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SECTION 100.00 - PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW

SECTION 110.00 - INTRODUCTION

The Environmental Process Manual (EPM) provides guidance for complying with federal, state, and local environmental laws and regulations during the planning, designing, constructing, and maintaining of transportation facilities in Idaho. The manual applies to facilities that are owned and operated by the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD), state-owned airports, state-sponsored rail systems, and ITD maintenance facilities. Cities, counties, tribes, other local agencies and private transportation entities may also use the Environmental Process Manual for guidance on their transportation facilities.

The intended users of the manual are ITD staff, consultants working on ITD projects, resource agencies, local governments, and other state and local staff working on transportation-related facilities. The manual is primarily a technical resource focused on the “how to” of environmental review under various laws and regulations. In addition to technical guidance, the manual provides background information on environmental laws and ITD policy statements to aid in interpreting the numerous mandates. Understanding a law’s history and intent may aid the user in properly interpreting its application. The manual also lists resources for further information and assistance in complying with the technical requirements.

This manual revises and replaces the draft manual previously made available on the [ITD website](#) and [ITD Manuals CD](#). The new EPM relies extensively on resources available through the Internet. In most cases these are agency web sites with information on the regulatory process and requirements.

Updating and revising the manual is a continuous process because of the ever-changing status of environmental issues and laws. While ITD endeavors to keep the Environmental Process Manual current, it is the user’s responsibility to ensure that any action taken to comply with environmental laws and regulations is based on the most current information available. The manual lists websites and agency contacts that can assist a user with this task. Current and updated CD’s are available on request from the ITD Headquarters Environmental Section at Box 7129, Boise, Idaho, 83707-1129. The website will be updated semi annually. It will be the user’s responsibility to check that the most recent edition is being used.

Comments and suggestions for improving the manual are welcome. Please use the feedback form provided at the end of this chapter. Please direct comments to the ITD Headquarters Environmental Section for consideration in the next revision. For questions about the manual or to request additional copies of the manual, users may contact the Environmental Section at 208-334-8842 or the address listed above.

SECTION 120.00 – ITD AUTHORITY

Over the past years there have been changes to policy, codes, regulations and gradual changes in methods and procedures between the districts. The primary focus of this manual is to provide a clear process that is accepted by each ITD District, ITD Headquarters, and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Contained within the

chapters of this manual are formats (or samples) for various reports, documents, and instruments. Whenever the reference “See Section 120.00” appears preceding a format, this indicates that the following format is both the accepted format and the only format that will be accepted for review and clearance by ITD Headquarters and the Idaho FHWA office.

There are other formats developed by other states, by consultants, and by other agencies and organizations that may work just as well in transmitting the information. However, they will not be accepted by ITD. This strict requirement is being adopted for a number of reasons. First, with the increase in the number of reports and forms that are required for a project clearance, adhering to a strict format allows reviewers to develop a quick and efficient process for review. Second, the authors of the report/document/form will have no question as to the required content of the report/document/form. This should lead to less chance of missing critical information needed to ensure better decisions.

As the indicated formats are used, if a legitimate reason for altering a format should arise, contact the ITD Headquarters Environmental Section to discuss a one time permission to alter the format. If a format needs a general change, make the suggestion to HQ. If accepted, the change will be made in the next manual update, and each district and manual subscriber will be notified of the change.

SECTION 130.00 - ORGANIZATION OF MANUAL

130.01 Overview. The manual is organized to reflect the flow of a transportation project through the major phases of development. The level of environmental review required for the early phases generally parallels the level of detail known about the project. In general, the level of information about a project increases from the planning phase, through the programming and project definition phase, to the project development phase. The bulk of the environmental review occurs in the final project development phase, because this is when the details of the project are being determined and when the impacts to the environment can best be evaluated. Environmental requirements and best management practices also must be followed during construction, maintenance, and surplus real property disposal.

Many of the environmental information needs during project development are driven by regulatory requirements to obtain a particular permit. In addition to these permit requirements, the project must also comply with the procedural and substantive requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other state and Federal statutes and regulations.

130.02 NEPA Umbrella Document. The environmental procedure outline and systematic approach requirements in the project development phase are categorized according to the NEPA regulations. These are often referred to as the elements of the environment or discipline areas. These areas include earth, air, water, plants and animals, land use, and other elements of the environment.

The intent of this manual is to identify the environmental requirements and point the user in the right direction—often to the resources available through resource agencies and the Internet. The manual does not attempt to duplicate these resources. The manual includes

the most recent versions of key documents along with hot links to documents available on the Internet. These documents are often attached as exhibits at the end of each section.

Between this manual and the Internet sources, users should have access to all environmental requirements. However, given the complexity of environmental regulations, which are constantly in flux, and the variability of ITD projects, no manual can offer complete step-by-step guidance applicable in all situations. Users will need to develop their own experience in exploring and applying the guidance found in this manual and in other resources to ensure that all applicable environmental requirements have been met.

130.03 Emphasis on Highways. While the manual covers all transportation facilities owned or operated by ITD, the level of detail for highway projects is greater for several reasons. First, highway projects are the most common type of facility constructed by ITD. As a consequence, the regulatory agencies have had more experience with highway projects and have developed more detailed environmental procedures. Second, highway projects typically have a larger “footprint” on the land and thereby generate more environmental impacts. Finally, the funding for highway projects is the largest of ITD’s transportation facilities and provides the most funding for environmental impact mitigation. This funding often assists in the development of new procedures for resolving highway related environmental impacts.

130.04 References. For easy reference, each chapter includes compilations of information referred to in the individual sections. For complete references and details, see the individual section. References include:

- Abbreviations and acronyms
- Glossary
- Web site reference guide
- Key state and federal legislation and regulations
- Memoranda of Understanding and other interagency agreements
- State and federal environmental permits
- Agency contacts and map of ITD regions