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Project Organization & Management, Communication, and Safety

Learning Outcomes:

- Describe the purpose of :
 - project documents,
 - pre-construction and pre-paving conferences, and
 - cooperative communication on the job

Project Organization and Communication

The most essential part of project planning and organization is communication. Effective communication is vital to all elements of project organization:

- The project documents are written instructions that must describe the requirements clearly and in detail
- The preconstruction conference initiates verbal communication between the representatives of the department and contractor personnel; it sets the tone for both the working relationship and direct communications during project execution
- Ongoing communication between the contractor and the department is essential to performing high-quality work
- Project records make it possible to track events should doing so become necessary
- Safety on the job cannot be maintained if communication between parties is inadequate



Project Documents

Project documents illustrate and describe work to be done under the contract. Project documents include:

Plans	Drawings that show the location, character, dimensions, and details of the work to be done
Standard specifications	Directions, provisions, and requirements for performing the work illustrated and described in the plans. The items in the standard specifications relate to or illustrate the method and manner of performing the work or describe the qualities and quantities of materials and labor to be furnished under the contract
Special or supplemental specifications	Approved additions and revisions to the standard specifications
Special provisions	Additions or revisions to the standard or supplemental specifications that are applicable only to an individual project
Special provision copied notes (SPCN)	A document that sets forth specifications or requirements usually limited in scope, for a particular project item or issue and as a modification to a Special Provision or Specification.
Standard Drawings	Calculated dimensions, unless obviously incorrect, will govern over scaled dimensions.

If there is a discrepancy between the instructions and specifications in any of the contract documents, a definite hierarchy exists among the above major types of documents.

The order of priority, from highest to lowest is:

1. Special provision copy notes
2. Special provisions
3. Plans
4. Supplemental specifications
5. Specifications
6. Standard drawings

This order of priority corresponds to the documents specific applicability to a project or contract.

Plans and specifications need to be accurate and complete and should leave little room for assumptions or later reinterpretation. In addition, plans and specifications need to define the responsibilities of both department and contractor.



Project Communication

The quality of the work completed and the safety of those performing and inspecting the construction are directly related to the quality of the communication between the department and the contractor. It is important that the individuals in daily charge of the project for both the department and the contractor meet periodically, on both a formal and an informal basis, to discuss the progress and quality of the work done to date and the schedule for future work.



Preconstruction Conference	The preconstruction conference should be held before work on a project begins. The meeting should bring agreement on the proposed schedule, methods to be used to complete the project on schedule with a minimum of delays and change orders, material sources, plant production rates, haul distances and routes, paving widths and speed, and type and operation of compaction equipment. Additionally the role of each person associated with the project should be discussed and clarified. One of the most important items to be addressed at the preconstruction conference is job safety.
Formal Meetings	Key personnel from both the department and the contractor should be present at these meetings. The meetings should discuss; the quantity of work completed, test results obtained, what has yet to be accomplished, the schedule for the coming weeks, and changes in personnel, equipment, construction methods used and mix design. Written minutes containing those in attendance should be completed and distributed as quickly as possible.
Informal Meetings	Daily informal meetings provide a forum for the exchange of information, they can be held at the job site, asphalt plant or at the paver. The purpose of informal meetings is twofold. First, occurrences the day before such as work completed, test results, and any problem areas, should be discussed and resolved. Second, the discussion should address what is expected to happen during the next several days – an update on the information exchanged at the last formal meeting.
Written Communication	Much information can be communicated in oral form, but discussion of important information should be followed up in written form, particularly when conditions on the project change substantially. If an occurrence is important enough to be remembered later on, it is important enough to be written down immediately after it happens so the information will be accurate and complete.

Project Safety

Working around an asphalt paving site can be hazardous. Communication is one of the keys to a safe work environment. Every individual involved in the project should know what is expected and how to perform the assigned tasks. Proper training in the operation of a piece of equipment is essential for its operators, for example. Retraining is necessary at frequent intervals because the longer a person continues to perform the same task, day after day, the more likely he or she is to do things by habit and ignore surrounding events.



Safety talks are a good way to start the day. People need to be reminded that they are operating in a potentially dangerous environment at both the plant and the laydown site, and daily talks are one way of meeting this need. Further, if an unsafe work practice is noticed, corrective action should be taken immediately, even if the paving operation must be shut down until the unsafe practice has changed.

Throughout the guide we have indicated areas highlighting safety practices using the icon symbol below.



SAFETY WARNING Describes a condition where personal safety may be at risk. This is used to alert personnel to operating procedures & practices which, if not observed, may result in personal injury.

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