TECHNICAL TRAINING & CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

GENERAL

The purpose of the Technical Training & Certification Program is to ensure Quality Control (QC)/Quality Assurance (QA) and Acceptance of Aggregates, Hot Mix Asphalt (HMA), Portland Cement Concrete (PCC), Soils, Erosion Control, Precast and Prestressed Concrete, and Pavement Profiles and to ensure proper documentation of quality control/quality assurance and acceptance procedures and test results by industry and Contracting Authority personnel.

This Instructional Memorandum (IM) explains the requirements to become certified and to remain certified to perform inspection and testing in the State of Iowa. This IM also describes the duties, responsibilities and the authority of persons assigned the position of Certified Technician in any of the above areas for construction or maintenance projects. Appendix C of this IM lists what tests and procedures the technician is qualified to perform for each level of certification they obtain.

Through a cooperative program of training, study, and examination, personnel of the construction industry, State DOT, and other Contracting Authorities will be able to provide quality management and certified inspection. Quality control/quality assurance and acceptance sampling, testing and inspection will be performed by certified personnel and documented in accordance with the IMs.

A technician who is qualified and holds a valid certification(s) shall perform quality control/quality assurance and acceptance at a production site, proportioning plant, or project site. Responsibilities cannot be delegated to non-certified technicians. The duties of a Certified Technician may be assigned to one or more additional Certified Technicians.

The Technical Training & Certification Program will be carried out in accordance with general policy guidelines established or approved by the Highway Division Director. A Board of Certification composed of the following members will advise the Director:

Director – Construction and Materials Bureau
Representative of District Materials Engineers**
Representative of District Construction Engineers**
Representative of Associated General Contractors (AGC of Iowa)
Representative of Iowa Concrete Paving Association (ICPA)
Representative of Asphalt Paving Association of Iowa (APAI)
Representative of Iowa Ready Mixed Concrete Association (IRMCA)
Representative of Iowa Limestone Producers Association (ILPA)
Representative of County Engineers
Representative of American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC-Iowa)
Coordinator of Technical Training & Certification Program**

** Appointed by Program Director

The Director of the Construction and Materials Bureau will be the Program Director. Coordinators will be appointed by the Program Director to assist in administration of the program and to handle such planning, administration, and coordinating functions as may be needed.

TRAINING

The Iowa DOT will provide the training necessary to become certified. Producers/Contractors are encouraged to conduct their own pretraining program. A complete listing of training opportunities is available at the Technical Training & Certification Program website, https://iowadot.gov/training/technical-training-and-certification-program.

CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

1. A candidate must attend Iowa DOT course instruction and pass the examination(s) for all levels of certification prepared and presented by the Program Director or someone designated by the Program Director. If the new candidate fails the examination, they will have one opportunity to retake the examination. The retake must be completed within six months of the original exam. If they fail the retake of the examination, they will need to attend the training again before taking the examination the third time. If an individual is recertifying they will have only one opportunity to take the examination. If they fail the examination they must take the applicable training before retaking the examination.

2. All prerequisites shall be met before the applicant may attend the next level of training for the certification desired. A listing of certification levels and prerequisites is located in Appendix A.

3. Once the candidate has met all the criteria and has received certification, it is recommended the Certified Technician work under the supervision of an experienced technician until they become efficient in the inspection and testing methods they will be performing.

   An individual requesting to become certified as a Precast/Prestress Concrete Technician is required to obtain forty hours of experience assisting in quality control inspection at an approved plant before certification will be issued. The experience must be documented and shall be approved by the District Materials Engineer. This experience must be completed within two years from the date the individual attended the training.

4. Registered Professional Engineers, engineering graduates, and geology graduates from accredited institutions will be exempt from the training requirement in the areas they have had instruction. It is, however, strongly recommended that they attend the certification classes. In order to obtain certification for any technical level, these persons must pass all applicable written examinations for the level of certification they wish to obtain. If the written examination attempt does not meet the required score, the candidate must take the certification class before another attempt can be made. All certificates issued in accordance with these requirements will be subject to the same regulations concerning expiration, recertification, etc., as applies to certificates obtained via training and examinations.

5. Technicians will be issued certifications by reciprocity when the following criteria are met:

   a. The applicant must be certified in another state or certification program determined equivalent by the Program Director or someone designated by the Program Director, in each level of certification they are requesting.

   b. The applicant must pass an examination for each level of certification desired, which will be administered by the Iowa Department of Transportation. Failure of the examination shall require the applicant to take the full certification class before they can retake the exam.

c. The applicant must follow the prerequisite requirements of the Technical Training & Certification Program.

