

Table of Contents

<u>Section</u>	<u>Page</u>
6.1 CORRESPONDENCE	6.1-1
6.1.1 In-House Memoranda.....	6.1-1
6.1.1.1 General	6.1-1
6.1.1.2 Format	6.1-1
6.1.1.3 Signatures.....	6.1-1
6.1.1.4 Distribution.....	6.1-2
6.1.2 Outside Correspondence.....	6.1-2
6.1.2.1 General	6.1-2
6.1.2.2 Signatures.....	6.1-3
6.1.2.3 Distribution.....	6.1-3
6.1.3 Legislature and Media Contacts	6.1-3
6.1.4 Electronic Communications	6.1-4
6.1.4.1 General	6.1-4
6.1.4.2 Project File.....	6.1-4
6.2 MEETINGS	6.2-1
6.2.1 Project Review Meetings.....	6.2-1
6.2.2 Staff Meetings.....	6.2-1
6.3 RECORDS AND FILES.....	6.3-1
6.3.1 Project Files.....	6.3-1
6.3.2 File Retention	6.3-1
6.3.3 MDT Document Management System (DMS)	6.3-1
6.4 CONTRACT DOCUMENTS	6.4-1
6.4.1 Boring Logs	6.4-1
6.4.2 Geotechnical Design Details	6.4-1
6.4.3 Construction Cost Estimates	6.4-1
6.4.4 Special Provisions	6.4-1

Chapter 6

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

This Chapter provides guidance on correspondence, meetings, records and files and contract documents.

6.1 CORRESPONDENCE

6.1.1 In-House Memoranda

6.1.1.1 General

Memoranda are used by MDT to provide written, interdepartmental information between the various Bureaus, Sections, Districts, etc. They are used to distribute project reports, process approval requests, request project information, submit project information, distribute policies and for informational purposes. Each Bureau and Section has established its own policies for circulating incoming mail. In general for the Geotechnical Section, the Geotechnical Engineer's staff will review incoming memoranda to determine the appropriate distribution.

6.1.1.2 Format

Prepare all memoranda in the standard MDT format including the MDT Logo. The preparer should note that, for each project memorandum, fully complete the heading including the project number, project name and uniform project number. [Section 5.1](#) provides additional guidance on preparing project related memorandum. For non-project reports, the subject should provide a brief but informative title of the memorandum's purpose.

6.1.1.3 Signatures

For outgoing memoranda, the Geotechnical Section has established the following signature requirements:

1. Memoranda for critical projects, information distribution outside of the Geotechnical Section and Section-wide general information require the Geotechnical Engineer's signature.
2. Signatures for all other memoranda will be determined by the project geotechnical specialist or Geotechnical District Manager on a case-by-case basis. This includes general information distributed within the Section, general project correspondence, including those to the Districts, project information requests and other general day-to-day forms.
3. In the absence of the Geotechnical Engineer, designated individuals have been given the authority to sign for the Geotechnical Engineer (e.g., Geotechnical Operations Manager). Where the Geotechnical Engineer's name or title is printed on the document,

employees should sign their own name, with the word “for” preceding the printed name or title of the Geotechnical Engineer. The Geotechnical Engineer should have an opportunity to review the document before it is filed.

6.1.1.4 Distribution

The Geotechnical Section has established the following general guidelines for distribution of outgoing memoranda:

1. Project Information Submitted to Others. Memoranda providing project information to the Districts, other Bureaus or Sections should also include a copy to the following:
 - District Administrator, as needed;
 - the project file (green stamped “original” copy); and
 - others, as needed.
2. Project Information Requests. Memoranda requesting project information from the Districts, other Bureaus or Sections should also include a copy to the following:
 - District Administrator, as needed;
 - author of memorandum;
 - the project file; and
 - others, as needed.
3. District Correspondence. Address all correspondence to the Districts and to the District Administrator and include a copy of the following:
 - project file;
 - project emails; and
 - others, as needed.
4. Other Information. Distribution and copies of other memoranda types will be determined on a case-by-case basis. In general, always include a copy to the Geotechnical Engineer.

6.1.2 Outside Correspondence

6.1.2.1 General

Prepare all written materials for sources outside of the Department on the current MDT letterhead. However, letters for the Governor’s signature will be on Governor’s letterhead. Written materials prepared for the Director or Governor’s signature must be coordinated through the Director’s Office.

Department letters will often be written to individuals without a transportation background; use terminology that is understandable to the general public. In contrast, letters and surveys to AASHTO, FHWA, TRB, etc., should use standard highway engineering terminology.

