



CITY COUNCIL REPORT

Date May 13, 2009

TO: John Szerlag, Acting City Manager

FROM: Brian Murphy, Asst. City Manager Economic Development and Services
Timothy Richnak, Public Works Director

SUBJECT: American Public Works Association Voluntary Accreditation

Background:

- There have been communication and discussion in reference to the American Public Works Association Voluntary Accreditation. It is the intent of this report to detail information about this accreditation and provide the process from start to finish and continuous reaccreditation.
- The Voluntary Accreditation process provides review and assessment of many aspects of government agencies. These include but are not limited to organization, personnel, management, planning, communications, record keeping, construction, buildings, facilities management, equipment, solid waste, storm water, traffic engineering, cemeteries, parks, right of way, water and sewer and many other operations.
- Attached are copies of the Application for Voluntary Accreditation, Checklist and Application for requesting Site Visit Evaluation and Voluntary Re-accreditation, A brief description of the accreditation concept and the Public Works Accreditation Process Guide

Financial Considerations:

- Accreditation Application Fees are based on population and the number of function areas. The fees for the City of Troy are estimated to be approximately \$11,000. The Assessment process would require City of Troy staff time estimated to be approximately 1,500 hours over the 2.5 to 3 year process. Staff involvement is at all levels and staff costs would likely range from \$30,000 to \$40,000.
- The accreditation once received is for a 4 year period. Semi-annual updates are required and the Reaccreditation Application Fees are approximately \$11,000. At this time it is difficult to calculate the long term staff time and costs that will be required for updates and reaccreditation.

ACCREDITATION COUNCIL
OF THE
AMERICAN PUBLIC WORKS ASSOCIATION
APPLICATION
FOR
VOLUNTARY ACCREDITATION

Agency Name: * _____

*An entire operating division of a public works agency can apply for accreditation if it is a separate, semi-autonomous unit of government.

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Mailing Address: _____

(if different from street address)

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

• Parent Agency's Chief Executive Officer: _____

Title: _____ Elected - Or Appointed -

• Public Works Agency's Chief Executive: _____

Title: _____ Elected - Or Appointed -

Phone: _____ FAX: _____ E-Mail _____

APWA Member? -- Yes, I.D. Number _____ -- No

APWA Agency Member? -- Yes, Contact _____ -- No

• Public Works Agency's Accreditation Manager: _____

Title: _____

APWA Member? -- Yes, I.D. Number _____ -- No

Phone: _____ FAX: _____ E-Mail _____

The public works agency is responsible for the Functional Areas, which are checked on the reverse side of this application form. The agency is responsible for addressing all recommended practices in the Functional Areas for which the public works agency has responsibility. Each area is covered by a separate chapter in the *Public Works Management Practices Manual* and forms the basis for fees charged for the accreditation process.

We hereby apply for voluntary accreditation by the Accreditation Council of the American Public Works Association. By this application, the agency acknowledges its commitment to accreditation and is willing to devote the resources necessary to complete the accreditation process. The agency is prepared to provide such information necessary for the Council to fairly evaluate the agency's eligibility for accreditation.

Executed this ____ day of _____, 20 ____.

By: _____, Title: _____

(typed or printed name)

Continued

ACCREDITATION COUNCIL
OF THE
AMERICAN PUBLIC WORKS ASSOCIATION

APPLICATION
FOR
VOLUNTARY RE-ACCREDITATION
Public Works Management Practices Manual - Sixth Edition

Agency Name: * _____

*An entire operating division of a public works agency can apply for accreditation if it is a separate, semi-autonomous unit of government.

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Mailing Address: _____
(if different from street address)

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

• Parent Agency's Chief Executive Officer: _____

Title: _____ Elected - Or Appointed -

• Public Works Agency's Chief Executive: _____

Title: _____ Elected - Or Appointed -

Phone: _____ FAX: _____ E-Mail _____

APWA Member? -- Yes, I.D. Number _____ -- No

APWA Agency Member? -- Yes, Contact _____ -- No

• Public Works Agency's Accreditation Manager: _____

Title: _____

APWA Member? -- Yes, I.D. Number _____ -- No

Phone: _____ FAX: _____ E-Mail _____

The public works agency is responsible for the Functional Areas, which are checked on the reverse side of this application form. The agency is responsible for addressing all recommended practices in the Functional Areas which the public works agency has responsibility. Each area is covered by a separate chapter in the *Public Works Management Practices Manual* and forms the basis for fees charged for the accreditation process.

We hereby apply for a site evaluation for voluntary accreditation by the Accreditation Council of the American Public Works Association. By this application, the agency acknowledges its commitment to accreditation and is willing to devote the resources necessary to complete the re-accreditation process. The agency is prepared to provide such information necessary for the Council to fairly evaluate the agency's eligibility for re-accreditation.

Executed this ____ day of _____, 20 ____.

By: _____, Title: _____

(typed or printed name)

continued

APPLICABLE FUNCTIONAL AREAS

Which of the following functions does your department administer, manage or provide services -- either directly or through a contractor or outside vendor? Explain reason for not being responsible for a particular functional area.

FUNCTIONAL AREA (Chapter Number)	YES	NO	REASON FOR NON-RESPONSIBILITY
Chapter 1-9	Required		
Planning and Development (10)			
Engineering Design (11)			
Bid Process (12)			
Project Management (13)			
Right-of-Way Management (14)			
Utility Coordination (15)			
Facilities Management (16)			
Equipment and Fleet Management (17)			
Parks, Grounds and Forestry (18)			
Solid Waste Management (19)			
Solid Waste Collection (20)			
Solid Waste Recycling and Reuse (21)			
Solid Waste Disposal (22)			
Street Maintenance (23)			
Street Cleaning (24)			
Snow Removal and Ice Control (25)			
Storm Water and Flood Management (26)			
Vector Control (27)			
Potable Water (28)			
Wastewater Collection and Conveyance (29)			
Wastewater Treatment and Disposal (30)			
Traffic Operations (31)			
Parking (32)			
Cemeteries (33)			
Airports (34)			
Transit Operations (35)			
Bridges (36)			
TOTALS (please enter a number for both Yes and No)			

Re-Accreditation Fee Calculation

Part A: Base Fee by Agency Population (2000 Census Data)

Check	POPULATION		Extension
	Under 10,000	\$1,000	
	10,001 to 25,000	\$2,000	
	25,001 to 50,000	\$5,000	
	50,001 to 100,000	\$7,000	
	100,001 to 300,000	\$9,000	
	300,001 to 1,000,000	\$12,000	
	More than 1,000,000	\$15,000	
	Subtotal Base Fee		\$

Part B: Functional Area Fee (Added to the Base Fee)

Functional Areas	FUNCTIONAL AREAS		Extension
9	First 9 Chapters (Required for all agencies)	\$800	\$800
	Each additional chapter (Maximum fee for additional chapters is \$4,800)	\$200 each	\$
	Subtotal Functional Area Fee		\$

Total Fee (add Base Fee and Functional Area Fee) \$ _____ X 50% = \$ _____ (amount due)

Continued

YES

NO

COMMENTS OR EXPLANATION

TIMELINE/REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

90 days prior to site visit

Preferred Date of Site Visit



45 days prior to site visit

Copy of Original Re-Accreditation Application

Copy of Original Re-Accreditation Agreement

Payment of Re-Accreditation Fees (see previous chart)

List of agency staff members and their responsibilities relating to individual chapters

Written Request for Waivers

30 days prior to site visit

On-Line Tracking Software Files Containing IPSR's – Must be completed and notify appropriate APWA staff of completion)

Verification that Outline of Self Assessment/Re-Accreditation Findings have been conveyed to Elected Governing Body

Brief Description of Community and Agency



PUBLIC WORKS ACCREDITATION



A brief description of a public works accreditation concept and what it offers to the public works community.



