



# MaineDOT

## NEPA Self-Assessment Guidance

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### 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, the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) has assumed Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) responsibilities for complying with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) when developing federally funded MaineDOT sponsored 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 8.2.x, requires the MaineDOT to perform annual self-assessments of its QA/QC process and performance to determine if its process is working as intended. The MaineDOT self-assessments will be conducted by the MaineDOT Environmental Office (Environmental Office Director, NEPA Manager, and Environmental Specialist-NEPA) to ensure that the FHWA's responsibilities assumed under the NEPA Assignment Program are being performed in accordance with the NEPA Assignment Program MOU and with all applicable Federal laws and policies.

A self-assessment report will be written to satisfy the requirements in the NEPA Assignment Program MOU. The report will include a description of the scope of the self-assessment conducted and the areas reviewed, a description of the process followed in conducting the self-assessment, a list of the areas identified as needing improvement, any corrective actions that have been or will be implemented, and a and a summary of MaineDOT's progress toward attaining the performance measures listed in the MOU.

These self-assessment procedures are general guidance and may be modified as necessary to accommodate circumstances surrounding the self-assessment.

The self-assessment report must be transmitted to the FHWA Maine Division Office at least one month prior to the date of a scheduled FHWA audit.

### Self-Assessments

Self-assessments are intended to provide an appraisal of the MaineDOT's processes and performance in relation to the following six core areas:

- Program Management
- Documentation
- QA/QC
- Training
- Legal Sufficiency
- Performance Measures

Self-assessments will be conducted annually as a regular part of the MaineDOT Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) process. All aspects of the Guidance documents, environmental documentation, project files, and ProjEx database for selected projects are subject to evaluation during the assessment.



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Self-assessments may provide a general evaluation or be focused to evaluate one or more perceived program concern(s) or risk(s) and determine whether these are either program-wide, project or region-specific, or negligible. The program concern(s) or risk(s) may be identified by the MaineDOT management, the FHWA, or resource/regulatory agency.

Each self-assessment will involve the selection of a subset of CE projects (approximately 20%) and include projects from the Bridge, Highway, Multimodal, Regional, and LPA programs. All EAs and EIS projects will be assessed. The self-assessment will generally be limited to those project approvals completed in the previous year, except where identified program concern(s) or risk(s) necessitate looking at a broader timeframe. The assessment will begin at the end of each MOU year (if the MOU is signed on June 30<sup>th</sup>, the assessment begins on July 1).

### Self-Assessment Procedures

#### 1. Develop the scope of the self-assessment.

- Select a subset of projects for self-assessment to include a representative sample of projects from each MaineDOT Project Development Program.
- Utilize the self-assessment-specific template and Quality Review Checklist for assessment.
- Identify concern(s)/risk(s) needing evaluation. This can be identified in previous assessments, audits, and agency comments.

#### 2. Develop the self-assessment schedule.

#### 3. The Environmental Office Director, NEPA Manager, and Environmental Specialist-NEPA perform the self-assessment

- Review CPD e-file project files
- Review ProjEx project documentation
- Review guidance documents

#### 4. Produce the draft self-assessment report

- A draft self-assessment report will be developed after self-assessment completion, utilizing the self-assessment report template, and include:
  - Scope
  - Areas reviewed
  - Process
  - Findings
  - Corrective action plan, if needed
- Review process
  - The Environmental Office Director, NEPA Manager, and Environmental Specialist-NEPA will collaboratively develop preliminary and final self-assessment reports
  - The Chief Engineer will be briefed on the program status by the Environmental Office Director and NEPA Manager.
  - The Assessment final self-assessment report will be distributed as appropriate.



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### 5. Self-assessment corrective action

- The Environmental Office Director and NEPA Manager will identify and determine the expectations for the resolution process based on findings.
- A schedule will be developed for the development and approval of corrective actions
- The Environmental Office Director and NEPA Manager will meet and discuss the actions needing corrections with appropriate staff.
- Corrective actions will be tracked and assessed over an agreed-upon timeframe.
- Corrective actions will be reported in the following year's self-assessment report.

