

Design Standards Letter

Letter Number: **G-1992-08**

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Section/Plan No.: **None**

Subject: **Soil Surveys**

Body

It has come to our attention that improved coordination would be desirable concerning soils surveys. In particular with our expanded program, the soil surveyor in the district is sometimes being requested to prepare reports without the benefit of strip maps, field staking, borings or soil tests due to commitments for an early letting.

Soil survey reports are of considerable importance, and the information provided is necessary for the proper design of a project. Soil survey and slope recommendations are not only necessary for the design of new projects but are also needed for those pavement rehabilitation projects, primarily on interstate and major primary routes, which may include significant quantities of earthwork, including contractor furnished borrow. Therefore, every effort should be made to furnish the necessary information to allow the soil surveyor to prepare a complete and accurate report.

District materials personnel should be granted a reasonable amount of time to preform the necessary work for soil surveys. We recognize that circumstances may force shortcuts in certain instances. However, we are concerned about some of the reports we have received of oversights where someone simply didn't think to ask for a soil survey even though there could have been adequate time to perform the work.

In some instances, a "general knowledge" type report will prove sufficiently accurate for the design of a project. However, we are concerned about the potential for error if this practice is used and believe it should be kept to a minimum. There are also risks of lost federal participation and increased exposure to liability in litigation.

We are confident that we will receive your normal excellent cooperation in alleviating this situation.

dd/pr