INTRODUCTION TO ACCREDITATION

The American Public Works Association (APWA) has developed a program to enhance the effectiveness of agencies and their competencies in the public works field. This voluntary, multifaceted program is designed to provide guidance and technical resources to agency managers as they seek to evaluate and upgrade the performance of their agencies. This program has as its foundation the *Public Works Management Practices Manual* (often referred to as "The Manual.")

Public Works Management Practices is a manual of more than 500 procedures necessary to perform as a public works agency. The manual provides the framework for an objective evaluation of an agency. Many public works agencies in the United States and Canada have used the manual to conduct self assessments of their operations. These assessments have lead to improvements in how these agencies conduct their work.

Self assessment is an agency-wide review of management and operations policies and practices as compared to nationally recognized "recommended" practices developed by members of APWA. It is an internal, voluntary effort with a focus on improvement opportunities. There are many benefits to conducting a self assessment and they vary from agency to agency. Some of the benefits that can be realized by an agency are: providing a framework for strategic planning, gaining insight into how services are provided, creating the catalyst for change, orienting employees, training supervisors, and becoming a better managed agency.

APWA has developed a toolbox of workshops, publications and software which provide guidance on using the manual to conduct a self assessment. APWA is committed to developing additional tools to assist agencies in performing a self assessment, making continuous improvement and attaining accreditation.



Public works accreditation is the recognition that the agency subscribes to the concept of continuous improvement and has conducted an in-depth self assessment of the agencies policies, procedures and practices. It is the verification and recognition of an agency for conformance with a recognized body of management practices.

WHAT IS PUBLIC WORKS ACCREDITATION?

A: The purpose of the accreditation program is to provide a means of formally verifying and recognizing public works agencies for compliance with the recommended practices set forth in the *Public Works Management Practices Manual*. It is a voluntary, self-motivated approach to objectively evaluate, verify and recognize compliance with the recommended management practices. The objectives of the accreditation program are to:

- Create impetus for organizational self improvement and stimulate a general raising of standards;
- Offer a voluntary evaluation and educational program rather than government regulated activity;
- Recognize good performance and provide motivation to maintain and improve performance;
- Improve public works performance and the provision of services;
- Increase professionalism;
- Instill pride among agency staff, elected officials and the local community.

WHAT ARE THE GUIDELINES USED TO ACCREDIT AN AGENCY?

A: The *Public Works Management Practices Manual* is the basis for the accreditation program. It contains the practices identified by public works practitioners as being important in providing services. The practices are not standards since they do not dictate how a function or activity should be accomplished. They provide a systematic method to evaluate every function in the organization. Each agency is responsible for establishing policies, procedures and practices. The criteria established by each agency must withstand the scrutiny of the evaluation team and the Accreditation Council.

IS ACCREDITATION REQUIRED OF PUBLIC WORKS AGENCIES?

A: The accreditation program is strictly voluntary. There are no mandates or requirements that public works agencies seek accreditation. As a voluntary program, an agency sets its own timeline for submitting an application and completing the accreditation process. It is important that this program be maintained as a voluntary effort.

MUST AN AGENCY MEET ALL PRACTICES IN THE MANUAL TO BE ACCREDITED?

A: Agencies that seek accreditation are required to comply only with practices specifically applicable to them. This is determined by the type of agency and the functions it performs. Each agency must document how they comply with all applicable practices. An agency must demonstrate compliance with the recommended practices which are applicable. The accreditation program is flexible to meet the responsibilities and characteristics of each agency.

WHAT IF AN AGENCY IS PROHIBITED FROM COMPLYING WITH A PRACTICE?

A: If an agency cannot comply with a practice because it is prohibited by legislation, labor agreement, court orders or case law, waivers can be sought to set aside that practice statement for the agency.

WHAT AGENCIES ARE ELIGIBLE FOR ACCREDITATION?

A: All governmental agencies with responsibilities for public works functions are eligible for accreditation. Accreditation is awarded to the department that provides the public works service. Eligibility for public works accreditation is verified by the Accreditation Council. There is no quota, or annual limit on the number of agencies that can apply for accreditation.

WHO IS THE ACCREDITING BODY?

A: The accreditation program has been established within APWA with representation from other national organizations and groups that affect the public works field or are notable for their contributions to the field. An operating policy has been established which outlines the roles and responsibilities of the Accreditation Council.

HOW LONG DOES THE ACCREDITATION LAST BEFORE IT MUST BE REPEATED?

A: Initial accreditation is for a four-year period. A semi-annual updates will be required to demonstrate continuing compliance. A re-accreditation process has been developed which builds on the original accreditation to encourage continuous improvement and compliance with newly identified practices.

IS THERE AN APPEAL PROCESS?

A: An appeals process is provided for an agency to review process issues raised during the accreditation process.

WHAT IS THE SELF ASSESSMENT PROCESS?

A: Accreditation is a major step in a program of continuous improvement of public works services. Before applying for accreditation, an agency must conduct an internal evaluation of its policies, procedures and practices to determine its strengths and areas for improvement. This self assessment is documented and forms the basis for making continuous improvements in agency operations. The accreditation component involves an objective review by experienced public works professional. The self assessment process prepares an agency for this review and leads to the preparation of necessary documentation.

IS ACCREDITATION AN INTENSIVE PROCESS?

A: Accreditation does require an agency to document its policies, procedures and practices. The amount of effort required to do this will depend on what the agency already has in place and how committed they are to the process. The program requires that existing policies, procedures and practices are well documented and communicated to those that should know about them. The self assessment process provides the systematic framework to gauge how well an agency has documented its policies, procedures and practices, and how effective it is at getting the job done. An agency must provide proof that it does comply with each practice that is applicable.

HOW IS PROOF OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRACTICES ACCOMPLISHED?

A: Compliance with the recommended practices is determined through an on-site evaluation. The site evaluation team is composed of public works practitioners. They are selected to serve on the site evaluation team because of their knowledge in the public works field. Proof of compliance will be demonstrated by review of written records, policies, practices and procedures; interviews with staff, managers, elected officials and community leaders; supplemented by field observations.

WHO CONDUCTS THE ON-SITE ASSESSMENT?

A: Experienced public works professional are recruited and trained to serve as evaluators. Wherever possible, these volunteers will be assigned to evaluate agencies of similar size and type as the agencies they serve. This interaction with peers is a key part of the accreditation program as it provides a valuable source of information, networking and support. Agencies are encouraged to make the process an educational experience. Evaluators will not be assigned to conduct assessments where they may have a potential conflict of interest.

