

Frequently Asked Questions FAQs

North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT)
Technician Certification Program (TCP) including
Quality Control/Quality Assurance (QC/QA) Program for Aggregate and Asphalt

The following are some of the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) regarding certification requirements for inspectors or testers in North Dakota. This document is intended to provide a general overview and is not all inclusive of the entire certification program.

Certification requirements can and do change. The information in this document is current as of October 2015.

A copy of the current Technical Certification Program manual is available online. The Materials and Research Division of the NDDOT is responsible for the ND Technical Certification Program. dotmaterials@nd.gov or 701-328-6900.

Every project is unique and requirements for certification vary. Contractors and consultants need to review the documents pertaining to their project including proposals, plans, the current edition of the Standard Specification for Road and Bridge Construction, Supplemental Specifications (Spec Book), Special Provisions, Plan Notes, and the Field Sampling and Testing Manual. All documents are available online through the NDDOT website.

Where do I go to get certified?

- Certifications are obtained by attending classes during the fall/winter training season. Classes are scheduled through the NDDOT Materials and Research office. The NDDOT and Dakota Asphalt Pavement Association work together to provide training for aggregate testing, asphalt testing, asphalt pavement inspection and asphalt mix controller.
- Additionally, the NDDOT offers classes for certification in soil field testing.
- In some cases reciprocal certification is allowed. See the section titled, *Does ND allow reciprocity – or acceptance of certifications from other states?*

All certifications must either be obtained through the NDDOT by completing classes or allowed by the NDDOT through an approved reciprocal request.

Certifications obtained by completing classes are generally valid for 5 years.

Can I get certified through the District office?

In **some** situations a district may be able to certify an individual in the field on a 1-year basis. However, that is not a guarantee and is entirely dependent upon the availability of the District Materials Coordinator.

It is highly recommended that individuals are certified before any project begins. A 1-year certification is NOT a substitute for the requirements of the QC/QA program as an Aggregate Field Lab Tester or Asphalt Mix Tester.

Individuals with 1-year certification may assist a QC or QA tester. However, the individual designated as the QC or QA tester must remain in the lab at all times and is responsible for all work performed.

Quality Control Quality Assurance – General Information

Quality Control (QC) is the responsibility of the contractor. Quality Assurance (QA) is the responsibility of the “Engineer”.

The Engineer is the NDDOT. The individual working as QA may be a representative from NDDOT or someone hired by the NDDOT to perform the responsibilities of QA. Quality assurance testing/results may at times be referred to as “verification testing/results”.

On QC/QA projects testing is completed by both the contractor and the Engineer but at different frequencies. The contractor test results are used for acceptance. The Engineer’s test results are used to compare or “verify” the contractor’s test results.

Who needs to be certified?

Most aggregate, asphalt or concrete project will have some certification requirements.

1. Individuals working on QC/QA Asphalt Paving Projects

All projects listed as QC/QA require that the individual running the QC lab during aggregate production and running either the QC or QA field lab during asphalt mix production be certified through the NDDOT TCP. The individuals must be certified as an Aggregate Field Lab Tester or Aggregate Mix Designer and Asphalt Mix Tester.

Additionally on QC/QA projects both QC and QA are required to have an individual certified as an Asphalt Pavement Inspector on the project at all times during asphalt mix production.

Contractors (QC) and the Engineer (Q/A) are required to have an individual on the project at all times that is certified as an Asphalt Mix Controller.

Reference Sections 106.10 and 430.04 of the 2014 Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction and Section 430 of the Field Sampling and Testing Manual.

“Project Certification Requirements” is a link that can be found on the TCP web page. <http://www.dot.nd.gov/divisions/materials/docs/projcerts.pdf>

2. Individuals sampling or testing on projects on the National Highway System or the State Highway System.

Any individual that performs sampling or testing for acceptance on a project on the National Highway System (NHS) or the State Highway System is required to be certified in the area they are working. Certification is required for the areas of soil, concrete, aggregate and asphalt mix. Individuals may have a 5-year certification or a 1-year certification.

