

PART 542 - SPECIFICATIONS

SUBPART A - CONSTRUCTION SPECIFICATIONS

542.00 General.

(a) NRCS uses standard construction specifications as a tool to ensure consistency and efficiency with the many contracts administered through various programs.

(b) Many types of engineering works have elements that recur as an installation or material quality requirement. These elements can be incorporated into a standard specification that can be supplemented for a specific project and be included as part of the contract. The content of the standard specification will be developed and maintained in a manner that ensures adherence to state laws and NRCS regulations and prevents conflict with other contract provisions.

542.01 Scope.

(a) Specifications are to be developed as outlined in NEH-20 and incorporated in all contracts prepared for installing works of improvement when the NRCS provides assistance, except:

- (1) Contracts for basic recreation facilities.
- (2) Separate contracts for seeding, sodding, or fencing.

(3) Contracts for less complex works of improvement shall have design drawings and specifications of sufficient detail to support quality installation and reflect the intent of the designer in solving resource concerns. The adequacy of the drawings and specifications shall be as determined by the responsible engineer or employee with the level of engineering approval authority necessary for the conservation practice or structure to be applied.

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(4) Contracts for works of improvement not designed by NRCS and installed under contracts administered by the project sponsors without using standard NRCS Construction and Material Specifications. This arrangement may occur when sponsors design or hire the engineering design and the NRCS retains quality assurance responsibilities.

(b) Sponsoring local organizations that prepare their own designs for NRCS assisted projects are encouraged to use the NRCS standard specifications. The specifications must be compatible with all other provisions in the contract document. The specifications selected or developed for a specific contract must provide the necessary construction details that result in the installation of a quality product equivalent to that expected from using the NRCS standard specifications.

(c) Agreements and contracts for engineering services for preparing designs must include the applicable requirements pertaining to the construction and material specifications.

§542.02 Preparation of standard specifications.

(a) Procedures for preparing specifications for construction contracts are outlined in NEH-20, Chapter 1, Discussion. Standard specifications for construction are located NEH-20 in Chapter 2 and those for materials in Chapter 3.

(b) The standard specifications are to be utilized verbatim, except for the deletion of alternative methods that do not apply to the project as described in NEH-20 Instructions.

(c) Standard specifications will be revised and issued through the NRCS Conservation Engineering Division and will be effective immediately. The State Conservation Engineer will determine applicability of specifications developed.

(d) The development of a new specification at the state level is the responsibility of the State Conservation Engineer and will be issued as an interim specification. All interim

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specifications have a use life of three (3) years following their issue date. After the use life has elapsed, interim specifications are to be evaluated for issuance as a national specification. State experience and recommendations are to be provided for evaluation and acceptance as national specification by the NRCS Conservation Engineering Division.

542.03 Reference specifications.

(a) Reference specifications are those specifications developed and issued by other agencies, associations, societies, or institutes, and are cited in NRCS Standard Specifications, National Handbook of Conservation Practices, and the National Engineering Handbook Section 19, Construction Inspection.

(b) The State Conservation Engineer shall develop a system to maintain all current reference specifications cited in NRCS Standard Specifications, National Handbook of Conservation Practices, and NEH-Section 19, as noted in Part 210-542.40.

(c) Other NRCS engineering staffs designated by the State Conservation Engineer are to maintain, or have direct access to, copies of reference specifications as noted in Part 210-542.40.

(d) The National Cartographic and Geospatial Center (NCGC) Staff at the NRCS Fort Worth, Texas office will annually coordinate the delivery of current ASTM reference specifications to all States, the Caribbean Area, and the Pacific Basin Area. Each year a revised index of updated and new ASTM reference specifications will be made available.

(1) Each State Conservation Engineer will maintain a file of current reference specifications that have been identified for use in NRCS assistance projects.

(2) Copies of ASTM reference specifications not on the current index, will be available upon request from the NCGC in Fort Worth, Texas.

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(3) Guidance to obtain other reference specifications, AWWA, ACI, etc. will be developed and provided in a manner similar to ASTM Reference Specifications.

(e) Additional copies of reference specifications for non-NRCS use should be obtained from the organization that owns the specification or from other sources that may be available.

(f) Reference specifications that are outdated shall be removed from the reference file at the time a revised or updated version is received. All specific construction contract reference specifications should remain with the completed "As-Built" file where they were utilized.

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SUBPART B - ENGINEERING SERVICES SPECIFICATIONS

542.10 General

(a) The NRCS provides engineering assistance for many programs. The need to obtain technical assistance from other sources occasionally occurs for various reasons, including:

- (1) Resources are not available to meet commitments; and
- (2) A specialty area expertise is not available within the agency.

542.11 Technical Services

(a) Technical expertise in differing subject areas may be needed to assist the NRCS in meeting program commitments. This assistance would generally be considered in one of the following:

- (1) Professional services; or
- (2) Architectural and Engineering (A&E) services.

(b) Procurement for the above listed services shall be in accordance with the Federal Acquisition Regulations, the Department of Agriculture Acquisition Regulations, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service Acquisition Regulations (formally SCSAR's), as applicable. Technical requirements for the procurement shall be developed and included in the contract provisions and/or specifications.

(c) For service contracts, clear and concise requirements must be outlined.

(d) The State Conservation Engineer, together with the Contracting Officer, shall develop review procedures for A & E Contracts.

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SUBPART C - EXHIBIT

542.40 List of Reference Specifications

An index that includes the designation, current issue date, and title of reference specifications will be maintained by each state conservation engineer. These are the specifications referenced in NRCS NEH Section 19, Construction Inspection; and NEH Section 20, Construction and Material Specifications; and the National Handbook of Conservation Practices.

Each State Conservation Engineer shall provide a current Index of Reference Specifications to all offices and individuals assigned a National Engineering Manual. Copies of the specifications are to be distributed as needed to provide guidance on installation procedures and to establish minimum material quality requirements.

Only the most current copy of each reference specification should be used for contract purposes. Care should be taken to avoid the potential use of obsolete or out-of-date specifications.

Reference Specifications that may be listed in this section could include, but not limited to:

American Society for Testing and Materials - ASTM
American Concrete Institute - ACI
American National Standards Institute - ANSI
American Water Works Association - AWWA
American Welding Society - AWS
Military Specifications
Product Standards
Steel Structures Painting Council
United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of
Reclamation