**CAN AN AGENCY
REVIEW THE NAMES AND
QUALIFICATIONS OF EVALUATORS
IN ADVANCE?**

A: The agency will be notified of the identities and backgrounds of potential evaluators in advance and can indicate any potential conflicts of interest or other concerns, and may request the assignment of an alternate evaluator.

**ONCE AGAIN, WHAT ARE
THE MAJOR STEPS IN THE
ACCREDITATION PROCESS?**

A: Once an agency submits a formal application for accreditation, the APWA staff and Accreditation Council determines whether the agency meets eligibility criteria. The agency conducts a self assessment to determine the extent to which it meets applicable practices and assembles the necessary documentation of compliance with the recommended practices. It is important to remember that the practices are not standards, and do not dictate how to accomplish a task or set standards for performance. The practices identify the need to address an issue or requirement of operating a public works agency. The agency creates its own policies, procedures and practices which are appropriate for its community. The time period for completion of the self assessment is flexible.

Next the agency makes improvements necessary to comply with all applicable practices. The results of the final self assessment are submitted to APWA for review.

Upon reviewing the self assessment report and finding it meets the criteria established by the Accreditation Council, the staff will schedule a team of evaluators to conduct a site visit to the agency for the purpose of verifying its compliance with the recommended practices. This involves examining the documentation for proof of compliance that the agency prepared during the self assessment process. The evaluation team report is forwarded to the Accreditation Council which either awards or denies accreditation. If accreditation is denied or deferred, the agency is provided with an outline of the steps required to gain full compliance with the practices.

WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE TO PREPARE FOR ACCREDITATION?

A: APWA has developed, through its membership, the manual of practices that is the basis for the accreditation program. The manual is updated as practices evolve and technologies change. A self assessment process has been developed to guide agencies in organizing their internal assessment. Workshops are available through APWA for training staff members who will be conducting self assessments. APWA provides assistance to an agency seeking to conduct a Peer Review of specific practices for the purpose of improving them. A group of agencies involved in self assessment may also be organized to exchange information on the self assessment programs. APWA chapters are another resource for agencies and individuals that can help prepare for accreditation by providing a forum for discussion and exchange of ideas. Additional guidance materials will be developed to assist agencies in preparing for accreditation as the needs are identified. A specific infoNOW community is available for agencies who have signed contracts which allows questions and responses to be directed towards others who have already completed the program.

ARE THERE DISADVANTAGES TO ACCREDITATION?

A: There are obvious risks and other implications associated with pursuing accreditation. It does require a significant amount of effort to conduct a self assessment and make necessary improvements in the operations and management of your agency. There are also costs involved for the accreditation process, though efforts will be made to keep these reasonable and affordable to all agencies regardless of size. It is expected accreditation will bring sufficient improvement to the operations and management of agencies to offset most, if not all of the potential disadvantages. Potential benefits as more agencies become accredited may parallel those experienced by the law enforcement community.

WHAT DOES ACCREDITATION COST?

A: The program is very sensitive to the need to keep costs at an affordable level. The fee schedule has been established which is based on the agency's population and number of functional areas provided by the agency and included for review. Accreditation fees are designed to recover the actual costs associated with administering the program such as staff salaries, postage, and printing and production of materials. An estimate of total accreditation costs based on the characteristics of each agency will be provided to applicants at the time of application. The costs of the on-site evaluation represent the unknown cost, since the agencies will be responsible for actual costs. Accreditation fees for a medium size municipal agency are expected to be between \$10,000 and \$15,000, over the two- to three-year process, not including the agency's staff expenses.

WHAT IF AN AGENCY FAILS TO ACHIEVE ACCREDITATION?

A: Agencies are encouraged to conduct a thorough self assessment prior to applying for accreditation. The self assessment provides benefits in evaluating your agency and identifying areas that need to be improved before accreditation could be conferred. Self assessment provides the information necessary to help agencies that may want to pursue accreditation. Once steps are taken to address the shortcomings identified by the self assessment process, the agency could apply for accreditation. The Accreditation Council and APWA staff will use the initial application to gauge whether an agency has adequately prepared for accreditation. Serious deficiencies may be noted before the site visit is scheduled and the application can be held until corrections are made. If an agency completes its accreditation site assessment and is found to have a few deficiencies in meeting the practices, the council may award partial accreditation and set conditions that would provide for accreditation if minor corrections are made within certain time frames.

WHAT IS INVOLVED IN RE-ACCREDITATION?

A: Re-accreditation begins with the preparing of semi-annual updates by the agency to verify it is continuing to comply with the spirit and intent of accreditation. This is an important step as it provides a target for each agency to use to ensure continuous improvements of its operations. The reporting process provides a framework for noting how the agency has advanced over the accreditation period. Accreditation is part of a continuous improvement process, not a destination.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS?

A: Accreditation provides a systematic approach to perform an objective assessment by an independent entity. Accreditation also provides a visible indication that the agency complies with the recommended practices established by the American Public Works Association, as published in the *Public Works Management Practices Manual*.

The benefits of conducting a self assessment and achieving accreditation include:

- Formal recognition of well run agencies
- A mechanism to evaluate the organization
- A target for improving operations
- Public recognition of public works function
- Justifying budget requests
- Instilling pride in personnel
- Reducing liability
- Lowering insurance premiums
- Raising national public works profiles
- Benefiting in personnel recruitment
- Encouraging documentation of policies
- Encouraging improvement of procedures
- Raising competencies in public works
- Consistent, comprehensive practices
- Fostering interaction among personnel
- Encouraging employee involvement.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

A: From the Technical Services Department

American Public Works Association

2345 Grand Boulevard, Suite 700

Kansas City, MO 64108-2641

Phone: 816-472-6100

Fax: 816-472-0405

E-mail: apwa@apwa.net

Public Works Management Practices Manual



Developed by, and for, public works professionals, this widely-used Public Works Management Practices Manual represents the state of the practice and the standard of public works performance. The Manual updates and improves statements on more than 500 practices which describe the basic criteria and procedures necessary to perform as a full service public works agency and provides the framework for the objective self-evaluation of an agency. Organized into multiple chapters relating to specific areas, the manual deals with such topics as organization, personnel management, planning, finance, risk management, communications, record keeping, construction, buildings, equipment, solid waste, storm water, and traffic engineering, cemeteries, airports, and many others.

Accreditation Process Guide

A step-by-step guide to assist in working through the process, from Self-Assessment through Accreditation, is now available online at: www.apwa.net/Documents/Accreditation/Acc_Process_Guide.pdf



Self-Assessment Tracking Software
Software designed to assist agencies in managing the self assessment process and keeping track of supporting documentation.

