Highway Construction Materials Technician
CERTIFICATION BOARD
NEWSLETTER

April, 2007

The Law

Impetus for establishing the Oklahoma Highway Construction Materials Technician Certification Board came from Federal Mandate 23 CFR Part 637 which required all acceptance and independent assurance testing to be performed by "qualified personnel." This led to Governor Keating signing House Bill 1476 on May 26, 1999. This bill created the Oklahoma Highway Construction Materials Technician Registration Act and established the Highway Construction Materials Technician Certification (HCMTC) Board and the HCMTC Board Revolving Fund. This act further states that the Board "shall be independent of, but shall receive administrative and financial support from, the Department of Transportation." The Board also determines, subject to Legislative approval, the fees for the various training and certification modules.

HB 1476 became official on July 1, 1999. Since that time, the Board has trained and certified 1373 technicians. A total of 820 technicians have been registered. (This is individuals, not the actual number of certifications. One individual may hold many certifications.) All certifications expire five years from the date of issuance.

The Rules

The Act states that the Board "shall be authorized to promulgate rules governing the examination and registration of highway construction materials technicians." The rules are an extension of the law and are, therefore, subject to Legislative review and approval. There are three chapters in the current official rules covering a) Administrative Operations, b) Examination and Certification, and c) Complaints and Individual Proceedings. The rules can be accessed from the Official web site of the Board. (See page 3 for more on the web site.)

Board meetings are held quarterly and are open to the public. Agendas and minutes are subject to the requirements of the Open Records Act. Final agendas are posted at the ODOT Training Center, 1025 SE 59th Street, Oklahoma City, OK and on the Board web site at least 24 hours before the meeting begins. Meeting minutes may be viewed and/or downloaded from the web site.

The Program

OVERVIEW

The program is designed to train and certify technicians to properly sample and test common highway construction materials. It is important for employers and industry personnel to understand that these certifications are on a very basic level and do not imply that a technician is qualified to do anything more than sample and/or test materials. That is to say, they are certified to provide hard data to industry experts who interpret the data and make decisions based on their own levels of expertise. While the Board has certified many technicians who have a great deal of knowledge and experience in their fields, the certifications awarded do not endorse any extended application of that knowledge beyond the technician's qualification to follow those sampling and/or testing procedures specifically demonstrated during the certification process.

POLICY

Policy is set by the Program Director with the advice and guidance of the Board. Policies are documented procedures that are not included in the official rules. For example, the rules do not address the possibility of a conflict of interest which may arise if an examiner and an applicant are both employed by the same company or agency. It is the "policy" of the program to provide examiners from both the public and private sectors so that, whenever possible, applicants will not be evaluated by a supervisor, subordinate, or coworker. A policy manual is not yet available for publication so any inquiries regarding policy should be addressed to the Program Director.

TRAINING vs CERTIFICATION

The program provides two basic services - training and certification. **Training** modules include hands-on instruction and are designed to prepare the student for certification. Training modules are offered for Aggregates, Asphalt, Concrete, Soils (5 days each), Profilograph (3 days), and our most recent offerings, Materials Sampler (2 days) and Asphalt Mix Design (under development). The Materials Sampler Training course is designed to be taken in conjunction with the Concrete Materials module. Taking these two modules provides 7 days of training intended to prepare the applicant for the Materials Sampling & Testing certification which is designed for construction inspectors.

Certification modules are designed solely to provide the applicant with an opportunity to demonstrate proficiency in the required procedures. For certification modules, the applicant is expected to be proficient in the procedures and need no instruction or demonstration. It is highly recommended that applicants attend the appropriate training module before attempting certification. The program director will review all applications and may recommend an effective training and certification plan for each applicant. Certification modules are offered for Aggregates, Asphalt, Concrete, Soils, Profilograph, and Materials Sampling & Testing.

APPRENTICESHIPS & TEMPORARY CERTIFICATIONS

In an effort to address the needs of the industry, the Board has created two alternative types of certification. An *Apprenticeship* enables a novice to gain practical experience under the direction and guidance of a registered technician. A *Temporary Certification* may be awarded to an experienced technician so that he or she can sample and/or test materials while waiting to attend the next available certification module. Criteria for awarding these certifications are found in the official rules which can be accessed from the Board web site.

