

PART 500 INTRODUCTION

SUBPART A - REVIEW AND APPROVAL

§NE500.00 General

(c) Engineering work in Nebraska will be provided in accordance with the following guidelines.

(1) Engineering assistance

(i) The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides engineering assistance in the form of investigations, planning, design, and construction inspection so conservation practices are installed in a sound manner. Proper operation and maintenance of the measures will be outlined with the owner at the time of installation.

(ii) Cooperating with Natural Resources Districts, NRCS may furnish engineering assistance to the following:

- a) individual land users,
- b) groups of land users having a mutual conservation or resource management problem,
- c) irrigation districts
- d) legally organized groups,
- e) state, counties, municipalities, and other units of government concerned with resource management according to procedures outlined in the National Planning Procedures Handbook.

(iii) NRCS will plan and design works of improvement only when assured that they will be constructed as planned. Technical assistance should be withdrawn whenever it is known that specifications are not being or will not be followed.

(iv) Large projects (other than PL-566, RC&D, or similar USDA program funded projects) will be handled in a manner that does not interfere with the interests of private engineers and consultants. In cooperation with the Natural Resources District(s), NRCS will implement activities on large projects in the following manner:

a) If the estimated time required for assistance on a project exceeds 60 staff-days, the district conservationist must obtain approval from the State Conservationist. The request for approval will include a statement of the availability of private engineering services, a description of agency benefit, and a human resource plan detailing staff commitments.

b) NRCS should provide assistance with preliminary investigations to determine feasibility. A preliminary investigation report, as a part of an inventory and evaluation, will be developed as outlined in the National Planning Procedures Handbook.

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c) Local interests should be encouraged to hire a consulting engineer(s) and geologist(s) to make detailed investigations, engineering surveys, project designs, specifications, and cost estimates.

d) NRCS will, when requested, review the design and construction inspection to determine that the project meets NRCS standards.

(2) Scheduling engineering assistance

(i) For each job on which engineering assistance is needed, the district conservationist will submit a request to the field engineer stating details concerning the nature of the project or activity, the assistance desired, survey data available, farmer interest, and date assistance is needed. Within the field engineers area of responsibility, the district conservationists will coordinate with the field engineer to establish priorities. The district conservationist will keep the field engineer advised whenever there is a change in the priority or target date for construction.

(ii) All requests for state office engineering assistance requiring more than 5 staff-days will be made in writing to the State Conservation Engineer. The state structure schedule will be used to establish work assignments, set state priorities, and track progress on these requests, as appropriate. Assistance on smaller projects may be coordinated directly with the assigned staff persons.

(iii) For livestock waste systems that NRCS provides technical assistance, the district conservationist is responsible for the waste management system planning and the development of the waste utilization plan.

(3) Engineering responsibilities

(i) The State Conservation Engineer is responsible to the State Conservationist for assuring a quality program of engineering in Nebraska. He/she provides the technical leadership for all employees of the NRCS in Nebraska in the engineering discipline. Within the framework of national engineering standards and policies, the State Conservation Engineer is to develop the Nebraska NRCS state policies and procedures governing all engineering work.

(ii) The State Conservation Engineer and Leadership Engineers provide engineering technical leadership within the assigned regions of Nebraska. Field engineers, as assigned, provide engineering technical direction to NRD and field office personnel, CETs, and to engineers in lower grades. All CETs, as assigned, provide engineering technical guidance to NRCS field office and NRD personnel. Deviations in engineering responsibilities to accommodate varying levels of employee skills and abilities will be coordinated by the Leadership Engineers with review and concurrence by the District Conservationists and State Conservation Engineer.

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a) Technical Leadership is defined as a process which provides quality assurance by:

- i) Reviewing and revising of engineering requirements.
- ii) Serving as responsible engineer for projects that are required to be directed by a registered professional engineer.
- iii) Providing technical advice and counsel to lower grade engineers.
- iv) Reviewing and approving complex projects.
- v) Providing technical direction.

b) Technical direction is defined as:

- i) Reviewing and approving engineering work of others.
- ii) Assigning job approval authorities.
- iii) Assessing training needs and coordinating training delivery.
- iv) Providing appropriate technical guidance.

c) Technical guidance is defined as:

- i) Providing training support.
- ii) Conducting quality assurance reviews.
- iii) Providing technical feedback for needed improvements.
- iv) Providing technical assistance on routine jobs.
- v) Providing job support.

d) Engineering requirements means all policy statements, standards, specifications, and design criteria (including Nebraska supplements) contained in the manuals, technical guides, handbooks, or technical releases, plus all applicable federal, local and state law, including NRD, NDNR, DOH & NDEQ regulations.

e) Technical feedback is the process by which engineers and civil engineering technicians identify and make needed revisions to Nebraska engineering requirements. This process also identifies needed training support.

f) Training support includes on-the-job training, field trips, seminars, workshops, formal training sessions, and core curriculum training. This training support may be conducted by the NRCS or it may be from an external source, as long as it is appropriate and serves as technology transfer.

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g) Quality assurance reviews are those needed to insure all engineering procedures such as field surveys, designs, final plans, and construction inspection comply with Nebraska engineering requirements. These reviews will be done by the person who is technically responsible.

h) Job support is the assistance provided by the engineer or engineering technician on complex practices beyond what the local FO personnel can provide. Examples of job support are: help on a survey crew, assistance with design analysis, or providing construction inspection help.

(iii) Field office personnel are responsible for conducting training support and quality assurance reviews within the limits of their job approval authority.