These resources can be purchased through the APWA Bookstore at 816-472-6100, or on our website: www.apwa.net/bookstore/



American Public Works Association

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Kansas City, MO 64108-2641

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Fax: (816) 472-1610

Toll-Free: (800) 848-APWA



PUBLIC WORKS ACCREDITATION PROCESS GUIDE

March 2007

AMERICAN PUBLIC WORKS ASSOCIATION
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FAX (816) 472-1610
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PUBLIC WORKS ACCREDITATION PROCESS GUIDE

EDITED BY
ANN DANIELS
DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES

AMERICAN PUBLIC WORKS ASSOCIATION
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

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The American Public Works Association nor any of its agents, such as the Accreditation Council, makes no warranty, express or implied, for the benefit of any person or entity with regard to any aspect of its Accreditation Process Guide. It is intended for the sole use of the APWA, the Accreditation Council, accredited local agencies, or those seeking accreditation or re-accreditation. There being no intended third party beneficiaries hereof, express or implied. The contents to this guide are subject to change or adjustment without notice. This guide, as with all APWA publications, is available, subject to costs, to any interested individual. The guide shall in no way be construed to be an individual act of an APWA employee, the Accreditation Council, any agent, member, individual, or legal entity associated with APWA.

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Appendix A. Publications Order Form

Appendix B. Application for Voluntary Accreditation

Appendix C. Accreditation Agreement

Appendix D. Sample Submittal Letter

Appendix E. Checklist for Requesting On-Site Evaluation

Appendix F. Sample Accreditation Site Evaluation Visit Agenda

Appendix G. Registration and Update Tracking Forms

Preface

This *ACCREDITATION PROCESS GUIDE* is the principal source of information about the American Public Works Association's Accreditation Program. It provides details about the Accreditation Council and instructions on navigating the accreditation process: from the time the Agency becomes interested in accreditation until it becomes accredited. The process book also assists accredited agencies in maintaining their accredited status and guides them through the re-accreditation process, which must be completed every four years.

There is currently one other publication that completes the library of documents that comprise the Accreditation Program:

APWA's Fifth Edition of the *Public Works Management Practices Manual* (referred to as the "Manual") contains more than 500 standards, termed practice statements, which define those basic criteria and procedures that a public agency would need to perform as a full service public works agency. It details uniform criteria and procedures to perform all public works services and assist public works managers in planning and controlling operations, improving performance, and increasing productivity.

Software is also available to assist agencies in organizing information and tracking the process of the self assessment phase of accreditation. Use of the software is mandatory for agencies applying for accreditation.

These publications may be ordered from:

APWA Bookstore
American Public Works Association
2345 Grand Boulevard, Suite 700
Kansas City, MO 64108-2625
(816) 472-6100, FAX (816) 472-1610
Online: www.apwa.net/bookstore/

APWA also produces *Q & A About APWA Accreditation*, a pamphlet giving a brief overview of the public works accreditation concept and what it offers the public works community. Written in easy to read question and answer format, it provides a brief description of the process and of the benefits of accreditation. Information is also available on APWA's Internet web site at <http://www.apwa.net/accreditation/>.

Additionally, APWA periodically offers workshops entitled *Self Assessment Using Management Practices: A Tool for Improving Operations and Management*. This one day training course discusses the implementation of a self assessment program and is designed to guide the Agency in performing a self evaluation of an agency's current management policies and practices and how to improve overall effectiveness through continuous process improvement.

Acknowledgement

The American Public Works Association would like to acknowledge the dedication of APWA members, estimated to number more than a thousand, who have been involved bringing the program of Voluntary Accreditation for Public Works Agencies into reality.

From its earliest beginnings as a focus group at a Northwest Municipal Conference meeting, trying to identify the essential management practices that could be used by public works managers across the U.S. and Canada. To the research project developed by APWA that resulted in the publication of the *Public Works Management Practices Manual* in 1991. To the members of the Management Practices Advisory Committee, who were responsible for assembling the more than 500 recommended practices contained in the current edition of the Manual and who developed the initial criteria for the accreditation program. To the APWA Board of Directors who finally approved the concept for the Accreditation Program in 1996.

Since its inception, thirty-four agencies have completed the self assessment and have attained full accreditation. Over three-dozen agencies have formally applied for Accreditation and are conducting the Self Assessment phase of the program. Hundreds of agencies are using the *Public Works Management Practices Manual* as a tool for evaluating their policies, practices and procedures.

Literally thousands of volunteer hours have been invested in developing the accreditation program that is summarized here, in this document, in but a few pages. The brevity of this document is a tribute to the members' ability to refine and focus on the key steps that are required to successfully attain the status of an Accredited Public Works Agency.

As with other massive projects, it is impossible to individually list all of those who have accepted the responsibility for producing portions of this document.

June 1, 2006
Ann Daniels
Director of Technical Services
American Public Works Association
Kansas City, Missouri

Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION TO ACCREDITATION

What Is Accreditation?

Accreditation is the mark of professionalism that indicates that a public works agency has made the commitment to continuous improvement in the delivery of public works operations and services in the community it serves. Accreditation recognizes that an Agency's policies, procedures, and practices have been evaluated against nationally recognized, recommended practices.¹

Why Is Accreditation Important?

Accreditation is important to agencies that seek a method of demonstrating that the Agency is well managed, complies with recommended practices, and is dedicated to continuous improvement of public works management practices. Accreditation is important to your organization because it provides:

- International recognition for the commitment to processes that promote good government;
- Recognition for the commitment to policies, procedures and processes that promote effective delivery of projects and services;
- A process for conducting a needs assessment to ensure that all critical services have been addressed;
- A process for setting goals for improvement of all practices, facilities and services;
- Increased productivity and effectiveness through critical evaluation of programs and services;
- Tools for establishing performance measurement systems and internal performance standards for operations, management and administrative functions;
- A visible form of recognition that can be used to gain community support for improvement of public works facilities and services;
- An opportunity for professional development of the Agency's staff;
- A process for staying abreast of the latest developments in public works operation and maintenance

What Is the Process?

In summary, accreditation involves five phases:

¹ The term practice(s) is intended to be inclusive of the terms practice, policy and procedure.

1. **Application Phase** - During this phase information regarding self assessment and accreditation is exchanged. The Agency may submit a formal application for accreditation; thereby fixing terms and conditions required for accreditation.
2. **Self Assessment Phase** - During this phase the applying Agency performs an analysis of its practices using the criteria contained in APWA's *Public Works Management Practices Manual*.
3. **Improvement Phase** - Using the results of the self assessment phase, the Agency makes improvements to the various processes indicated by the self assessment as needing further enhancement in order to be considered in substantial or full compliance.
4. **Evaluation Phase** - Once the Agency believes it complies with all applicable practices, an evaluation team performs a "site visit" to affirm compliance.
5. **Accreditation Phase** - This is the final approval stage of accreditation by the Accreditation Council and the renewal process.

Accreditation is a voluntary process offered through the Accreditation Council (the Council), the accreditation-granting arm of the American Public Works Association (APWA). The Council is made up of professional managers with public and private sector experience in the delivery of governmental services. The Council is a subordinate entity, supported by the American Public Works Association.

Since self assessment and accreditation are voluntary programs, each public works agency has the ability to select how far they wish to proceed in the process. An agency can choose to participate only in the self assessment process as a needs assessment or quality improvement program. It is up to each agency to decide how to use the tools that have been developed for the accreditation program.

Chapter 2 contains a detailed discussion of each of the steps necessary to complete the accreditation process.

Who Is Eligible for Accreditation?

