

ASPHALT SUPPLIER CERTIFICATION PROGRAM



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ASPHALT SUPPLIER CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

1. SCOPE

This *Asphalt Supplier Certification Program (ASCP)* specifies requirements and procedures for a certification program to ensure that quality asphalt products are produced for California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) projects and minimize the risks to project delivery. Approved supplier certification issued by Caltrans allows suppliers to supply asphalt to Caltrans projects using a Certificate of Compliance (COC).

These requirements and procedures apply to asphalt binders manufactured or modified at refineries, blended or modified at terminals, and continuous in-line blended process prior to shipment to Caltrans projects.

2. BECOMING AN APPROVED SUPPLIER

2.1. Initial Request Submittal

The supplier must submit a written request to the Department by completing form titled "Notice of Intent to Supply Asphalt Binder." The form can be obtained from the Departments of approved suppliers:

<https://mets.dot.ca.gov/aml/AsphaltBindersList.php>

The supplier must submit the completed form to the Department via email to: Caltrans.Binder.COC@dot.ca.gov.

The supplier must submit a quality control (QC) plan along with the written request to the Department for review. The QC plan must comply with the requirements listed in [Section 4](#).

2.2. Department Reviews Quality Control Plan

The Department will notify the supplier that the application for ASCP has been received. The supplier must allow the Department 7 business days to review the QC plan. The Department will request revision and resubmission if the QC plan fails to meet the minimum requirements.

Upon approval of the QC plan, the Department will notify the supplier of acceptance of the QC plan and authorization for initial QC testing.

2.3. Supplier Performs Initial Quality Control Testing

The supplier must request a [Data Interchange for Materials Engineering \(DIME\) account](#) to submit QC test results. QC testing must be performed by an AASHTO-accredited laboratory.

2.3.1. Asphalt binder

The supplier must conduct initial QC testing in accordance with Caltrans Standard Specifications, Section 92, and test results must be submitted to the Department through DIME.

For each grade of asphalt binder to be approved, the supplier must perform initial QC testing for at least three consecutive lots. A lot may be a fixed batch of material or a specified quantity in a continuous operation. Lot size depends on the production method used and the quantity of the asphalt produced.

If a batch operation is used, a tank may be defined as a lot. Lot size would be the amount of material batched into the tank. Three consecutive tanks (a minimum of 25 tons each) must be tested. If only a single tank will be used for an extended period of time, three samples may be taken for testing a minimum of 3 days apart in lieu of testing three consecutive tanks.

If a continuous process (in-line blending or a shipment from "live" tanks) is used to manufacture the asphalt product, lot size may be obtained at random during the production for continuous operations. Samples must be taken at a minimum of 1 hour between random samples.

The Department personnel may visit suppliers' facilities to witness sampling and verify QC plan compliance. The supplier must provide the Department with a sample when requested.

2.3.2. Reserved

2.4. Supplier Provides Split Sample to Department

The supplier must submit split samples of each lot collected to the Department following the sampling procedure as described in [Section 5](#).

2.5. Department Performs Verification Testing

After receiving split samples, the Department will perform verification testing in accordance with Caltrans Standard Specifications, Section 92, and will issue test reports on DIME within approximately 14 business days. The Department uses an AASHTO-accredited laboratory to perform verification testing.

Test results will be considered satisfactory if:

1. The verification test results meet the requirements in Section 92 of the Caltrans Standard Specifications
2. The difference between the supplier's test results and the Department's test results is within the limits of multi-laboratory precision requirement for the corresponding test method (if applicable)

If test results are satisfactory, approved supplier certification will be granted by the Department (see [Section 2.7](#)).

If verification test results fail to meet specification requirements or exceed acceptable multi-laboratory limits, where available, the application for certification will be rejected. The supplier must address any issues before proceeding (see [Section 2.6](#) and [Section 7](#)).

2.6. Supplier Conducts Analysis on Failing Test Results

If the verification test results on split sample fail to comply with Caltrans Standard Specifications, Section 92, the supplier must conduct a root cause analysis of the failure.

The supplier and the Department must work together to identify the cause of the unacceptable differences between the supplier's results and the Department's results.

The supplier must take corrective actions to resolve the cause of the unacceptable differences between the supplier's results and the Department's results. The corrective actions and findings must be reported to the Department via email (Caltrans.Binder.COC@dot.ca.gov).

The supplier's application for approved supplier certification will not be processed until the cause of the unacceptable test results has been identified and appropriate corrective actions have been implemented.