6.1.2.2 Signatures

In general, all letters will be forwarded through the chain of command to the individual signing the correspondence. The following presents the Department's policy for signing all outgoing letters:

1. Letters to U.S. Congressmen, the Governor and legislators will be signed by the Director.
2. Letters responding to citizen inquiries will be signed by the Materials Engineer or a higher level, depending on who initially received the letter.
3. Letters which provide information, including routine project information, to towns, counties or local officials should be signed by the Geotechnical Engineer.
4. Information requested by the news media should be signed by the Materials Engineer or a higher level. General project information releases may be signed by the Geotechnical Engineer. All correspondence with the media should be coordinated with the Public Information Officer (PIO).
5. Information to Federal and State agencies, AASHTO, TRB, other State DOT's, etc., should be signed by the Geotechnical Engineer.
6. Project information submitted to consultants, contractors, suppliers, etc., should be signed by the Geotechnical Engineer.
7. In the absence of the Materials Engineer or Geotechnical Engineer, designated individuals have been given the authority to sign for the Geotechnical Engineer. Where the Geotechnical Engineer name or title is printed on the document, employees should sign their own name, with the word "for" preceding the printed name or title of the Geotechnical Engineer. The Geotechnical Engineer should have an opportunity to review the document before it is filed.

6.1.2.3 Distribution

Distribution of an outside letter will vary according to the information in the letter. A copy of all letters submitted outside of the Department should be sent to the Materials Engineer.

6.1.3 Legislature and Media Contacts

Use the following guidelines when contacted by news media, legislators, legislative audit staff, other government officials, etc.:

1. Responding. In general, staff may answer media inquiries if they are within their expertise. It is recommended to coordinate responses to inquiries with the PIO and your immediate supervisor.
2. Research. If answering the inquiry will require additional research, determine the deadline. Try to accommodate the deadline unless it is unreasonable.
3. Supervisor. Inform your supervisor and PIO of the contact the same day. If trouble is suspected, immediately inform your supervisor and PIO of the contact.
4. News Media or Legislative Contacts. Report any media inquires to the PIO. For legislative contacts, complete the Legislative Contact Form. During a legislative session, all legislative contact should be coordinated with the Director's Office. Report any legislative audit contacts to the Administrative Division in the Headquarters. Refer these contacts in a timely manner unless trouble is suspected; if this is the case, contact the appropriate unit immediately. The purpose of reporting these contacts is to ensure the Headquarters staff is aware of potential problems and/or to allow them to address the problem.
5. Department Policies. Questions regarding Department policies should be left to administrators or higher level employees.
6. Controversial and Sensitive Issues. Refer inquiries on sensitive and controversial issues to the PIO. This may include inquires that are uncomfortable to answer. In instances, employees will be asked to refer all calls on a specific issue to the PIO or Director, as in the case of a pending legal issue or controversy that is receiving unusual attention.

6.1.4 Electronic Communications

6.1.4.1 General

MDT staff is encouraged to use email, the internet and the intranet to accomplish their duties. However, access to electronic communication imposes certain responsibilities on the user. MDT must not be exposed to undue legal liabilities. Users may be subject to limitation on their use of electronic communication as determined by the Geotechnical Engineer. Use of computer systems is subject to the MDT computer use policy. In general, the policies and procedures that apply to hard-copy communication also apply to electronic communication. Assume that every email will become public knowledge. If there is litigation, the law makes no distinction between hardcopy and electronic communication.

6.1.4.2 Project File

The *MDT Managing Electronic Files and Email* publication presents Department-wide policies, guidelines, etc., on managing the use of the electronic filing system for design projects. The project geotechnical specialist or Geotechnical District Managers are responsible for setting up and maintaining an electronic file folder for all electronic project-related documents. Any project-related email correspondence should be copied to the project's e-folder and a hard copy printed.

All emails should contain the project number, project name and uniform project number. The non-letter characters in the project number should not be used in the subject line. In general, use the uniform project number in the subject along with the subject of the email.

Once the project has been completed, hard copies of all email correspondence should be placed in the project design file.

6.2 MEETINGS

Good communication is a necessity. It is imperative that all meetings be well planned, attended by the proper individuals and the information disseminated to the affected people in a timely manner. The following provides additional information for project and staff meetings in the Geotechnical Section.

6.2.1 Project Review Meetings

During project design, there are typically several meetings to allow others to review the project design. MDT formal review meetings include the Preliminary Field Review, Alignment and Grade Review, Bridge Design Parameters, Plan-in-Hand Review and Final Plan Review. In addition, informal meetings are often initiated to gather or disseminate information between the affected parties.

In general, the Preconstruction Project Manager will be responsible for arranging the meeting, determining the location, leading the meeting and documenting the concerns and decisions made during the meeting. For informal meetings, a memorandum documenting the decisions made during the meeting should be submitted to those involved with copies distributed to the project file and other individuals as deemed necessary.

