



STATE OF DELAWARE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
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MEMORANDUM

TO: All of Transportation Solutions
All of Maintenance & Operations
All of Planning
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FROM: Mark Luszcz, Director & Chief Engineer, Transportation Solutions *ML*
Pam Steinebach, Director, Maintenance & Operations *PJS*
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DATE: January 9, 2026

SUBJECT: Revised Inspection Framework – January 2026

Attached is the Revised Inspection Framework for the inspection and acceptance of projects into the Department's maintenance responsibility. This update to this framework replaces the previous *Revised Framework Memorandum* that was issued in January 2022. Upon evaluating the framework from the January 2022 revision to present, several changes were made to better clarify and capture Department procedures.

This revision has defined the purpose of the Inspection Framework and elaborated on the intent, participating parties, and timing and responsibilities of each of the steps in the inspection and acceptance process. The purpose of the Inspection Framework is to **ensure the project quality through conducting a joint inspection with all relevant stakeholders to confirm the project was constructed in reasonable conformance with the contract documents, Standard Specifications, Special Provisions, and Standard Details.**

There are changes to the framework regarding the nomenclature of the inspections. **The Initial Inspection has become the Primary Inspection. This is an inspection after substantial completion that consists of multiple parties working together to create one punch list for the Contractor. The former Primary Inspection has become the Acceptance Inspection which will be between the Administering Construction Section, Contractor, and the Accepting Section confirming that the Primary punch list items have been addressed.**

We expect continued cooperation and participation in the implementation of this Revised Inspection Framework. Implementation will be effective February 1, 2026.

Any questions or concerns should be directed to John Caruano, Chief of Environmental & Administrative Support.

JC:hb

Revised Inspection Framework

January 2026

Purpose of the Inspection Framework: Ensure the project quality through conducting a joint inspection with all relevant stakeholders to confirm the project was constructed in reasonable conformance with the contract documents, Standard Specifications, Special Provisions, and Standard Details. Other inspections, safety walk-throughs, confirmatory testing, as-builts are separate from this process.

I. Primary Inspection

- *Intent*
 - i. The Primary Inspection will involve a review of all contract work completed according to the Plans (including revisions, redlines, and change orders), Standard Specifications, Special Provisions, and Standard Construction Details. The inspection is confirmation of the work completed per the contract documents.
 - ii. The joint inspection attendees representing multiple entities in the Department will allow for assessment of work with regard to various specialty areas. The inspection is confirmation of the work completed per the contract documents in a manner to ensure that the constructed assets will not result in foreseeable future maintenance challenges beyond normal maintenance activities.
 - iii. Items that deviate from a Manual(s) or a Design Standard(s) may have been selected based on engineering judgement during the design process and should not be identified on the Primary Inspection. Items that may deviate from a manual or standard should be discussed with design and/or appropriate support groups via other avenues outside of the contract. Design should document deviations through design exception or design deviation forms in advance of construction.
- *Exemption*
 - i. Public Works administered commercial entrance projects with total project construction costs of less than \$500,000 may self-conduct Primary Inspection.
 - 1. ADA Inspections are required on all projects, regardless of project cost, that affect, alter, or construct pedestrian facilities and must be requested through Engineering Support. ADA deficiencies will be identified in the ADA Compliance Inspection Application (ACIA), and the resolutions or corrections will need to be documented in ACIA by Public Works section representative.
 - 2. Public Works projects which install or modify guardrail, and bridges/structures, regardless of project costs, must request Primary Inspection through Engineering Support.
 - 3. Public Works will include the project costs, including bond amount, on preconstruction meeting minutes and include Engineering Support on the distribution of meeting minutes for all projects. This will allow for consistency and understanding as to which projects may be inspected by Public Works and Engineering Support as well as ensuring that ADA Inspections are requested.