The supplier must resume the application process starting from [Section 2.3](#).

2.7. Department Approves Application

The Department will issue a letter to the supplier granting approved supplier certification. The supplier will be listed on the Department's website of approved suppliers:

<https://mets.dot.ca.gov/aml/AsphaltBindersList.php>

3. MAINTAINING APPROVED STATUS

3.1. Supplier Maintains Quality Control Plan

The supplier must maintain approved status of the QC plan.

The QC plan must be updated by the supplier and submitted as soon as practical or within 30 days to the Department for the following events:

1. Supplier personnel changes.
2. Facility changes (e.g., addition of new tanks).
3. Supplier laboratory changes, primary or back-up (e.g., AASHTO accreditation status of any binder test methods required by Section 92).

The supplier must report its QC plan to the Department annually by January 31, even if unchanged, via email at Caltrans.Binder.COC@dot.ca.gov.

The Department will review the QC plan submitted by the supplier and notify the supplier via email of its approved supplier certification status.

3.2. Supplier Performs Quality Control Testing

To maintain approval status of asphalt products, the supplier must conduct QC testing for specification compliance with Caltrans Standard Specifications, Section 92. QC testing results must be submitted via [DIME](#). QC testing must be performed by an AASHTO-accredited laboratory.

The supplier must allow the Department to inspect production, shipping, and laboratory facilities to observe the supplier's quality control procedures and to witness sampling for testing.

When the supplier's specification testing has identified an asphalt that fails to meet the specification requirements and has been released to Caltrans projects, the following actions must be taken:

1. The supplier must immediately cease shipment of the asphalt that is not in compliance, remove the noncompliant asphalt from the shipping queue, identify the shipment(s) containing noncompliant asphalt, and retrieve the noncompliant asphalt, if possible.
2. The supplier must immediately notify the Department and advise the Department of product and shipment status.
3. The supplier must immediately sample and re-test the asphalt for which noncompliance has been identified.
4. The supplier must take corrective action to bring the asphalt into specification compliance and to prevent occurrences in the future.
5. The supplier must provide the Department with documentation regarding the corrective action taken.

3.2.1. Asphalt binder

The supplier must perform not less than one specification compliance test per approved asphalt grade per week (or less for shorter periods of production) while the asphalt is being produced or retained for shipment to Caltrans projects.

The supplier must submit four split samples per approved asphalt grade per month, collected weekly, to the Department by the 15th of the following month for verification testing following the sampling procedure outlined in [Section 5](#). After six months from first approval status, the supplier may reduce the number of split samples to one per month upon the Department's review and approval.

It is considered as a noncompliance incident if the required number of split samples are not submitted during the month.

The supplier may reduce testing frequency for the following two tests:

1. Solubility test (AASHTO T 44) must be tested at least once every 6 months and when there is a change in formulation or crude oil source.
2. Ductility test at 25° C (AASHTO T 51) must be tested monthly and when there is a change in formulation or crude oil source.

3.2.2. Reserved

3.3. Department Performs Verification Testing

The Department uses an AASHTO-accredited laboratory to perform verification testing.

3.3.1. Asphalt binder

The Department performs verification testing to determine:

1. If the split sample provided by the supplier meets the specification requirements outlined in Section 92 for the specific grade of asphalt binder.
2. If the test results meet the multi-laboratory precision of the corresponding test methods, where available.

The Department notifies the supplier of verification test results via DIME email notifications. For noncompliant test results, one incident is defined as one or multiple failures on one split sample or if the required number of split samples are not submitted to the Department during the month.

Depending on the verification test results, the following steps must be followed:

1. For test results that meet both Standard Specification requirements and multi-laboratory precision, the supplier can continue the shipment of approved asphalt binder to Caltrans projects.
2. For any noncompliant test result, the supplier and the Department must collaborate to identify and resolve any problems. The following corrective actions must be taken:
 - 2.1. The supplier must suspend shipment of the noncompliant grade of asphalt involved to Caltrans projects.

