

# Memorandum

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Subject: **ACTION:** National Highway Specifications Website

March 22, 2004

From: **/Original Signed By/**  
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Director, Office of Asset Management

In Reply Refer To:  
HIAM-20

To: Division Administrators  
Federal Lands Highway Division Engineers

In August 2003, the FHWA, in partnership with the AASHTO, released the National Highway Specification Website (NHSW). The purpose of the NHSW is to better serve the highway construction community's need for national access to the latest approved construction specifications and related information.

The NHSW serves as a clearinghouse and electronic library where users can search, review, cross-reference, and download the most current specifications and other specification-related documents. The NHSW also provides web-based discussion forums for specification-related topics in areas such as performance related specifications, design-build, warranty specifications, quality assurance, and other innovative special provisions. This public website is housed and maintained by the FHWA, and can be accessed at: [www.specs.fhwa.dot.gov](http://www.specs.fhwa.dot.gov).

The NHSW consists of web pages managing an electronic library of currently approved standard highway construction specifications and supplemental specifications from each State department of transportation (DOT) and the Federal Lands Highway division offices. The NHSW also contains the AASHTO *Guide Specifications for Highway Construction* and provides access to summaries of the American Society of Testing and Materials standards. The NHSW specification library is fully searchable and the individual specifications can be readily downloaded.

Clear, concise specifications are an essential ingredient in achieving high quality construction products. As such, there is a need for State DOT's to consistently update their standard specifications and supplements as needed to refine contract requirements and to account for new and improved equipment or test procedures. The NHSW provides the State DOT's with a valuable tool for updating their specifications by providing them with a national library of the latest approved specifications available. Working with the AASHTO Highway Subcommittee on

Construction, the State DOT's have agreed to submit their approved specifications electronically, using the NHSW administrative features. The NHSW system is designed to allow authorized State DOT personnel to upload, alter, or delete their agency's specifications as needed to maintain an up-to-date library of the latest specifications available for their State.

While the NHSW system allows State DOT personnel to update their own approved specifications, the FHWA divisions play a critical role in maintaining the integrity of the system and in providing access to the system. The division responsibilities are summarized below:

### ***NHSW Access***

The NHSW system allows designated State DOT personnel to become agency-level users, with access rights to upload, revise, or replace their agency's specifications located on the NHSW. However, since the NHSW is an FHWA information system, State DOT representatives must be registered in the FHWA's User Profile and Access Control System (UPACS) and must be granted a UPACS ID and access rights to the NHSW system. This process of registering and gaining access to the NHSW by a State DOT user requires approval by the UPACS Administrator within each FHWA division office, and a division sponsor. The complete process for obtaining access rights is outlined in the attached document "Accessing FHWA Information Systems." Once granted, the user's access rights will allow full access to the administrative functions of the NHSW.

### ***Specification Review and Approval***

At the time of its release in 2003, the NHSW contained the latest approved specifications available for each State DOT and the FHWA Federal Lands Highway offices. This information will soon become outdated, however, as the States continue to refine and update their specifications. To ensure that the NHSW contains the latest specifications available, it is essential that the submission of new specifications to the NHSW library be linked with the division's process for reviewing and approving State specifications. The NHSW specifications library is intended to provide only standard specifications and supplemental specifications that have been approved for use on a statewide basis by the FHWA. It does not contain special provisions that are used for individual projects.

The FHWA divisions have been delegated authority for reviewing and approving the States' construction specifications. These delegations are outlined in the FHWA Delegations Manual, Chapter 5, and as allowed by 23 CFR 1.37. Effective as of this date, the divisions should ensure that final approved specifications are submitted to the NHSW as part of their overall process of reviewing and approving the States' specifications.

The attached "Submission Standards" provides guidance for State DOT users to submit their agency's specifications to the NHSW. This document also outlines general roles and responsibilities for the State DOT users as well as the division representatives for the review and approval of specifications. Several States have already successfully updated their specifications using this process.

To facilitate the registration and submission process, we are requesting that each division designate a division staff contact and a State counterpart to be responsible for specification development, review, and approval. Please provide this information to Mr. Ken Jacoby of the Office of Asset Management at [Ken.Jacoby@fhwa.dot.gov](mailto:Ken.Jacoby@fhwa.dot.gov). If you have questions concerning the NHSW, please contact Mr. Jacoby at 202-366-6503.

2 Attachments