Any government agency with responsibility for management of public works infrastructure and services is eligible for accreditation by the Accreditation Council, the accrediting body established by the American Public Works Association. Major departments or divisions within large agencies can be accredited individually. There are no limits on the number of departments or divisions that can apply for accreditation.

How Much Does Accreditation Cost?

Fees and Charges. The fees paid to APWA for administering the accreditation program are determined by several factors:

- first, the population of the governmental body
- second, the administration fee for the first nine chapters of the Manual
- third, the administration fee for the individual chapters for which the agency has full responsibility

Payment of the fees can be made in a lump sum at the time the contract is signed or with fifty percent paid when the contract is signed and the remaining fifty percent being due eighteen months into the three year contract or when the Site Visit is requested.

(See the Application for Voluntary Accreditation form at www.apwa.net/About/Accreditation to compute the fees for your own agency.

The local agency will be billed for the direct costs incurred with the On-Site Evaluation. This includes cost of airfare, hotel, ground transportation, and meals. The average charge is between five and six thousand dollars.

Re-Accreditation fees

When an agency has reached their fourth year of their Accreditation and are ready to request an On Site Evaluation Visit, an Application for Voluntary Re-Accreditation must be submitted. Fees for Re-Accreditation are calculated just as for the original Accreditation, including the amount due for the population of the governmental body, the administration fees for the first nine chapters of the Manual, and the administration fee for the individual chapters for which the agency has full responsibility, **but based upon the fee structure currently in place at the time of Re-Accreditation.**

Once these fees have been calculated, the amount is divided by 50% and this becomes the amount due from the Agency to APWA.

On Site Visits costs are billed for actual costs and are usually reduced from the first visit due to one less evaluator needed for Re-Accreditation.

Fees for Nonmember Agencies. The cost of administration and operation of the accreditation program are partially subsidized by dues paid by member agencies, corporate members, and individual members of APWA. Nonmember agencies are encouraged to apply for accreditation but are charged a 50% surcharge, not to exceed the cost of agency membership.

A nonmember agency is defined as one not holding "Agency Member" standing in APWA. The Director of Technical Services can reduce or waive the requirements or fees for nonmember agencies, subject to the concurrence of the Executive Director of APWA.

Who Pays The Costs Of Accreditation?

The costs of the accreditation program are met by application fee and by charges paid by agencies for site visits. The Council may accumulate a reasonable surplus for future contingent needs. The Council normally sets fees on a three-year basis, but reserves the right to adjust fees upon written notice to all current applicants and accredited agencies. Site visit costs are charged to the Public Works Agency on an actual cost basis. Current schedules of fees and site visit charges are available from APWA or on the web site at www.apwa.net/About/Accreditation. Payments may be made by lump sum at the beginning of the program or in installments as agreed to contractually.

Can an Accreditation Be Revoked?

The Council has the authority to revoke an accreditation award when the Council has sufficient documentary evidence that the Public Works Agency is no longer meeting the accreditation criteria as defined in the *Management Practices Manual*. At a subsequent time, the Public Works Agency may reapply for accreditation without prejudice.

Can an Agency Withdraw From Accreditation?

The chief elected or appointed official of the public agency in which a Public Works Agency is located may request the removal of a Public Works Agency from the published list of accredited agencies. The Council will comply with that request and delete the Public Works Agency's name. At a subsequent time, the Public Works Agency may reapply for accreditation without prejudice.

Are Records Confidential?

The records of the Council and of ad hoc Appeal Panels used in making decisions on the accreditation of agencies and recommendations on all applications before it, and all records of the Council relating to accreditation, shall be kept confidential except:

- a. Listings of all categories of accredited agencies are published, as determined by the Council and specified above;
- b. Disclosure is made in those instances in which the Council is legally required to disclose information;
- c. At the request of the chief elected or appointed official of the Agency, information on a specific Public Works Agency may be made available to other agencies or organizations;
- d. In the case of an appeal, the Council's decision as recorded in the minutes is available to the Board of Directors of the American Public Works Association.

Chapter 2 **THE ACCREDITATION COUNCIL**

The Council on Accreditation of the American Public Works Association accredits public works agencies. The APWA Board of Directors approved the voluntary accreditation process at their meeting on August 23, 1996. Their approval was based on the description contained in Section 2 of the publication *Improving Public Works Operations and Management: a Guide to Self Assessment Using the Management Practices Manual*.

PURPOSE

The purpose of accreditation is to promote excellence in the operation and management of a Public Works Agency, its programs and employees. Accreditation is designed to assist the Agency in improving operations and management; in educating and training public works professionals; and in providing a valid and objective evaluation of Agency programs as a service to the public and the profession.

The principal function of the Council is to exercise professional judgment in making decisions on accreditation of agencies. The Council also:

- Develops guidance documents and data-gathering instruments necessary to carry out this principal function,
- Institutes programs for the training of site evaluators,
- Provides consultation to agencies,
- Interacts with other elements of the governance structure of the American Public Works Association on matters related to accreditation, and
- Takes such actions as required to enable it to carry out its functions.

The Council will periodically evaluate the site evaluators and their written reports as a quality assurance function of the program.

ACCREDITATION PROGRAM

Participation in the Accreditation Program is voluntary and self-motivated with the goal to objectively evaluate, verify and recognize compliance with nationally recognized “recommended” practices developed by members of APWA. The objectives of the accreditation program are:

- Create impetus for organizational self-improvement and stimulate a general raising of standards;
- Offer a voluntary evaluation and education program rather than government regulated activity;
- Recognize good performance and provide motivation to maintain and improve performance;
- Improve public works performance and the provision of services;

- Increase professionalism; and
- Instill pride among Agency staff, elected officials and local community.

All governmental agencies with responsibilities for public works functions are eligible for accreditation. Accreditation is awarded to the department that provides the public works service. Major divisions of a public works agency that operate as a semi-autonomous unit may also be eligible for accreditation. The Accreditation Council verifies eligibility for accreditation. There is no quota, or annual limit on the number of agencies that can apply for accreditation.

The process is described in detail in Chapter 3 of this manual as five major steps:

1. Application Phase
2. Self Assessment Phase
3. Improvement Phase
4. Evaluation Phase
5. Accreditation Phase

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

The “Council” is comprised of public works professionals and members of allied professions such as city/county management, government finance, law, public administration, human resource management, planning and others involved in administration of local, regional, state, provincial and federal government agencies. The Council determines the criteria for accreditation and will recommend changes to the *Public Works Management Practices Manual*. The Council will establish policies and criteria for accreditation.

The Council consists of not fewer than six members appointed by the APWA President on the recommendation of the Executive Director. Council members serve staggered three-year terms. From these, the president of the American Public Works Association appoints one member as chairperson for a one-year term. All appointments are subject to ratification by the Board of Directors of the American Public Works Association. The membership of the Council may include public members who are not members of the public works profession. The number of public members may not exceed the number of public works professionals. Members of the profession, who serve on site evaluation teams or other bodies that may seek Council accreditation, may not accept concurrent membership on the Council.

Two-thirds of the members constitute a quorum for the purpose of making a decision on the status of a Public Works Agency. When a Council member is withdrawn from a portion of the meeting, that position is not counted in determining a quorum. A vote of the majority of the Council members at a meeting at which a quorum is present is required to make a decision on the status of any applicant or Public Works Agency.