6.2.2 Staff Meetings

Staff meetings are held to disseminate design and administrative information, discuss design problems, discuss policy changes and discuss personnel concerns. Geotechnical Engineering staff meetings are typically held weekly. These meetings are typically attended by the Geotechnical Engineer, Geotechnical Operations Manager, project geotechnical specialists, Geotechnical District Manager and others as needed. Monthly staff meetings are held for all Geotechnical Section employees including the Geotechnical Engineering Unit and Geotechnical Field Investigation Unit.

6.3 RECORDS AND FILES

6.3.1 Project Files

A hard copy geotechnical project file will contain relevant geotechnical information to provide a history of the project and to provide a single source of the geotechnical information on the project. This file will usually be retained and maintained by the project geotechnical specialist until completion of the design. Identify each design file by its uniform project number and project number. The geotechnical project file will typically include the following:

- MDT project programming information;
- copy of all geotechnical reports, see [Chapter 5](#);
- all project correspondence including emails;
- design notes and calculations;
- design drawings;
- original boring logs;
- lab test results;
- all notes, designs and calculations made during construction; and
- any other applicable information related to the project.

Draft copies of memorandum or other information should not be kept in the file and all drafts should be discarded. Where practical, the project geotechnical specialist should convert the electronic files to a PDF format for easier retrieval of information.

6.3.2 File Retention

All project files will be retained in the Geotechnical Section office until construction has been completed. Once construction is completed, the files will be moved to the basement and retained pursuant to MDT's document retention policy.

Retain the physical soil or rock samples until construction has been completed and all claims have been resolved. Discard the samples, after notification has been received that the project has been closed.

6.3.3 MDT Document Management System (DMS)

The DMS is used to track documents for preliminary surveys, preliminary field reviews, plan and specification development, pre-bid and preconstruction conferences, and as-built plans. The Document Management System, in conjunction with SiteManager, is used to track and manage project correspondence, letters, pay estimates, photographs, diaries, change orders, project meeting minutes and other similar documents during construction.

6.4 CONTRACT DOCUMENTS

6.4.1 Boring Logs

Include copies of final Boring Logs with the contract documents. The boring logs should be saved in a PDF format and sent via email directly to the Preconstruction Project Manager and the Contract Plans Bureau. The Contract Plans Bureau will also include the “Soil Boring Information” and “Logs of Boring” standard special provisions with the contract documents.

6.4.2 Geotechnical Design Details

The Geotechnical Section has developed several geotechnical detailed drawings that address typical geotechnical designs. These drawings can be included as part of the project plans or modified, as necessary, to fit the project. Copies of these design details can be obtained from the Geotechnical Section.

6.4.3 Construction Cost Estimates

The project geotechnical specialist may be required to provide the Preconstruction Project Manager with a unit cost estimate for new or special geotechnical elements that are included within the project. The project geotechnical specialist should review the “Bid Tabs” unit costs located on the MDT website to determine if they are appropriate for the project. For new items, the project geotechnical specialist should contact other State DOTs to determine if they have unit costs available or work with the manufacturer to determine the appropriate costs.

6.4.4 Special Provisions

Special provisions are required whenever a project contains work, material, sequence of operations or any other requirements that are necessary for the completion of the project but are not “described completely” in the construction plans, *MDT Standard Specifications for Roads and Bridges* or Supplemental Specifications. “Described completely” should be interpreted to mean that the prospective bidder will be able to clearly understand the work to be accomplished, type of materials or equipment required, construction methods or details to be used, how the item of work will be measured and the basis of payment. See the *MDT Road Design Manual* for guidance on preparing special provisions.

“Standard” special provisions are special provisions that are commonly used on many projects that are not part of the *Standard Specifications* or Supplemental Specifications. These special provisions generally require only very minor modifications to be project specific (e.g., amount of time to be included within the “Contract Time Special Provision”; date, time and location for the “Mandatory Pre-Bid Conference Special Provision”). Standard special provisions are generally not applicable to geotechnical situations or elements, although some exceptions can occur. These standard special provisions are available on the MDT internet site for review and download by MDT personnel and consultants.

The Geotechnical Section has prepared several example special provisions that are applicable to common geotechnical situations and/or elements. These special provisions are located on

the MDT computer network and are only accessible to the Geotechnical Section personnel. These example special provisions must be modified on a project-by-project basis. Although some special provisions may be very similar between two different projects, their intended use should be project specific. Some example geotechnical special provisions include Construction of MSE Walls, Reinforced Soil Slopes, Pre-Fabricated Vertical Drain Installation, Embankment Foundation Treatment, etc. Other example geotechnical special provisions are available on the Geotechnical Section network.