

QAQC Documents

Dear _____ Conservation District,

Thank you for participating in a Dirt and Gravel Roads Program Quality Assurance / Quality Control (QAQC) visit. The QAQC team will be visiting your District on _____ and _____, _____. The purpose of the visit will be to insure the Dirt and Gravel Road Program is being administered properly and to work jointly to improve the Program at both the local and State level. Please review the enclosed information and agenda.

We are requesting that your District complete some preliminary actions prior to the team's visit. This will allow the team to review some basic information beforehand so they can make better use of the limited time during the QAQC visit. Please make sure to review **Attachment A** for a list of these requested actions.

Please find the following documents attached for further details:

- **Attachment A: Pre-Visit Checklist for the District**
- **Attachment B: QAQC Visit Agenda** (schedule of what to expect for visit)
- **Attachment C: Expectations** (what the QAQC team be looking at)

Thank you, sincerely,

Roy Richardson,
SCC Dirt and Gravel Road Program Coordinator

How has the process changed since the first round of QAQC visits? We are trying to:

- *get a few more things reviewed before the visit to spend time more effectively;*
- *spend more time in the field, potentially even visiting a "potential" site;*
- *emphasize an interactive visit and learning experience over evaluations and scores;*
- *give the District a better understanding of what the visit will entail;*
- *share more strategies between Districts and focus on improvement at the District and State level.*

Attachment A: Pre-Visit Checklist for the District

Please complete these tasks at least two weeks before your visit:

- Schedule Interviews:** Contact the people listed below and request that they come in to the District Office for a 20 minute interview between 8:30 and 10am on Day 1 of the QAQC visit. Try to stagger the interviews a little so not everyone shows up at the same time. If they will be unavailable, please provide contact information so they can be interviewed over the phone before the visit.
 - All QAB Members
 - ANY District Staff involved in the Program

- Make copies of the following three project files and submit them:** (including receipts)
 - Site _____, _____ Road, _____ twp
 - Site _____, _____ Road, _____ twp
 - Site _____, _____ Road, _____ twp

- Make copies of the following material, if available, and submit them:**
 - List of QAB members names, affiliations, and role on QAB
 - QAB policies:
 - Project ranking criteria sheet
 - Equal access criteria
 - Environmental standards for products and practices
 - QAB rules of conduct
 - Any other adopted policies
 - Minutes from your last three QAB meetings.
 - Minutes from your last Board Meeting where Dirt and Gravel issues were acted on (approving projects for funding, etc).

- Have the person responsible for administering the Dirt and Gravel Road Program in your county review:**
 - The District's previous QAQC report.
 - The three projects listed above. Whether they were involved with the projects or not, we will be able to have a better discussion if they refresh or familiarize themselves with these projects prior to the visit. If current staff was not involved in the requested projects, consider having them visit the sites before the QAQC team arrives.

Submit all preliminary information to:

Steve Bloser
Penn State University
216 Transportation Research Building
University Park, PA, 16802

Attachment B: QAQC Visit Agenda (schedule of what to expect for visit)

PRE-VISIT

- Please submit the items in Attachment A at least **two weeks** before your visit.
 - **Your DEP “Field Rep” will be contacting you at some point prior to your visit.** In order to better prepare and spend time more efficiently during the visit, the Field Rep will be completing the “Administrative Checklist” at some point prior to the actual visit.
 - The QAQC team will interview townships in your County prior to the visit.
 - The QAQC team may arrive in the area the afternoon before your visit to review and discuss preliminary material. You may be contacted if they have questions.
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DAY 1 *Full day (8:30-4) scheduled for interviews, file review, and site visits.*

8-8:30am **Arrival, introductions, and review of agenda** (*at District office*)

8:30 – 10am **Interviews of manager, staff and QAB members** (*at District office*)

- **District should arrange interview times for staff and QAB members, ^{District}staggering times as much as possible.** ← Task
- Individual interviews will take approximately 20 minutes.
- Any questions that arose during the administrative or project file review will be addressed as well.

10am **Visit to field sites**

- At a minimum, the person responsible for administering the D&G Program for the District must accompany the group. The District Manager is also encouraged to attend. Anyone else at the District, including the District Board and QAB, is also invited.
- We will plan to have lunch as a group at a restaurant between sites.
- Ideally, we will visit at least two of the three sites that were submitted.
- We may visit additional sites as time and travel allows.
- We may visit a current contract or application site that has not been completed as time and travel allows. (opportunity for District to get input or help on an upcoming project)

4pm We will try to be back at the District before 4pm.

Evening QAQC group will work without District to prepare preliminary report.

DAY 2 *Exit Interview – wrapped up by noon*

~8-10am QAQC group will work without District to complete preliminary report. We may contact the District with questions, or arrive early to make copies of the report.

10am **Exit interview and review of preliminary report**

- District manager and the person responsible for administering the D&G Program must be present. Anyone else at the District, including the District Board and QAB, is also encouraged to attend.

**Day 2 schedule is flexible. In some cases, the exit interview may be scheduled earlier or later as needed. These plans can be finalized at the end of Day 1. The QAQC team will also stay as long as necessary day two to address anyone’s questions and concerns.*

Attachment C: Expectations (1of3)

This document is meant to give you a thorough picture of the kinds of things that the QAQC team will be looking at. Some of these issues, especially in administration, are “black and white” items required by the law or Statement of Policy. Other items are meant to gauge how the Program is being run. The QAQC process is divided into three areas: Administration, Functionality, and Projects.