Reciprocity requests should be made through the Technical Training and Certification office in Ames. Copies of all the applicant's certifications will be required.

CERTIFICATION

Upon successfully completing the requirements for certification, the Program Director will issue a pocket certification card. The certification is not transferable. A certification earned in a training season shall be valid until March 31st of the fifth succeeding training season. A training season is defined as October 1st, XXXX to September 30th, XXXX+1.

CERTIFICATION IDENTIFICATION

The certification card will identify the certificate holder, their certification number, the level(s) of certification, and the expiration date of each level.

RENEWAL OF CERTIFICATION

A certification shall be valid through March 31st of the fifth succeeding training season. If the individual has not renewed their certification by the certification expiration date, they are automatically decertified.

All certified technicians will be required to pass an examination before recertification will be issued. Failure of the examination shall require the applicant to retake the full certification class and pass the examination. If the individual does not take the examination within one year after their certification(s) expire-they must retake the full certification class and pass the examination.

If an applicant becomes decertified in any level of certification and that certification is a prerequisite for other levels of certification the applicant will also be decertified in those related levels of certification until the prerequisite certification has once again been obtained.

The certificate holder shall be responsible for applying for certification renewal and for maintaining a current address on file.

PROVISIONAL CERTIFICATION

Provisional certification will be allowed through a special request to the TTCP Director. The request can be mailed or emailed to the TTCP Director and must include the need for a provisional certification, such as, company technician quit and they need to replace, an unforeseen workload, etc. Provisional certifications will only be granted to contractors. If the request is granted the following requirements will apply.

1. The provisional certification applicant must work under the direct supervision of a certified technician until such time that the applicant is competent in the required skills of the certification and has taken the written exam. The applicant must also take the web based review offered by the TTCP in the area they are seeking provisional certification.
2. The applicant must take and pass the written exam for the provisional certification they are requesting. There will be a testing fee in the amount of the TTCP recertification fee due at the time of the exam. CIT funds may not be used for provisional certification testing. The exams will be offered at the District Materials offices or the TTCP office in Ames.
3. The technician must demonstrate proficiency to an Iowa DOT certified technician at the first available opportunity.

4. After the provisional certification applicant has successfully completed the steps in 1 and 2, they will become provisionally certified until the end of the calendar year in which they obtained certification.
5. If the provisional certified technician wishes to keep their certification they must attend the full class at the full class cost for the certification during the training season immediately following their provisional certification.
6. A provisional certification is not intended to be an annual request. The provisional certification will only be allowed for one construction season. Repeated requests for provisional certifications for the technician will be denied.
7. Any prerequisites for the certification must be met prior to number 2 above.
8. HMA Basic Tester is a new certification that may only be used as a provisional certification. This certification follows all the requirements previously listed and the technician will be required to take Level I HMA at the first available opportunity after the provisional expires.
9. Provisional Certification will be offered for:
    a. Aggregate Sampler
    b. Aggregate Technician
    c. Level I PCC
    d. HMA Sampler
    e. HMA Basic Tester

UNSATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE NOTICE

A certified technician failing to perform the required specified duties or inadequately performing these duties, will receive an Unsatisfactory Notice (Materials IM 213, Appendix B). The notice will be from the District Materials Engineer in the District where the failure occurred. This notice and all supporting documentation will be placed in the technician's record with the Iowa Department of Transportation's Technical Training & Certification Program (TTCP). The notice will remain in their file for five years. The notice may be removed prior to the five years upon the recommendation of the District Materials Engineer.

SUSPENSION

A technician receiving two Unsatisfactory Work Performance Notices for work performed under a specific certification will be given a three-month suspension of the applicable certification. Suspended technicians shall not perform any duties governed by the suspended certification, including any duties which require the suspended certification as a prerequisite.

Technicians are eligible to be reinstated after the three-month suspension and successful completion of the applicable recertification test(s).

Technicians are subject to decertification when they receive a third Unsatisfactory Performance Notice.

The suspension will be effective on the date the Program Director issues the suspension.

