



MaineDOT

NEPA Environmental Training

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Version 1

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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, 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.

In accordance with the 23 U.S.C. 327 MOU, MaineDOT will continue to implement training necessary to meet its environmental obligations. MaineDOT will be solely responsible for the development, implementation, and review of its training program. 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 information sessions on environmental topics on 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. Training is recorded by staff members in their personal training file.

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 and training information is accessible on the [MaineDOT Web NEPA Assignment Page](#).

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 identified in Appendix 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 work 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 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 Appendix 1. Many of these opportunities are often flexible and can be tailored to meet the needs of individual staff members. Records of staff training will be kept in the NEPA Training files.

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. 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, trainings, developing technologies, and other current news occurring in the environmental field.

Appendix 1: MAINEDOT Training Modules

Module	Description	Sponsor	Staff	Frequency
Basic Air and Noise	Training in 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, Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Essential Fish Habitat, agreements, process, and roles	MaineDOT	Biologist, ENV Team Leaders, RC, Compliance	New staff, refresher
Basic Hazardous Materials Management	Training in CERCLA, SARA, RCRA, process, and roles	MaineDOT	ENV Team Leaders, Hydrogeologist, SR. Geologist, RC, Compliance	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 Coordinators, RC, Compliance	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, PM	New staff, refresher
Basic Water Resources and Wetlands	Training on the Clean Water Act, Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899, Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, Coastal Barrier Resources Act, Coastal Zone Management Act, Flood Disaster Protection Act, Wetland Mitigation, process, and roles	MaineDOT	ENV Team Leaders, Biologists, Hydrologist, Technician, RC, Compliance	New staff, refresher
Commitment Compliance	Training in 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 in filing, documentation, admin record requirements	MaineDOT	All ENV	New staff, refresher
Public Involvement	Training in Public Involvement requirements	MaineDOT	All ENV	New staff, refresher
Purpose and Need	Training in writing, reviewing, providing information, and utilizing a Purpose and Need statement	MaineDOT	Team Leaders, Historic Coordinators, PM	New staff, refresher