Administration

1. Quality Assurance Board (QAB)

- a. Is QAB complete and do members attend? (§83.607.e)
- b. Adopted policies – *these policies should have been adopted long ago. They are required by various section of the SCC Statement of Policy.*
 - i. DGRP equal access criteria (§83.607.f)
 - ii. Written criteria for ranking projects (§83.608.b(3), §83.608.c)
 - iii. Environmental standards for products and practices (§83.608.b(6))
 - iv. QAB rules of conduct (§83.608.d(3))
- c. QAB Minutes (required) or past meeting dates. (§83.608.d.(2)) (§83.608.d.(1)) *Minutes of QAB meetings (at least date, attendance, and recommendations) are required by the Law & Statement of Policy. (Yes, QAB meetings are public.)*

2. District Accounting

- a. Is there evidence of proper financial & accounting practices?
 - i. Are D&G funds separate accounting? (§83.607.k)
 - ii. Are D&G funds kept in an insured account? (§83.607.k)
 - iii. Is interest used only for D&G projects (§83.607.k) *Interest can ONLY be used for projects, even interest from admin/edu accounts.*
 - iv. Is Administrative spending kept within the 10% limit? (§83.608.b.4.ii) What was it spent on? (§83.607.k) Contract, General Conditions II.H)
 - v. Education spending kept within the 5% limit? What was it spent on? (§83.608.b.4.i, Contract, General Conditions II.I)
- b. Have they encumbered to a contract and/or spent D&G funds within 2 years? (Contract, General Conditions II.J)

3. District Administration

- a. Does the District board regularly act on adopting the policies and project recommendations of the QAB? (§83.607.d) *QAB is an advisory group only. The District Board must approve all policies and project funding.*
- b. Schedule of payments - *Policy allows for up to 50% advance and requires at least 30% be withheld until project closeout.*
 - i. Do they advance funds to municipalities? (§83.611.b)
 - ii. Did they keep advances 50% or less? (§83.614.c(1))
 - iii. Did they hold at least 30% of the grant amount until project completion and final certification? (§83.614.c(3))
- c. How does the District handle D&G cost over-runs? *Overruns of up to 10% of the original grant can be handled through a signed amendment form. Cost changes of over 10% require a new contract to be written.*
- d. Are the District's GIS and hard-copy files current? *Hard copy files should include signed contract, application, attachments, receipts, and signed performance report that are consistent with each other. GIS records should reflect these same figures.*

Functionality

Far from the “black and white” administrative aspects of the Program, the Functionality part of the process looks at how the Program is being run and the involvement of the people within the County. The major tool for assessing functionality is the interviews with District Staff, QAB members, and participating townships. Obviously, the amount of funding a District receives will have a bearing on the number of projects completed and the District’s level of involvement. Below are some general areas the group will be looking at:

- **What is the townships’ knowledge of the D&G Program?** Are townships that have not completed projects getting the word about the Program. Are townships with completed projects satisfied with the District and the Program?
- **How involved is the District in planning projects?** This ranges from Districts who co-design projects with applicants, to Districts who meet on site to suggest application improvements, to Districts who simply “rubber stamp” applications with a yes/no as they come in.
- **How are projects ranked for funding?** Does QAB visit application sites? Does someone from District visit sites in the field and report back to QAB? Are decisions made from applications without site visits? Are QAB recommendations acted on by the District Board?
- **How involved is the District in project implementation and oversight?** How often is the District on site when work is being done? How accessible is the District during project work? Is the District notified before a project begins?
- **What is the final inspection procedure?** Ideally, the District and Township will do a final walkthrough of a completed site together. This allows the Project Performance Report to be completed on site and signed by both parties, effectively closing out the project. Some Districts also involve the QAB in “after” site visits.
- **What is the relationship between the District Board, the QAB, and District Staff?** In a program emphasizing “local control” among 64 different Districts, a great deal of variability can be expected. The major goal here will be to find out how the process is currently working in your District, and to make suggestion to improve the process where needed.

Projects

In the end, the most important question to answer may be: “Is the Program making strides to reduce sediment pollution and improve the way Municipalities maintain their unpaved roads?” Some considerations:

Project Effectiveness

- **Have ESM principles of “drainage disconnection” been used?** There should be a lower volume of water, and less sediment, reaching the stream as a result of the project.
- **How effective are the practices that were used?** Were the practices used appropriate to the situation and installed properly? For example: There may be a pipe installed, but: does it have a headwall? Is it at an appropriate angle, location, or depth? Are there enough pipes installed? Etc.
- **What ESM practices would have made the project better? How far beyond “DSA and pipes” did the District go?** Applying DSA and installing pipes can be an effective project. DSA reduces surface erosion while adding pipes divides road drainage. But many times we have seen projects stop at “DSA and pipes” where other practices would have been beneficial. Are other more “innovative” practices being used where appropriate such as underdrains, French mattresses, gradebreaks, shallow pipes, vegetation management, road fill, berm removal, etc.

Project Logistics

- **Does what is in the field match the application, contract, performance report, receipts, and GIS data (both location and deliverables)?**
- **Was the project an effective use of D&G money?** How cost-effective was the project? Were project expenditures within normal ranges?
- **Were the sites impacting water quality in the first place?** Was there a stream/wetland impact from the site?

Other Project Considerations

- **What project strategies is the District using? Which may be helpful to consider?** These could include general project funding philosophies such as: not funding DSA, required use of DSA on all projects, use of dust suppressants, phasing projects to complete drainage before DSA, many small projects vs. few large projects, etc.
- **Is the Program having an effect on the way Townships maintain their roads outside of funded projects?**
- **How effectively are previously funded projects being maintained?**