- 2.2. Remove the noncompliant asphalt from the shipping queue, identify the shipment(s) containing noncompliant asphalt, and retrieve the noncompliant asphalt, if possible.
 - 2.3. The supplier must provide written notification to the Department detailing actions taken to resolve the problem.
 - 2.4. The supplier must re-test a new sample and must provide the Department with a split sample.
 - 2.5. The Department will verify the test results before granting approval to resume shipment.
3. If the noncompliance incidents reach three for the same asphalt binder grade in 12 months, the supplier must suspend all shipments of noncompliant asphalt binder and take the following actions:
 - 3.1. Identify the cause of the noncompliance. If the problem is determined to be a result of the supplier's production process, the Department will revoke the supplier's approved status for this noncompliant asphalt grade on the approved suppliers list for 12 months following the identification of the problem. The supplier may re-apply for approved supplier certification for this asphalt grade after the 12-month period.
 - 3.2. The supplier may request that the retained split sample be tested by a third-party laboratory for discrepancy resolution (see [Section 7](#)). The test results of the third-party laboratory will determine the outcome of compliance.

If the supplier's and the Department's test results meet the multi-laboratory precision for verification, but the Department's verification test result is out of specification and the supplier's specification compliance test result is in specification, the asphalt will be considered in specification.

3.3.2. Reserved

3.4. Department Performs Project Acceptance Testing

This section applies to project acceptance testing performed by the Department to establish additional requirements for suppliers. Project-specific test results will be reported to the Resident Engineer (RE) administering the contract.

3.4.1. Asphalt binder

The Department performs acceptance testing to ensure that the asphalt binder shipped to Caltrans projects complies with Caltrans Standard Specifications, Section 92, requirements. Acceptance testing will be performed at the discretion of the Department using tests specified for the asphalt binder being provided and at frequencies determined by the Department.

Acceptance testing will be performed on asphalt binder samples obtained downstream from the in-line blending operation at the asphalt mixture production

facility in accordance with AASHTO T 40 by producer's personnel under the supervision of Department's personnel.

If any asphalt binder sample fails to meet the specification requirements, the Department may conduct an investigation, which could include the following actions:

1. The supplier must submit records to the Department, including shipping and delivery documentation, Certificate of Compliance (COC), and corresponding QC test results records for the PG binder grade in question.
2. The Department will collect documents at the project level from the HMA producer including storage tank records of PG binder grade in question.
3. The Department will review supplier and HMA producer submitted records.
4. The Department will sample and test a new binder sample from the HMA producer.
5. The Department will draft investigation findings in a report and share the report with the supplier and the HMA producer for feedback.
6. After finalization, the investigation findings report will be shared by the Department with the supplier, HMA producer, and contractor. The RE will make the final decision for resolving the sample failure at the project level.

If the supplier is found to be responsible for noncompliant asphalt of any type or grade from a single or multiple projects after the investigation, the following actions will be taken:

1. Up to nine incidents of noncompliance in 12 months, the Department will suspend the supplier's status as an approved supplier. The supplier and the Department must work together to identify and resolve any problems that may be involved. The supplier must notify the Department in writing of the action taken to resolve the problem before the Department approves resuming its active status.
2. Ten incidents of noncompliance in 12 months, the Department will revoke the supplier's status as an approved supplier for 12 months following the identification of the problem. The supplier may apply for approved supplier certification after the 12-month period.

For project acceptance testing, one incident is defined as one investigation report per batch as defined by QC plan that concludes the asphalt supplier is at fault.

3.4.2. Reserved

3.5. Supplier's Approval Status During Production Shutdown

Approved suppliers may continue to stay on the list if they notify the Department via email at Caltrans.Binder.COC@dot.ca.gov of prior to production shutdowns and resume required testing upon restarting production. If the supplier does not provide timely notification, the lack of split sample may constitute a noncompliance.

4. SUPPLIER QUALITY CONTROL PLAN

The supplier's QC plan must include the following minimum requirements:

1. Description of the facility type (refinery, terminal, or in-line blending, etc.).
2. Brief narrative description of the facility and products including:
 - 2.1. Facility location.
 - 2.2. Loading racks, rail or barge facility.
 - 2.3. Number of tanks and a site map identifying locations of tanks and other major features.
 - 2.4. Overview of production and blending process (if applicable).
 - 2.5. Method of storage including storage temperatures, circulation and stirring requirements such as the revolutions per minute, and acceptable storage duration.
 - 2.6. Identification of material compatibility issues.
 - 2.7. Inspection procedure (inspection attributes, minimum inspection frequency, point of inspection, and inspection method).
3. Name, telephone number, and email address of each individual responsible for QC at the facility.
4. Certification from the Asphalt Institute or similar training program for the Quality Manager (QM) in the supplier's laboratory.
5. Qualifications from each technician involved in asphalt binder testing (e.g., training records maintained by the QM for each technician).
6. Frequency of production for each asphalt binder grade (e.g., regular, intermittent).
7. Email address of each individual to receive notices and communications from the Department.
8. Name, location, and a copy of the AASHTO accreditation for each primary and backup laboratory.
9. Description of tests and frequency of QC testing and specification compliance testing.
10. Description of programs or systems implemented for maintaining records of testing, loading, and shipment.
11. Outline of procedure for checking transport vehicles before loading to prevent contamination of shipments. The outline must be maintained in the supplier's records and must be made available to the Department upon request.
12. A declaration stating:

