi-annual surveys can be a valuable management tool for Maintenance Managers in allocating funds amongst various maintenance activities as well as adjusting their work schedules to achieve LOS targets.

Environmental Responsibilities

Just as we are entrusted with public monies to maintain the highway system, we are also entrusted with being good stewards of the public right-of-way associated with the highway system. As the population of Washington State continues to grow, the environmental value of the highway right-of-way and adjacent lands is also increasing. Whether the right-of-way or adjacent lands serve as habitat for burrowing owls, a conveyance for stormwater runoff into salmon-bearing streams, or as a haven for native plant species, it is reasonable to expect that the increasing environmental protection requirements will necessitate changes in how many maintenance activities are performed.

Many resources are available to assist maintenance personnel in conducting maintenance activities in compliance with environmental requirements. Several environmental guidance documents are available on the Headquarters Maintenance and Operations web site. Particularly applicable to specific maintenance activities is the WSDOT Maintenance Manual for Water Quality and Habitat Protection. This manual contains a number of best management practices that can be used for a variety of activities and/or conditions to ensure environmental compliance. Personnel are available in both the Headquarters Maintenance and Operations Office as well as Regional Environmental offices to assist in providing guidance on environmental issues. One of the most valued environmental resources that can be developed by maintenance personnel is a positive work relationship with local environmental regulators such as the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's Area Habitat Biologists. Such a positive work relationship will help maintenance personnel to not only deliver their program in a timely manner but to do so in conformance with environmental best practice methods.

Fiscal Management

Sound fiscal management is a key ingredient in delivering the maintenance program in an effective and efficient manner. Once the biennial budget is distributed to region maintenance organizations it is essential that the expenditure for various activities be accurately documented. This is accomplished through the Departments labor collection and voucher processing systems which not only provide an expenditure record for each maintenance activity, but also the detailed components that make up the cost, i.e., regular time, overtime, vendor services, materials, and equipment. By tracking the expenditure of activities Maintenance Managers are not only aware of the costs of doing business relative to targets but are better positioned to adjust their schedules to meet evolving problems and/or deliver their programs.

