

April 26, 2002

420-02-13

Subgrade Stabilization  
Standard Special Provisions

**DISTRICT ENGINEER/DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR**

Michael M. Ryan, P.E., Deputy Secretary  
Highway Administration

/s/ Gary L. Hoffman, P.E.

Attached are Guidelines for use of the following Standard Special Provisions:

<b>Document Title</b>	<b>Special Provision No.</b>	<b>Item Numbers</b>
"SECTION 210"	S00 (ID02033A)	9203-0400 (E) 9203-2400 (M)
"SECTION 203"	S00 (SD02031A)	N/A

To address concerns expressed by both the contracting Industry and Department personnel on the issue of subgrade stabilization, the APC / PennDOT Risk Allocation Committee has developed specifications for evaluating the stability of existing subgrade (i.e. subgrade constructed prior to the current contract) in order to determine when corrective action should be taken. These same specifications also establish an objective means of addressing the issue of payment when existing subgrade is found to be unstable.

Committee members representing both sides of the issue have acknowledged that the unbalanced risk inherent in the existing subgrade specification (Publication 408, Section 210) often becomes an obstacle that prevents project managers from selecting the best, long-term solution over the option that represents the lowest cost alternative at the time. This is primarily due to the fact that the Specifications place responsibility for stabilizing existing subgrade entirely on the Contractor, while considering such work to be incidental to the immediate overlying pavement structure. As a result, contractors, knowing that there will be no separate compensation for the work, are understandably only willing to put forth a limited amount of effort toward achieving a stable subgrade. Additionally, Department personnel, who must be concerned with project cost overruns, are unwilling to authorize contractors to perform the undercutting and backfilling of substantial areas of unstable subgrade as extra work.

The subject special provisions attempt to eliminate these conflicting viewpoints by recognizing the existence of two, distinct contractual conditions: Constructed Subgrade (subgrade constructed under the current contract) and Existing Subgrade (subgrade constructed prior to the current contract that must be determined to be stable before planned paving operations can commence). In addition, the revisions specify how the stability of existing subgrade is to be determined and establish a new class of excavation (Class 1C Excavation) as the means of paying for the undercutting and backfilling of unstable existing subgrade.

The Standard Special Provisions have been approved by the Federal Highway Administration for use on a project-by-project basis and may be included in applicable projects in accordance with the effective date established by the Specifications Unit of the Bureau of Design, Contract Management Division.

Questions or concerns regarding these specifications should be directed to Edward Fuhrer, Bureau of Construction and Materials, Contract Management Division, at (717) 787-7034 or Nikki Krise, Bureau of Design, Contract Management Division, at (717) 783-6416.

422/EHF/er  
Attachment

a:SOL4SubgradeStabilization  
(DISK: SOL-17)

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