Should a member of the Council be in a possible conflict of interest with respect to any Public Works Agency scheduled for review by the Council at any particular meeting, that member is excused during discussion and decision on that Public Works Agency. Furthermore, the Council may in its judgment determine that a member is in possible conflict of interest and ask that member to withdraw from discussion of and decision on a particular Public Works Agency.

An Executive Committee, including at least one member each in the third, second, and first year on the Council, may be appointed by the chairperson of the Council to act for the Council between meetings on matters other than agency accreditation.

COUNCIL DECISIONS ON ACCREDITATION

A high degree of professional judgment will be exercised in the review of applications, in the conduct and reporting of site visits, and during the decision making process of the Council. A detailed description on the entire decision making process is contained within the various individual steps in Section 2. The following describes the Council's process and guidelines for decision making.

- a. Documentary Bases for Decisions. Before rendering a decision on the award, denial, renewal, placement on probation, or revocation of accreditation, the Council reviews the current self assessment by the Public Works Agency (application or mid-term report), the most recent site visit report, the Public Works Agency's response to that report, other relevant materials and the Public Works Agency's comments on these materials. The Council may make a decision or may defer action until its next scheduled meeting in order to obtain more information on which to base a decision. The decision of the Council is recorded in the minutes and transmitted not later than one month following the decision to the chief public works officer of the Public Works Agency, together with a statement of the factual basis for the decision and, in the case of an adverse decision, the criteria the Public Works Agency did not meet. That communication of the final accrediting decision clearly distinguishes between statements addressing actual or potential deficiencies in meeting criteria and statements offering consultative recommendations to the Public Works Agency.
- b. Award, Renewal, or Denial of Accreditation. Four types of decisions may be made by the Council to award, renew, or deny accreditation:
 - (1) In the case of a new Public Works Agency applying for accreditation, the Council first votes whether to grant accreditation. If the Council votes not to grant final accreditation, then the Council votes whether to grant provisional accreditation. Agencies that receive neither provisional nor full accreditation are denied accreditation.

(2) In the case of a provisionally accredited Public Works Agency, the Council first votes whether to grant full accreditation. If the Council votes not to grant full accreditation, the Council votes whether to renew provisional accreditation for a specified period. Agencies that receive neither accreditation nor continued provisional accreditation have their provisional accreditation revoked.

(3) In the case of a fully accredited Public Works Agency, the Council votes whether to renew accreditation. A Public Works Agency whose full accreditation is not renewed is automatically placed on probation for a period of not less than one year.

(4) In the case of a Public Works Agency on probation, the Council votes whether to reinstate full accreditation. If the Council votes against reinstatement, it then votes whether to continue probation for a specified period. A Public Works Agency that is neither reinstated nor granted continued probation has its accreditation revoked.

- c. Effective Date of a Decision and its Public Announcement. Award of full or provisional accreditation is effective as of the adjournment of the Council meeting in which the decision was made. The next site visit is scheduled from this same date. An annual listing of accredited agencies is placed in an appropriate professional journal selected by the Council to reflect the latest decisions of the Council, including revocations, except that no change in the status of a Public Works Agency is reflected in these listings if the Public Works Agency has filed an appeal that has not been decided. In the same public listing, notice is given of agencies that voluntarily withdraw from accredited status. The Council will take action to correct any errors of fact or possibly misleading statements in its public listing in a timely manner.
- d. Revocation of Accreditation. A provisionally approved Public Works Agency that receives neither full accreditation nor continued provisional accreditation has its provisional accreditation revoked. A Public Works Agency on probation that is neither reinstated to full accreditation nor granted continued probation has its accreditation revoked.

A Public Works Agency on full accreditation that does not have its full accreditation continued is automatically placed on probationary status for a period of not less than one year. The placement of a Public Works Agency on probation is a clear warning that, if it does not substantially correct the deficiencies noted by the Council, the Public Works Agency will have its accreditation revoked at the end of the probationary period.

The Council has the authority to delete a Public Works Agency from the list of approved agencies when the Council has sufficient documentary evidence that the Public Works Agency is no longer a functioning entity. At a subsequent time, the Public Works Agency may reapply for accreditation without prejudice.

APPEAL OF DECISION OF COUNCIL

The chief elected or appointed official of the public agency, or the chief public works officer may appeal any eligible decisions of the Council within 30 days of receipt of written notice of the Council's decision. The only decisions eligible for appeal are specified in Chapter 4, which contains a detailed discussion of the appeals process. The burden of presenting the argument initially, and/or persuading the appeals body, rests with the Public Works Agency filing the appeal.

Within 30 days of receipt of the appeal, the Executive Director of APWA will appoint three members of an ad hoc Appeal Panel along with three alternates. No one of these designees may have had affiliation with the Public Works Agency filing the appeal or with the accreditation process relating to that Public Works Agency. The Public Works Agency must concur in the selection of the panel or by showing good cause why a Panel member would be unacceptable, in which case an alternate who is acceptable to both parties is selected.

The Appeal Panel meets within 90 days of the date on which the Public Works Agency is notified of the adverse decision by the Council or on a date mutually acceptable to the Public Works Agency, the Appeal Panel, and the Council representative. The Public Works Agency along with a representative from the Council will appear before the Panel to make oral and/or written presentations and to respond to questions from the Panel.

STAFF AND MEETINGS

Certain functions in the accreditation process are strictly administrative and are permanently delegated to the Executive Director, or staff designee. The Council does not have any governance responsibility within APWA and reports to the Executive Director.

The Council meets at the International Congress and Exposition, and such other time as necessary to conduct Council business.

The Director of Technical Services is the primary staff contact at APWA responsible for the administration of the program. Specific duties are detailed throughout this guide.

Chapter 3 THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS

Accreditation is an administrative function within APWA, with control and oversight from the Accreditation Council, which is responsible for establishing the criteria for accreditation. Accreditation is defined as the process of recognizing agencies that comply with the recommended management practices established by APWA's Accreditation Council. These practices are contained in the *Public Works Management Practices Manual*, referred to as the "Manual."

APWA is responsible for continuously updating the recommended practices through the Management Practices Advisory Committee and the Director of Technical Services. The Council is responsible for setting standards for accreditation and evaluating agencies that choose to apply for accreditation.

The accreditation program is strictly voluntary. There are no mandates or requirements that public works agencies seek accreditation. As a voluntary program, an agency can control the length of time necessary to complete the process.

ACCREDITATION PHASES

The Accreditation Process Map outlining the phases and steps are on page 3-4.

Application Phase (Steps 1-4)

This first phase is the normal starting point toward accreditation. Information is exchanged between the Agency and APWA that should help the Agency in understanding the process and commitments, and eventually helps to make the decision to pursue accreditation. Once the decision has been made to commit to the accreditation process, the Agency submits a formal application along with the application fee. APWA in turn will review the application, and if acceptable, will issue an accreditation agreement based on the *Application for Voluntary Accreditation*. (See Appendix B for sample.)