DECERTIFICATION

Certified Technicians will be decertified for any of the following reasons:

Certifications will be revoked for the following reasons:

1. Failure of the certificate holder to renew the certificate prior to regular expiration as described above.

2. Use of false or fraudulent information to secure or renew a certificate.

3. Use of false or fraudulent documentation by the certificate holder.

4. Use of misleading, deceptive, untrue or fraudulent representations by the certificate holder.

5. Cheating on certification exams or performance evaluations. This includes removing, or attempts to remove, exam questions, answers, or other exam materials from the testing location.

6. Receipt of 3 Unsatisfactory Performance notifications, as stated above under suspension.

The Program Director, or designee, will notify an individual in writing of the intent to suspend or revoke the individual's certification(s). Notice will also be sent to the technician's last known employer. For DOT employees, notice will also be sent to their immediate supervisor.

An individual's certifications will be suspended during the appeal process, and the individual can't perform any duties governed by the certification during this time, until the first day following the end of the appeal process described below.

Technicians that are decertified shall not perform any duties requiring certification.

APPEALS & REINSTATEMENT REQUESTS

An individual has 10 business days to respond to the revocation notice. If the individual fails to respond with an appeal within 10 days of receipt of the original revocation notice, the suspension or revocation becomes effective on the 10th day.

Appeal step 1: First step appeals will be heard by the program director and a representative panel. The individual will have an opportunity to present information to support their continued certification to the panel. The Program Director and representative panel will then render a written decision, taking into account the technician's actions or omissions, the existence of past infractions, and any mitigating factors. This step 1 appeal will become final if further action is not taken as described in appeal step 2 and the suspension or revocation will become effective on the day the decision is issued by the panel.

Appeal step 2: If the individual is not satisfied with the decision of the Program Director and representative panel, the individual shall, within 10 days of receipt of the written decision, submit a request for further review to the Program Director. This appeals request will be considered by the entire Certification Board. The decision of the Certification Board will be the final decision on behalf of Technical Training & Certification Program.

Any violation will remain on the violator's record for five years, at which time the violation will be removed from their record.

A technician may request reinstatement after one year of being decertified unless the Program Director authorized a shorter period of time, which shall not be less than three months. If a reinstatement is authorized, the individual must attend and successfully complete the applicable certification courses.

FUNCTIONS & RESPONSIBILITES

A certificate holder at each production site, project site, proportioning plant, or laboratory will perform duties. The certified technician shall perform quality control testing in accordance with specified frequencies and submit designated reports and records.

The specification requirement for materials testing by a certified technician does not change the supplier's responsibilities to furnish materials compliant with the specification requirements.

The District Materials Engineer and/or Project Engineer will be responsible for monitoring the sampling, testing, production inspection activities and quality control performed by the contractor. A monitor shall have satisfactorily completed the training and be certified for the level of technician they are monitoring.

The District Materials Engineer and/or Project Engineer will have authority and responsibility to question and, where necessary, require changes in operations and quality control to ensure specification requirements are met.

QUALITY CONTROL, TESTING, & DOCUMENTATION

The QC Technician shall be present whenever construction work related to production activity, such as stockpiling or other preparatory work, requires record development and/or documentation is in progress. The QC Technician's presence is normally required on a continuing basis beginning one or more days before plant operation begins and ending after plant shut down at the completion of the project. The work shall be performed in a timely manner and at the established frequencies.

The QC Technician's presence is not normally required during temporary plant shut downs caused by conditions, such as material shortages, equipment failures, or inclement weather.

All quality control activities and records shall be available and open for observation and review by representatives of the contracting authority.

Reports, records, and diaries developed during progress of construction activities will be filed as directed by the Contracting Authority and will become the property of the Contracting Authority.

Quality control activities, testing, and records will be monitored regularly by Contracting Authority representatives. The Project Engineer or District Materials Engineer will assign personnel for this function.

Monitor activities will be reported and filed at prescribed intervals with the Project Engineer, District Materials Engineer, producer, contractor, and the contractor's designated producer.

At no time will the monitor inspector issue directions to the contractor, or to the QC Technician. However, the monitor inspector will have the authority and responsibility to question, and where necessary, reject any operation or completed product, which is not in compliance with contract requirements.

ACCEPTANCE

Completed work will be accepted on the basis of specification compliance documented by acceptance test records, and monitor inspection records. Specification noncompliance will require corrective action by the producer, contractor, or by the contractor's designated producer, and review of events and results associated with noncompliance by the Project Engineer.