Oklahoma

Highway Construction Materials Technician

CERTIFICATION BOARD

http://www.oktechcert.org

Please visit and become thoroughly familiar with the web site where you get access to information regarding the program and the status of registered technicians as well as the course schedule and online enrollment.

Every technician should read the **"About the Program"** page which explains the two types of modules offered (training and certification) and gives detailed information regarding each module's content, duration, and fee. At the end of the page there is a list of every procedure included in our certifications.

Some of the site's newer features include an FAQ page (answers to frequently asked questions), an online form for registering anonymous complaints or comments, and a "Procedure Updates" page where pertinent changes to AASHTO and OHD L procedures are posted annually. Also, a printable Key Element Guide to help prepare applicants for certification modules is available on the "Register for a Module" page. **Please read the guide before attending a certification module.**

The "Board Meetings" page has a list of dates and times for the current year's meetings as well as viewable and printable copies of the agendas and minutes of previous meetings. The agenda for the upcoming meeting is posted 24 hours prior to the time the meeting is scheduled to begin. The meetings are open to the public and subject to the open meetings and records laws of Oklahoma. Guests are encouraged to contact the Program Director with items they wish to have placed on the agenda for discussion.

To enroll in a training or certification module, click the "Register for a Module" link and fill in the required information. First-time applicants must complete and submit the "Qualifying Experience" form found on the same page. Be sure to obtain the necessary approval from your organization's management before enrolling. Module fees must be remitted at least ten days in advance of the module start date.

Again, we wish to emphasize in the strongest possible terms the importance of becoming familiar with the web site and its contents. The program director responds to the vast majority of inquiries received at the Training Center by simply going to the site and reading verbatim from the posted information. You owe it to yourself to diligently study the web pages at our site and revisit often to keep abreast of any changes to the program and its requirements. One final word of advice about the web site - Web browsers store site information in a cache and do not always check the visited page for recent changes. To ensure that you are seeing the latest version of a page, click the refresh or reload button so the latest page will be loaded from the server.

ODOT Project Requirements for RHCMTs.

ODOT Construction Control Directive No. 020215 addresses the use of contractor's test results for acceptance purposes and states that "All technicians who perform material sampling and testing for acceptance must be properly certified by the Highway Construction Materials Technician Certification Board." The Directive also details the statistical process by which test results are validated. The critical consequence of this directive as it applies to RHCMTs is that both private and public sector technicians conducting QC/QA testing must be certified by the HCMTCB - a requirement that was previously stated more generally in Control Directive No. 000526 which defines the requirements for producing test reports to be used for acceptance. It also includes example forms for reporting test results.

Every technician should be thoroughly familiar with all of 000526 and with pages 1-3 of 020215. Viewable and printable pdf versions of ODOT Construction Control Directives are available on the internet at:
http://www.okladot.state.ok.us/construction/ccdirectives/CCDTOC.pdf.

In recent years the Department of Transportation has been developing an electronic construction management system called Site Manager which is now operational. RHCMT test results are frequently entered into Site Manager by either the sampling/testing technician or by designated data entry personnel. It is important for RHCMTs to know that test results entered into Site Manager are considered to carry the same legal binding as a paper document with the technician's seal affixed. **If the results are being entered into the system by someone other than the technician, paper documentation of the sampling/testing results bearing the seal and signature of the RHCMT must be maintained in the project file.** The upshot of this is that you are legally bound to your sampling and testing results regardless of whether those results are submitted on a signed, sealed form or electronically through the Site Manager system.

SUMMARY

Below, in order of importance, is a bulleted list of the key points covered in this newsletter.

• RHCMTs are legally bound to their test results by either signed, sealed document or electronic submission via the Site Manager program.

• The HCMTCB web site is your most comprehensive source of information regarding the program.

• The Board offers three methods of certification; 1) laboratory performance and written examinations, 2) temporary certifications for experienced technicians, and 3) apprenticeships for new, inexperienced technicians.

• Board meetings are held quarterly and are open to the public.

• Every technician should read the Key Element Guide before attempting certification.

This is the first issue of a periodic publication. However, future publications will not be mailed to individual technicians but will be made available on the web site in pdf format for easy reading and printing by RHCMTs and other interested parties. A limited number of printed copies will be made available to industry organizations.

If you have questions about this issue or wish to provide feedback to the editor, please contact Steve Sawyer at (405) 632-8022 or e-mail him at ssawyer@odot.org.