



CALIFORNIA COUNCIL OF TESTING AND INSPECTION AGENCIES

Discussion Items - October 29, 2009 Meeting with DSA

Why would DSA choose January 1, 2010 as a deadline for the compliance by inspectors, technicians, and laboratory personnel with mandated forms when most of the office and field personnel are all out on much deserved one-week vacation? Could the deadline be either January 15th or February 1st?

January 1, 2010 was selected as a target date to publish the standardized test and inspection forms. When forms are published all participating labs will be notified by email. Expect a soft implementation period of about 90 days.

Title 24 requires VR's to be submitted "from time to time", "as required" or "as requested. The note at the top of the DSA-291 and DSA-292 specifies "within 14 days". The parties signing these forms may be inadvertently indicating compliance with this note, which is generally not true. Can this note be removed? The reasons and criteria for issuing VR's is already spelled out in the Code.

Verified reports are required by code to be submitted at the completion of the testing/inspection program. Or when requested by DSA, work suspended, or services terminated. Reports must be submitted within 14 days of the completion of the phase of work to which they apply.

When coring a grouted masonry wall according to 2105A.4 CBC, do you continue coring until you have the specified number of testable specimens?

No, you would only cut the number of cores specified by code or approved construction documents. Additional cores may only be taken at the direction of the design professional in responsible charge.

In the question above, are untestable specimens considered to have failed?

Yes, if the core specimen bond failed during the cutting operation it would be reported as a failed specimen.

When the code says "Visual examination of all cores shall be made to ascertain if the joints are filled", are we to core directly over the bed joint, increasing the chance of losing the face shell, or does the code mean "ascertain if the cells are filled"?

No, all cores shall be taken in the center of grouted cells, and be free of any joints or reinforcing. The code intent is that all cores are visually examined and the conditions reported.



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What are the retest procedures for a masonry core sample where the face shell detaches during coring? Select another location to core? How many cores are needed for a retest? Who selects the location? It is rarely the Architect of Engineer of Record as specified, but more typically the Project inspector.

All changes to the testing or inspection program must come from the design professional in responsible charge, subject to approval by the DSA field engineer. If additional sampling is required, the inspector may (per code) select locations as a representative of the design professional.

The masonry core shear test method is a single shear test performed individually on each of the two grout/block faces of a single core. Does each face have to be tested? Does each face have to meet the minimum shear strength? What about averaging the two tests for one core? This would allow acceptance when one of the shear tests was below minimum.

Each face of the core must be tested and reported separately. Each face must meet shear requirements and test results are not to be averaged. Any acceptance by averaging results would be by the design professional, with concurrence by DSA.

Masonry strength compliance procedures indicate that mortar and grout tests are still required even when prism testing is specified. Is this correct?

Yes, sample and test mortar and grout per CBC 2105A.5. Verify specific requirements on DSA approved documents, consult design professional if conflicts exist. The 2010 CBC will clarify that unit strength testing is not required if prism testing is used.

We understand that changes are being considered in respect to the coring requirements for masonry structures. Will we have to wait for the 2010 CBC or will they be retroactive to current projects?

Code changes will be enforceable January 1, 2011. An IR supporting CBC 2105A.4 will be published mid 2010.

Concrete cylinders – 6"x12" vs. 4"x8": Is DSA moving toward accepting 4"x8" cylinders?

Current code references ASTM C-31 98, which does not allow 4"X8" specimens. The 2010 code may reference C-31 06, which would allow for 4'X 8"concrete specimens.



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The waiver of batch plant inspection under Section 1704A.4.4 specifies an approved inspector of the testing lab check the first batching at the start of work and furnish mix proportions to the licensed weightmaster. The lab should NOT be furnishing the mix design, but rather verifying the proportions are consistent with the APPROVED mix. The “first batching” intended to mean the first truck? Is “start of work” intended to mean every pour, every day, every mix, and every project?

An IR is currently being developed and will be vetted through the DSAAB I&T Committee.

High strength bolt sampling and testing procedures are still unclear. What is the status of some revision to clarify this issue?

Draft IR complete (hand out) expect to post prior to 1/1/2010.

How are disciplinary procedures for test labs, special inspectors and project inspectors being handled? Would you provide some examples of how the claim and hearing process works? How does DSA notify the party that disciplinary action is pending? What is the method for defending or challenging a claim? Who makes the final decision?

Framework included in code changes proposals for 2010. Supporting IR's, and procedures under development. LEA lab manual will specify processes for labs and special inspectors.

Can reports be scanned and emailed to DSA? Many school districts now seem to have the electronic files, and it seems to be quite an efficient system and much more cost effective rather than sending out the paper copies. Not only would this be cost effective, but reports can be easily retrieved and eliminates repeated requests for copies of reports.

Reports should be sent via regular mail at this time. No infrastructure available at this time. DSA working on an internet “portal”, and will implement sometime after standardized reports are available.

It is intended that the DSA Form 5 be approved by the design professional at least 10 days prior to the project start, which rarely happens. Frequently, the testing agency has not yet determined who will be covering the project as the first notification the project is beginning is much closer to the start. Is there any consideration being given to changing this process to something more workable that doesn't have the design professional accepting inspectors “after the fact”? Why not shift the acceptance of the inspectors to the approved laboratory, which they should be working for? The registered civil engineer responsible for the laboratory and the supervisor of the inspector are surely a better judge of the capabilities and qualifications of the inspectors that the design architect or structural engineer.

An alternate system for special inspector approval is in development.



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The practice of hiring the testing agency through the Project Inspector or the agency that employs the project inspector is still happening. Is there anything DSA can do to educate the school districts and stop this?

This should never occur, and should be brought to the immediate attention of the responsible DSA field engineer for resolution.

It is noted that engineers are working for more than one company on the LEA list of testing labs. Is this allowed?

No, however in certain cases an engineering manager may be approved for more than one lab location. And must demonstrate adequate supervision of both facilities. Geotechnical engineers may consult for more than one company, but would not be listed on DSA's website.

The industry is required to employ a full-time registered engineer with at least 5 years experience. Can the engineer be located in an office or laboratory facility other than the LEA facility for which he is responsible? If so, is there a limit or policy of how many offices/laboratories one engineer can oversee, or how often he must be present in that facility, etc.?

In general an engineering manager must work full time at the facility he/she is approved for. Yes, in certain cases an engineering manager may be approved for more than one lab location. Additional details will be published in the new LEA program manual 1/1/2010.

Our firm has four locations in Southern California for client convenience. Does a firm have to have a Geotechnical Engineer in each location to practice if they are able to provide supervision with a governing Corporate Geotechnical Engineer?

No, as long as the geotechnical engineer maintains adequate supervision of all soil related tests and inspections.

DSA recently revoked the original expiration dates for all masonry special inspectors and is now requiring them to recertify by examination prior to January 1, 2010. What prompted this unilateral decision with such a short timeframe?

The significant changes to the code. The requirement was published April 1, 2009. Inspectors were notified of the requirement via regular mail.