- *Participating Parties*
 - i. The Primary Inspection includes the following attending sections:
 1. Administering Section, including field personnel directly involved on the project
 2. Contractor
 3. Maintenance & Operations (M&O)
 4. Municipality, state agency, or other owner/party accepting maintenance responsibility.
 5. Designer(s), including the designer most closely involved in the design of the project.
 6. Engineering Support – Project Compliance
 7. Other support sections as applicable for project
 - a. Traffic – Traffic System Design; Traffic Field Operations Signal/ITS Construction
 - b. Environmental Stewardship Office (ESO)
 - c. Water Resources – Erosion & Sediment (E&S)
 - d. Maintenance Statewide Support Services
 - i. National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)
 - ii. Roadside Environmental
 - e. Bridge Management
 - f. Others
- *Timing and Responsibilities*
 - i. Administering Section, including consultant inspection staff, are responsible for ensuring that work is completed in accordance with contract documents. Administering Section should work with design and support sections as early as possible to identify and correct any items that may lead to future inspection concerns prior to substantial completion.
 - ii. Contractor completes work in accordance with contract documents and notifies the Administering Section of Substantial Completion in accordance with Section 101.3 of the Standard Specifications.
 - iii. Substantial Completion of a project will be granted once the Administering Section performs an evaluation of the project to determine whether it has reached substantial completion and is ready for the Primary Inspection.
 - iv. ADA Inspection (dependent upon project scope) should be performed once all the required ADA facilities are completed, and final paving placed.
 1. The ADA Inspection can occur prior to final striping and should be completed prior to the Primary Inspection so all deficient items can be added to the Primary Inspection punch list.
 2. Engineering Support (ES) will obtain and input the accessibility measurements of the PAR features in the ADA Compliance Inspection Application (ACIA) and generate a report for discussion at the Primary Inspection and inclusion on the Primary punch list.
 - v. The date and time of the Primary Inspection is to be coordinated and confirmed by Engineering Support prior to scheduling by the Administering Section. The Administering Section should distribute plans and any maintenance agreements with the invitation to the Primary Inspection. All other parties participating in the Primary Inspection should make it a priority to attend on the scheduled date or send a representative if necessary.

- vi. The Primary Inspection date should occur within thirty (30) calendar days of initial coordination with ES.
- vii. The Administering Section will lead the inspection in accordance with the “Intent of the Primary Inspection” and will generate the draft punch list based upon input from the Primary Inspection attendees.
- viii. Others not attending the Primary Inspection will need to submit punch list items **prior** to the Primary Inspection meeting date and time for discussion with the Primary Inspection attendees and inclusion on the Primary Inspection punch List.
- ix. When a project involves work on a new or existing bridge or structure (sign structure, retaining wall, dam), Bridge Management should be notified at least twenty-one days in advance of the Primary Inspection to provide sufficient time for their review. The punch list created by Bridge Management shall be included in the Primary Inspection punch list.
- x. When a project involves the alteration or creation of a stormwater facility, NPDES should be notified at least twenty-one days in advance of the Primary Inspection to provide sufficient time for their review. The punch list created by NPDES shall be included in the Primary Inspection punch list.
- xi. The Primary Inspection punch list will consist of the following:
 1. A location and description of the required work that needs to be performed.
 2. The entity financially responsible for the corrective work (Contractor, DelDOT, utility, or others).
 3. If there is a disagreement as to who is financially responsible for the punch list item(s), the Contractor shall follow Section 100 of the Standard Specifications regarding disputes.
 4. Only items discussed at the Primary Inspection or items submitted prior to the Primary Inspection will be added to the list. The items for inclusion on the punch list should be reviewed with the attending parties at the end of the Primary Inspection. Any disagreement with items for inclusion on the Primary Inspection punch list should be discussed prior to adjourning the Primary Inspection. The Administering Section will have the final determination on which items will be included in the Primary Inspection punch list that is sent to the contractor.
 5. The Administering Section will update the ACIA portal for projects that had ADA Inspection deficiencies which have been addressed by the Contractor. The update to the ACIA portal will include updated measurements, photos, and other documentation as necessary to demonstrate corrective actions on the non-compliant PAR features by the project inspector and Area Engineer. The Administering Section will have the final determination of satisfactory completion through the issuance of a compliant ADA Report by the Group Engineer/Public Works Engineer or by the issuance of an ADA Acceptance Memorandum by the Administering Section Assistant Director stating the technical infeasibility. This documentation must accompany the request for project acceptance.
 6. The Inspection Report or project files generated by Engineering Support will be utilized for Departmental documentation, education, and best practices development. Engineering Support will retain documentation to assist the Department with training opportunities and potential modifications to practices, guidance documents, and standard contract documents (Specifications and Details).

xii. Primary Inspection Timeframe:

1. The Administering Section will prepare a draft Primary Inspection punch list and distribute it for review by inspection attendees, except for the Contractor, within seven (7) calendar days from the date of the Primary Inspection and prior to sending it to the Contractor.
2. The Primary Inspection punch list will be sent to the Contractor within fourteen (14) calendar days from the date of the Primary Inspection.
3. The punch list will indicate that the contractor will have thirty (30) calendar days to resolve all punch list items prior to restarting contract time charges. If the Primary Inspection punch list is significant due to the size or complexity of a project, the administering section can negotiate a longer duration with the Contractor. Administering Section will annotate the Primary Inspection punch list with initials and date of completion.

