



MaineDOT

NEPA Environmental Training

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1.0 Introduction

As part of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Surface Transportation Project Delivery Program (23 U.S.C 327), commonly known as the NEPA Assignment Program, MaineDOT has assumed FHWA responsibilities for complying with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) when developing federally funded highway projects in Maine. Under the NEPA Assignment Program Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between FHWA and MaineDOT dated XXXX, MaineDOT has also assumed FHWA's legal responsibilities and liabilities for its actions and decisions pertaining to the environmental review and approval responsibilities assigned under the NEPA Assignment Program, including interagency consultation, and environmental regulatory compliance.

The NEPA Assignment MOU Part XX. Training requires the MaineDOT to continue to implement training necessary to meet its environmental obligations. MaineDOT shall continually assess the need for training.

MaineDOT's approach is to:

1. Identify the minimum competencies (education, training, experience) for technical or subject matter experts with review responsibilities, NEPA decision-makers, and non-environmental team members and managers.
2. Assess any individual training needs and track the competency status for individuals who are environmental subject matter experts or NEPA decision-makers.
3. Identify general training needs that may be based on the need for refresher training, or training on newly developed guidance, policy, or requirements (in statute, regulation, or Executive Order).
4. Ensure that consultants providing professional services are appropriately qualified and experienced and have access to training on State manuals and procedures.
5. Develop a strategy for informal training through periodic meetings, webinars, and teleconferences.

The MaineDOT Environmental Office (ENV) continues to rely heavily on on-the-job training and mentoring as an efficient and effective method of ensuring that environmental staff obtain the skills to successfully accomplish their tasks. Collaborative on-the-job training and mentoring also provide valuable professional development for career staff.

In addition to on-the-job training, ENV will utilize virtual and in-person classroom training and conferences, including web-based training available through other agencies as well as conducting our own rapid-delivery information sessions on environmental topics on an as-needed basis.

This plan is not intended to encompass every possible training opportunity. Environmental staff and their supervisors are encouraged to explore additional training opportunities not listed in this plan as the supervisor deems appropriate.

MaineDOT environmental training consists of training available by MaineDOT for environmental staff, and online resources helpful in an employee's day-to-day work.

2.0 Training Updates

Environmental Training will be reviewed annually and will be updated if a need to do so has been

identified during the year. This includes addressing training needs arising from new policies and procedures, programmatic agreements, and memoranda of understanding and/or agreement (MOUs/MOAs); Changes to regulations or new regulations and EO, the implementation of new technologies; Departmental directives; and other circumstances that necessitate specific training.

3.0 MaineDOT NEPA Guide and NEPA Training

Environmental staff will become familiar with the MaineDOT NEPA Guide and are required to participate in the Basic NEPA Module to assist in learning the procedures and responsibilities in the NEPA Assignment Program. The MaineDOT NEPA Assignment Program information is accessible on the web.

Since knowledge of the procedures is necessary for the essential job functions of environmental office staff, including carrying out the responsibilities assigned under the NEPA Assignment MOU, all environmental staff are required to participate in the NEPA Assignment Program training.

- New environmental staff: New environmental employees will complete Environmental in-house training modules listed in Table 1 as part of their initial training, within six months of their hire.
- Current environmental staff: Since the NEPA Assignment Program procedures are new, all current environmental staff will be required to complete the Basic NEPA Module and other position-specific required modules to reinforce their understanding of the new procedures. After this initial training, all current environmental staff are required to take the Modules as refreshers as determined necessary by their supervisors.

4.0 Mentoring

MaineDOT's Environmental Office allows for mentoring new environmental staff by senior environmental staff and Management. Mentoring happens naturally as staff works together (e.g., there is no official program or assignment of mentors). ENV staff may also mentor and assist with individual training for new, and existing staff. Mentoring is an economical way of providing excellent job-specific training and is highly encouraged. Mentoring is one of the few training opportunities that can help environmental staff progress in all desired skill sets.

Senior staff acting as mentors can guide junior and environmental staff through problem-solving, demonstrating how to complete tasks, and providing constructive criticism of work products. The mentor also learns while teaching new staff. By mentoring, senior staff will improve their communication.