"The supplier understands that pursuant to Government Code Section 14105, that any person, firm, corporation, partnership, or association found to willfully conceal, alter, misrepresent, or distort information pertaining to the quality of materials may be barred from bidding or working on a California Department of Transportation job for a period of one to three years."

13. A statement that the supplier will notify the Department of any changes made to the QC plan.

14. A contingency plan for addressing noncompliant test results of asphalt binder shipped either to the Department for ASCP or to Caltrans projects that includes the following at a minimum:

- 14.1. Identify the product in question.
- 14.2. Cease shipment until the product complies with the specification.
- 14.3. Remove the noncompliant asphalt from the shipping queue, identify the shipment(s) containing noncompliant asphalt, and retrieve the noncompliant asphalt, if possible.
- 14.4. Take corrective action.
- 14.5. Notify the Department.
- 14.6. Work jointly with the Department to resolve problems.

If the supplier deviates from the approved QC plan, the following actions must be taken:

1. The supplier must suspend shipment of all impacted grades of asphalt involved in Caltrans projects.
2. The supplier must provide written notification to the Department detailing actions taken to resolve the problem.
3. Until the supplier's corrective actions are accepted by the Department, the supplier may continue shipment if:
 - 3.1. The supplier conducts the required QC testing for each batch or daily, at a minimum.
 - 3.2. The supplier submits a split sample to the Department.
4. The Department verifies the test results prior to incorporation in the project. The Department's cost for verification testing must be borne by the contractor of the project involved. A fee schedule is posted on the Department's website at:

<https://mets.dot.ca.gov/aml/AsphaltBindersList.php>

5. SAMPLING

Sampling locations may include the storage tank at the refinery, the holding tank at the terminal, or from the line downstream from blending operation of an in-line blending process. For consecutive tanks, split samples from each tank must be sent to the Department for verification testing.

Sampling procedures must meet the following requirements:

1. Sampling must be performed in accordance with AASHTO T 40.
2. Split samples must be obtained at the supplier's facility.
3. Split samples must be obtained from the same collection point from which binder for Caltrans projects are being shipped.
4. For each asphalt binder grade, the supplier must obtain at least three split samples from each lot: one for supplier QC testing, one for Department verification testing, and one retained by the supplier for potential discrepancy resolution.

Suppliers must ship split samples to the Department for verification. The shipping address to the Department is:

California Department of Transportation
Asphalt Binder Laboratory
5900 Folsom Blvd.
Sacramento, CA 95819

Split samples submitted to the Department must include a label with the following information:

1. Supplier's name and address
2. Type and grade of asphalt (e.g., PG 64-16, 64-10)
3. Sample source (e.g., tank number, blender, etc.)
4. Sample date and time
5. Safety data sheet
6. Sample purpose (initial testing, specification compliance testing, testing discrepancy resolution, etc.)
7. DIME identification number

Incorrectly identified materials will not be accepted.

A supplier can be certified for multiple grades of asphalt by submitting one sample, provided the container is identified as a multi-grade binder. The supplier must submit test data showing the sample was tested at the most conservative grade (e.g., test results at PG 64-16 for sample identified as PG 64-16 and 64-10). The Department will test the multi-grade binder sample for the most conservative grade.

6. REQUIREMENTS FOR SHIPPING AUTHORIZED ASPHALT BINDER TO CALTRANS PROJECTS

Each shipment of asphalt binder must be accompanied by three hard copies including a copy of COC, a copy of loading affidavit, and a copy of bill of lading.

The Certificate of Compliance must include the following information:

1. Name and location of the supplier.
2. Grade of asphalt binder.
3. The tank number, batch number (or supplier sample ID), production date, testing date, name and location of the laboratory that performed the tests.
4. A statement confirming that the transport vehicle was checked following the suppliers' routine procedure before loading and was found acceptable for the asphalt shipped.