Self Assessment Phase (Steps 5-8)

The next step toward accreditation is the completion of a needs assessment, termed a **self assessment**, using the *Public Works Management Practices Manual*. Self assessment is an internal review of an agency's practices combined with a comparison of the recommended practices contained in the manual. At the completion of the self assessment, the Agency will have a broad knowledge of its strengths and areas where improvement is needed to bring the Agency into compliance with the recommended practices. To become accredited, the results of the self assessment must be carefully documented. This documentation establishes the basis for setting goals and evaluating the Agency's effectiveness in attaining compliance with the recommended practices. *The self assessment is required before requesting a site evaluation, and is the core element in the*

accreditation process. The Self Assessment *Tracking Software* program, available from APWA, is a requirement for applying for accreditation.

Improvement Phase (Steps 9-12)

Once the Agency has completed the self assessment and identified areas needing improvement, the Agency will work to bring all practices into an acceptable level of compliance with the recommended practices. Refinement and improvement to policies practices and procedures are encouraged even if the Agency's practices might be considered in compliance with recommended practices. Continuous improvement is the ultimate goal of the self assessment process; therefore, the improvement phase is extremely important. Agencies are encouraged to make continuous improvements to processes and procedures regardless of their status in the accreditation process.

Evaluation Phase (Steps 13-20)

This is the most critical phase of the process. The Agency requests a visit by a site evaluation team appointed by the Accreditation Council². The Agency will have the opportunity to review the team composition to avoid conflicts of interest. The Team will make an on-site review and evaluation of the Agency to determine the level of compliance with all applicable practices. Following the on-site evaluation, a final report will be developed, which the Agency will have the opportunity to review.

Accreditation Phase (Steps 21-25)

Periodically, the Accreditation Council will meet to take action on accreditation site visit results. The report will be used in the decision making process. The Council may then grant full or provisional accreditation or may modify the recommendation of the evaluation team.

The Council has the power to revoke or cancel accreditation based on due process. The Council has the power to place an accredited agency on probation if the Council suspects that an agency is no longer able to assure compliance with established criteria.

Accreditation is granted for a set period, four (4) years, at which time the Agency's accreditation shall expire. Biennial written updates are required to demonstrate continuing compliance and progress with self-imposed goals for improvement.

Appeal procedures have been established and are described in detail in Chapter 4.

THE PROCESS – STEP BY STEP

² Agencies that have not previously applied for Accreditation may do so at this point. Agencies that have not previously executed an Accreditation Agreement will be subject to fees and criteria in effect at the time of application.

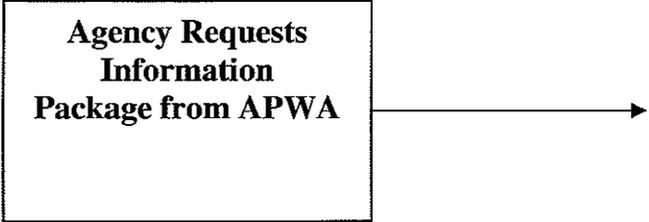
The remaining pages in this chapter illustrate and explain the twenty-five steps of the accreditation process. The responsibilities and protocol of each step are depicted as a flow chart. The entire accreditation process forms a cycle. A first-time agency enters at Step 1 and proceeds through Step 23 to attain the initial accreditation. Biennial/mid-term written updates are required to maintain accreditation for the four (4) year period. At this time, the Agency will apply for re-accreditation and begin the process again.

American Public Works Association

Accreditation Process Map

Application Phase	Self Assessment Phase	Improvement Phase	Evaluation Phase	Accreditation Phase
1 Agency Requests Information or Application Package from APWA	5 Agency Conducts Self Assessment (if Not Completed)	9 Agency Makes Improvements Identified During Self Assessment	13 APWA Acknowledges Request for Site Visit	21 Accreditation Council Meets to Consider Agency Accreditation
2 Agency Reviews Accreditation Process Guide	6 Agency Presents Results of Self Assessment to Elected Body	10 Agency Updates Self Assessment Documentation Agency	14 APWA Identifies Evaluation Team and Informs Agency	22 APWA Notifies Agency of Results
3 Agency Makes Formal Application and Pays Fees	7 Agency Mails Notice of Completion and Documentation	11 Agency Submits Documentation of Completion of Self Assessment	15 Agency Reviews Evaluation Team for conflict of Interest	23 Certificate of Accreditation Awarded to Agency
4 APWA Reviews Application and Approves Accreditation Agreement	8 APWA Mails Acknowledgement and Certificate to Agency	12 Agency Mails Documentation and Request for Site Visit with Waiver Requests	16 APWA Confirms Site Visit With Evaluators and Agency	24 Continuous Improvement And Annual Reporting
			17 APWA Provides Evaluators with Self Assessment Documentation	25 Re-accreditation
			18 Evaluators Conduct Site Visit and Prepare Report	
			19 Evaluation Team Submit Report to APWA and Agency	
			20 Agency Acknowledges Report and Submits Comments	

**Agency Requests
Information
Package from APWA**



STEP 1: THE AGENCY REQUESTS GENERAL INFORMATION

The APWA provides information about the accreditation program to public works agencies in a variety of ways. In addition to this Guide, there are currently two other resources described in the Preface that may be purchased and complete the library of documents that comprise the entire Accreditation Program:

- 1) *Public Works Management Practices Manual*
- 2) *Required Self Assessment Tracking Software*

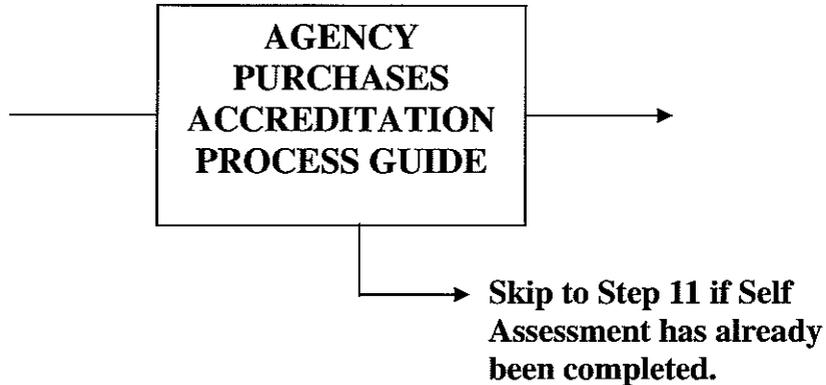
These publications are extremely useful regardless of whether the Agency chooses to pursue full accreditation.

Additionally, a pamphlet entitled *Public Works Accreditation* is available as a brief description of the program and may be useful for distribution to interested persons.

The Agency may have sufficient general information about the program and then may proceed to request a formal application package.