5.0 MaineDOT Environmental Basic Training Modules

Regular internal training opportunities exist for environmental staff, as described in Table 1. Many of these opportunities are often flexible and can be tailored to meet the needs of individual staff members.

Table 1 MAINEDOT Training Modules

| Module | Description | Sponsor | Required Staff | Frequency |
|--|---|----------|--|----------------------|
| Basic Air and Noise | Training on the Clean Air Act, Noise Control Act, manuals, process, and roles | MaineDOT | ENV Team Leaders, Air and Noise Specialist | New staff, refresher |
| Basic Fisheries and Wildlife | Training on Endangered Species Act, Marine Mammal Act, Anadromous Fish Conservation Act, Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Essential Fish Habitat, Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, agreements, process, and roles | MaineDOT | Biologist, ENV Team Leaders | New staff, refresher |
| Basic Hazardous Materials Management | Training on CERCLA, SARA, RCRA, process, and roles | MaineDOT | ENV Team Leaders, SR. Geologist | New staff, refresher |
| Basic Historic, Cultural, and Parkland | Training on Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, Section 4(f) of the DOT Act, the Land and Water Conservation Funds Act, other historic and cultural Acts, Agreements, and process | MaineDOT | ENV Team Leaders, Historic Coordinator | New staff, refresher |
| Basic NEPA | Training on the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA), NEPA Assignment, NEPA Assignment MOU, MaineDOT NEPA Guide, process, and roles | MaineDOT | All ENV, Project Managers | New staff, refresher |
| Basic Social and Economic | Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations, process, and roles | MaineDOT | ENV Team Leaders | New staff, refresher |
| Basic Water Resources and Wetlands | Training on the Clean Water Act, Safe Drinking Water Act, Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899, Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, Coastal Barrier Resources Act, Coastal Zone Management Act, Emergency Wetlands Resources Act, Flood Disaster Protection Act, Wetland Mitigation, General Bridge Act, process, and roles | MaineDOT | ENV Team Leaders, Biologist, Stormwater Engineer, ENV Engineer Technicians | New staff, refresher |
| Commitment Compliance | Training on compliance with commitments made during the NEPA and permitting process, tracking, and roles | MaineDOT | All ENV | New staff, refresher |
| Environmental Baseline | Training on ENV baseline requirements | MaineDOT | All ENV | New staff, refresher |
| Filing and Documentation | Training on filing, documentation, admin record requirements | MaineDOT | All ENV | New staff, refresher |
| Public Involvement | Training on Public Involvement requirements | MaineDOT | All ENV | New staff, refresher |

6.0 Additional Training

ENV provides opportunity for national and state level trainings for staff. These courses included (but are not limited to) offerings through the National Highway Institute (NHI), The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), the National Preservation Institute (NPI), Federal Highway Resource Center, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), and national/regional/state level trainings and conferences. Understanding that training courses change over time, ENV does not have a set list, but rather an annual review and discussion between staff and their supervisors to develop a training plan. The Environmental office encourages training via in-person and virtually.

7.0 Conferences and Workshops

Conferences offer an opportunity to learn about changing regulations, developing technologies, innovative research, best management practices, and other current news occurring in the environmental field. Conferences are also a means for staff to network and build relations. ENV Staff will be expected to brief other staff on the conference topic and key takeaways. Supervisors and the ENV Director have final approval on the appropriateness and feasibility of a specific conference.

8.0 Online Resources

Environmental staff are encouraged to develop a personal library of resources to utilize in their day-to-day work. While an individual's go-to resources may grow and change over time, there are some basic online resources that environmental staff should become familiar with and utilize as part of their learning process. These include:

- [MAINEDOT's Environmental Webpage](#). Organized by resource topic, this page provides links to other online tools to develop an analysis of project impacts.
- [FHWA's Environmental Review Toolkit](#). This website provides comprehensive information

regarding FHWA's implementation of the NEPA process, as well as guidance on several key topics such as Section 4(f) and Historic Preservation.

- [AASHTO's Center for Environmental Excellence](#). This is a comprehensive source for reference materials regarding environmental topics in relation to transportation activities.
- [National Highway Institute Courses](#). This website offers courses on transportation and environment-related topics.

In addition, environmental staff can join other appropriate sites that offer information about changing regulations, upcoming conferences, and trainings, developing technologies, and other current news occurring in the environmental field.

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