The Certificate of Compliance must include the following wording:

“(Supplier name) hereby certifies that the asphalt product accompanying this certification was produced in accordance with the California Department of Transportation’s Asphalt Supplier Certification Program, and that this product complies in all respects with the requirements of the applicable specifications for the asphalt product identified on this document.

I hereby certify by my signature that I have the authority to represent the supplier providing the accompanying asphalt product.”

The Certificate of Compliance must be signed by a person having authority to bind the supplier. Each of the items specified above must be completed prior to signing. No certificate will be accepted that has been altered, added to, or changed after the authorized signature has been affixed. Notations of a clarifying nature, such as project number, or contractor name are acceptable, provided the requirements of the certificate are not affected.

The supplier's loading and shipping log must contain the following information:

1. Asphalt binder grade and quantity
2. Purchaser name
3. Contract or project number (if known)
4. Date and time of transportation vehicle inspection and shipment
5. Number of Bill of Lading issued
6. Supplier's shipping source (e.g., tank, blender, truck, etc.)

The supplier must provide the Department with copies of supplier's loading and shipping logs upon request.

7. RESOLUTION FOR TESTING DISCREPANCIES

This section applies solely to verification testing and does not apply to project acceptance testing.

If the supplier and the Department are unable to resolve testing discrepancies, the services of a third-party laboratory may be initiated by a request from the supplier or the Department. The third-party laboratory will conduct testing to resolve testing discrepancies that cannot be addressed through the joint efforts of the supplier and the Department. The third-party laboratory must be:

1. Mutually chosen by the Department and the supplier
2. Independent of any involvement with the supplier or Department activities
3. AASHTO accredited for all tests required to resolve the discrepancy

The Department will send the samples without the identification of the supplier for discrepancy resolution testing to the third-party laboratory.

8. ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

AASHTO-Accredited Laboratory – A laboratory that maintains an active accreditation on the AASHTO re:source website for all tests performed as a part of this program.

Approved Supplier Certification – Certification issued by Caltrans to approved asphalt suppliers which allows them to supply asphalt to Caltrans projects using a certificate of compliance.

ASCP – Asphalt Supplier Certification Program.

Asphalt binder - Products of refined crude petroleum. Asphalt binder may contain modifiers based on the requirements for the grade. This includes modified (rubber modified binder, and performance graded – polymer modified) and unmodified asphalt binder. Approval of asphalt binder for specialty asphalt must be on a case-by-case basis.

Back-up Laboratory – Testing facility designated for fulfilling testing requirements should the primary be unable.

COC – Certificate of Compliance. A certified statement from the supplier in compliance with Caltrans Standard Specifications (Section 92) and this program.

Department – California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). The Division of Engineering Services, Materials Engineering and Testing Services (METS), Office of Central Laboratory manages this program.

Department Acceptance Testing – Testing performed by the Department to ensure the asphalt product delivered to Caltrans projects meets specifications.

Discrepancy Resolution Laboratory – Testing facility chosen by the supplier and the Department to serve in the discrepancy resolution capacity should the need arise if the Department and supplier cannot resolve their difference.

Initial Testing – Testing performed by the supplier and submitted to the Department as part of the requirements to be qualified as an approved asphalt product supplier.

Modifying Supplier – Suppliers that utilize modifiers or blend different asphalt binder grades or sources, must provide certification.

Primary Laboratory – Supplier's main testing facility. This laboratory will coordinate the supplier's initial, quality control, and specification compliance testing.

Quality Control (QC) Testing – Testing performed by the supplier to confirm the asphalt product samples meet specification requirements. QC testing is used as a part of the acceptance decision and is verified by Department Verification testing. Quality control testing must be described in the supplier's quality control plan.

Refinery Supplier – Suppliers that process crude oil into asphalt binder and directly supplies that binder to hot mix asphalt (HMA) plants.

Specification Compliance Testing – Testing performed by both the supplier and the Department to ensure Standard Specifications requirements for the applicable asphalt product are met.

Supplier – A supplier is a refinery, terminal, in-line blender where final production or modification of the asphalt takes place.

Verification Testing – Testing performed on split samples used to verify both asphalt product quality and the accuracy of the supplier's testing program.

9. REFERENCED DOCUMENTS

AASHTO T 40 – Sampling Bituminous Materials

AASHTO T 44 – Solubility of Bituminous Materials

AASHTO T 55 – Water in Petroleum Products and Bituminous Materials by Distillation

California Test 125 – Sampling Highway Materials and Products Used in the Roadway Structural Sections

Caltrans Standard Specifications, Section 92