If the project is a QC/QA project individuals running the field lab must hold 5-year certification for aggregate testing and asphalt testing.

For a map of the NHS system in North Dakota, see this link:

http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/national_highway_system/nhs_maps/north_dakota/

Click this link to see a map of all state roads including the NHS. State roads include all roads on the map labeled, State Corridor, District Corridor and District Collector.

<https://www.dot.nd.gov/divisions/planning/docs/statehighwayclassificationmap.pdf>

How do I know if a project is QC/QA?

Requirements for QC/QA pertain to asphalt paving projects. That includes aggregate production. QC/QA projects are designated under Specification 430.

Do I need to be certified to work on a City or Urban projects?

If a project is in city limits, and is a route designated on the National Highway System the requirements for certification apply.

Are individuals working on county projects required to be certified?

County projects do not fall under the scope of the Technical Certification Program. Some counties may require NDDOT certification. Always check with the local county to determine project requirements.

What are the subcontractor's requirements for certification on a QC/QA project?

The requirements are the same for a subcontractor as those of the Contractor. If a subcontractor is hired to perform any portion of the project that requires certification, they are required to hold a current certification obtained through the North Dakota Technical Certification Program.

It is the contractor's responsibility to ensure that individuals working in the roles of the asphalt mix controller, asphalt inspector, aggregate tester or asphalt mix tester have current ND TCP certification.

Are there projects where there are no certification requirements?

Yes, at this time, maintenance projects do not have certification requirements.

Can my new employee or intern help run tests in the field lab?

Individuals that do not currently hold certifications may assist in a field lab. However they must be under direct supervision of a certified tester. That certified tester must remain in the lab at all times. If the non-certified individual performs any portion of a test or procedure the certified individual is responsible for the accuracy of the work and must verify (sign) test reports.

Do I need to be certified for Aggregate Testing if all I do is take a sample occasionally?

Yes. Individuals that do not test but may occasionally obtain aggregate samples from a project may request certification as an Aggregate Sampling Technician or Asphalt Mix Sampler.

The certification can only be obtained through the NDDOT.

My certifications expired and I didn't attend a Certification Renewal class, what do I do now?

It is the responsibility of the individual to maintain their certifications. If certifications have expired you will be required to repeat the classes to regain certification.

Certification cards are no longer mailed. The online registry is available to everyone to review the status of their certifications and print verification of their certification

What does the Valid Thru year mean on my certification card?

For example, if your card says Valid thru 2015, you have the winter of 2015-2016 to complete renewal requirements.

Does ND allow reciprocity – or acceptance of certifications from other states?

Yes, reciprocity or acceptance of certifications from other states *may* be possible. Individuals that plan to work on a project but do not currently have the necessary certification in North Dakota may request reciprocity.

Reciprocity is allowed one time and for one calendar year. A single attempt at passing the written reciprocity exam is allowed. A passing grade is 70% on the exam.

Certifications must be current in the originating state and must not be considered “provisional”. Each request is reviewed and then verified with the originating state.

If a reciprocity request is approved, the applicant must complete additional steps to complete the process. For testing certification, a written and performance exam must be successfully completed.

Individuals requesting aggregate tester reciprocity to run a QC or QA lab must hold certifications that closely match the list of tests included in the category, *Aggregate Field Lab*.

Asphalt Pavement Inspection or Asphalt Mix Controller certification requires a written examination that can be completed by appointment.

After the one –year certification, individuals must complete the (new-student) classes in North Dakota to continue their certification. In the case of Reciprocity, the Certification Renewal classes will not update/renew certifications.

American Concrete Institute Field Testing Technician – Grade 1 is equivalent to Concrete Field Tester certification. No additional testing is required.

The form for requesting acceptance of out of state certifications/reciprocity is available at this link below.

<http://www.dot.nd.gov/forms/sfn50854.pdf>