II. Acceptance Inspection

- *Intent*
 - i. The Acceptance Inspection is to validate the Primary punch list items that have been satisfactorily completed, and that as-constructed assets are in a condition to be accepted into the Department's maintenance responsibility.
- *Participating Parties*
 - ii. Administering Section
 - ii. Contractor
 - iii. Maintenance and Operations
 - iv. Municipality, state agency, or other owner/party accepting maintenance responsibility.
- *Timing and Responsibilities*
 - i. Contractor to request Acceptance Inspection upon completion of Primary punch list items. Prior to Acceptance Inspection scheduling, Administering Section shall confirm and annotate the Primary Inspection punch list, and ensure ADA Inspection deficiencies have been addressed and documented in ACIA as satisfactorily completed. The Acceptance Inspection should be scheduled within thirty (30) calendar days of notification to DelDOT Maintenance in the form of a completed annotated Primary Inspection punch list. The date and time of the Acceptance Inspection is to be coordinated and confirmed by the Administering Section with concurrence from the participating parties. All parties participating in the Acceptance Inspection should make it a priority to attend on the scheduled date or send a representative if necessary. Administering Section should distribute the annotated Primary punch list to Acceptance Inspection attendees when scheduling.
 - ii. The Administering Section will lead the inspection and create a punch list noting any deficiencies not satisfactorily addressed from the Primary Inspection punch list as identified by the Acceptance Inspection attendees.
 - iii. A discussion on maintenance responsibility for projects involving another accepting entity should occur to clearly define project components within DelDOT and other entity's ownership. Administering Section should request confirmation in writing from other accepting entity after the Acceptance Inspection. Administering Section should coordinate with DelDOT Team Support if revisions are necessary to the executed town or maintenance agreement.

- iv. The punch list will be generated and sent to the Contractor and invitees within seven (7) calendar days of the Acceptance Inspection. If all items from Primary Inspection have been sufficiently addressed, Administering Section will generate a letter indicating all items have been completed to the Department's satisfaction.
- v. Contractor to remediate punch list items from Acceptance Inspection within fifteen (15) calendar days or within a time negotiated to be completed.
- vi. Items noted on the punch list that are to be completed by other internal Department sections will be coordinated for completion by the Administering Section, but will not prevent acceptance of the Contractor's work.
- vii. The Administering Section will verify remediation work and is responsible for providing a list with dates that remedial activities were resolved to the Maintenance District when requesting Project Acceptance.

III. Project Acceptance

- *Intent*
 - i. Project Acceptance is the Department's notification to the Contractor that time charges will cease, and construction activities are completed releasing the contractor from liability and repairs or maintenance to the completed work. The project and any maintenance or repairs will be the responsibility of the representative Maintenance District or other accepting entities (municipalities, state agencies, etc.).
- *Participating Parties*
 - ii. Administering Section
 - ii. Contractor
 - iii. Maintenance and Operations
 - iv. Municipality, state agency, or other owner/party accepting maintenance responsibility.
- *Timing and Responsibilities*
 - i. The Administering Section notifies the District Engineer and Maintenance Engineer (or Division equivalent) and if applicable other accepting entities via email that Acceptance Inspection punch list items have been addressed.
 1. This notification will include an annotated Acceptance Inspection punch list, including a compliant ADA Report or ADA Acceptance Memorandum, based upon follow up review and discussions from the Acceptance Inspection. The Administering Section will be responsible to provide the punch list and dates of when remedial activities were resolved that will accompany the request to the Maintenance District and/or other accepting entities.
 2. Partial acceptance of specific features (e.g. guardrail) may occur after the Primary Inspection and satisfactory completion of work through agreement between the Administering Section and the Maintenance District. Documentation should include a request for acceptance outlining the specific items to be transferred from the Contractor's responsibility to Maintenance.
 3. The Maintenance District and/or other accepting entities will verify Acceptance Inspection punch list items have been addressed within thirty (30) calendar days of notice from the Administering Section.

- ii. All release documents are to be submitted in accordance with Section 100 of the Standard Specifications.
- iii. Project Acceptance is the date of signature of the Maintenance Division Director and/or other accepting entities.
- iv. The project closeout process begins once Project Acceptance is complete.