All requests for publications, information, and forms should be directed to the following:

Technical Services Department
American Public Works Association
2345 Grand Boulevard, Suite 700
Kansas City, MO 64108-2625
(816) 472-6100
FAX: (816) 472-1610
www.apwa.net



STEP 2: AGENCY REVIEWS ACCREDITATION PROCESS GUIDE

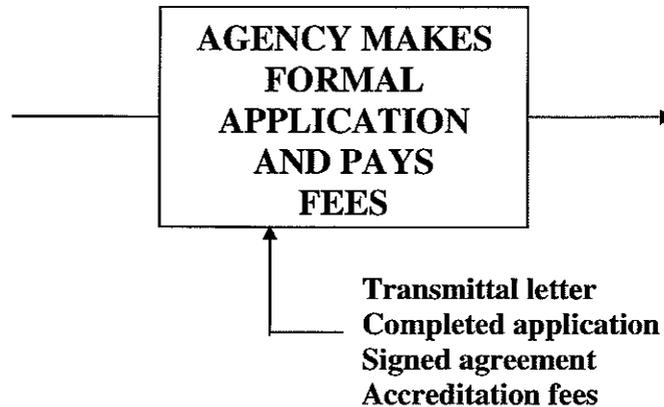
General program information will be mailed at no cost. Such items include:

- Order form for publications and application package
- Fee schedule
- General program statistics
- Published articles
- Accreditation process map

The *Process Guide* is located on the APWA web site and includes

- *Detailed information on the Self Assessment and Accreditation programs*
- *Sample letter of Application (Appendix A)*
- *Application form (Appendix B)*
- *Sample Accreditation Agreement (Appendix C) – Contact APWA for current form or view on the web site at www.apwa.net/About/Accreditation*
- *Sample Checklist for Requesting Site Evaluation for Voluntary Accreditation (Appendix D)*
- *Sample Accreditation Site Visit Agenda (Appendix E)*

If the Agency has already completed a self assessment, skip to Step 11.



STEP 3: AGENCY MAKES FORMAL APPLICATION AND PAYS ACCREDITATION FEES

Because the accreditation process is initiated by the Agency that submits itself for review, the burden of proof of compliance with the criteria rests with the applicant. Therefore, an application must be prepared with a degree of thoroughness that will satisfy detailed review by staff, a site visit team, and the Council.

The Application constitutes a commitment to conduct a self assessment by the Agency, organized in accordance with guidelines furnished by the Council. A letter of commitment must accompany the application. Agencies desiring to contractually establish their fees and criteria for accreditation may submit an Accreditation Agreement and pay all, or a portion of the accreditation fees.

The complete application for accreditation consists of a letter of intent, a completed application, and a signed agreement. The application letter from an Agency *must be signed by the chief elected or appointed official of the Agency*. The accreditation application form may be signed by the chief public works officer(s) responsible for the department being accredited. The completed application must be submitted to the Accreditation Council as follows:

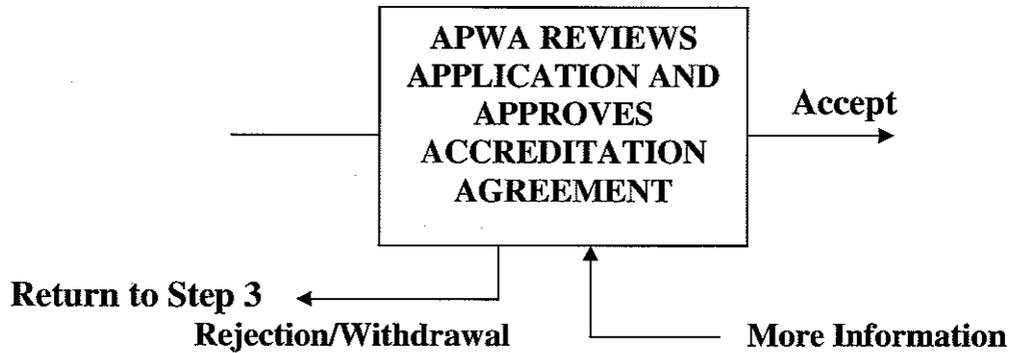
Accreditation Council
 Technical Services Department
 American Public Works Association
 2345 Grand Boulevard, Suite 700
 Kansas City, MO 64108-2641

During the application process, agencies are required to identify each functional area (represented by a chapter in the Manual) where the Agency has any responsibility. Each agency is required to comply with the recommended management practices specifically applicable to the functional areas. Each agency must consider its mission, legally mandated responsibilities, and the demands of community in determining which practices are applicable and how to comply with them.

Waivers for specific practices may be requested for agencies that cannot comply due to legislation, labor agreement, court orders, case law, or other legitimate reasons. The Agency must submit the request for the waivers in writing, citing the extenuating circumstances that preclude the Agency from complying with the recommended practice to the Director of Technical Services prior to the Site Visit. Simply not having funding or staff resources will not be considered a valid reason for non-compliance.

When applying for accreditation, the Agency declares which practices apply and which are not applicable. The Agency, in conjunction with APWA staff, will propose those practices that will be evaluated throughout the accreditation process. The Accreditation Council can accept, reject or modify the list of practices that the Agency must address during the accreditation process. The Agency must substantially or fully comply with *all* of the applicable practices as defined later in this document.

An agency can declare its candidacy for accreditation without executing an Accreditation Agreement by submitting a completed application, together with the application fee. This step allows an agency to announce its intent to become accredited without paying the accreditation fees. However, all fees and requirements for accreditation are subject to change until an agency executes an Accreditation Agreement. Agencies are encouraged to execute an Accreditation Agreement early in the process to avoid the potential for increased fees or the need to revise the self assessment to conform to the recommended practices published in any later editions of the *Public Works Management Practices Manual*.



STEP 4: APWA REVIEWS APPLICATION AND APPROVES ACCREDITATION AGREEMENT

Acceptance of the Application:

In order to expedite processing, the staff of the Council reviews each application and may schedule the initial site visits. When the application seems to be incomplete in its response to one or more criteria-related topics in the application guidelines, Council members may request additional information from an Agency before making this decision. All applications that may not clearly meet the criteria to warrant a site visit are referred to the Council. The Council then decides, by vote of the majority of the Council members at which a quorum is present, to:

- (1) Accept the application and instruct the Agency to begin the self assessment, or
- (2) Accept the application and schedule a site visit (for Agencies that have previously completed a self assessment); or
- (3) Reject the application because, in the opinion of the Council, the applicant does not meet the criteria for accreditation; or
- (4) Request additional information.

Agreement Approval:

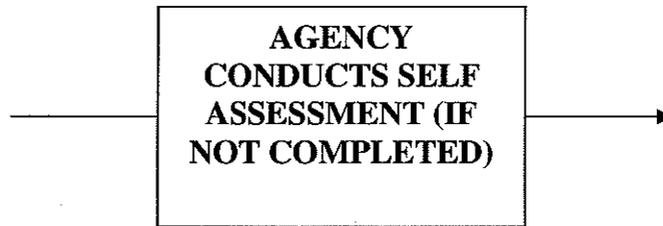
If the Council decides to accept the application, the Agency will be formally notified of the latest version of the *Management Practices Manual* and the required tracking software to be used, together with the completed agreement signed by the AWPA Executive Director.

Notice of Rejection:

In the event the Council rejects the application, it advises the Agency in writing of the reasons for its rejection. The Agency may appeal the rejection to the Executive Director of the American Public Works Association as provided in Step 11 below.

Withdrawal of Application:

At any time before the Council takes final action to grant or refuse accreditation to an applicant Agency, the senior signatory may withdraw the application without prejudice.



STEP 5: AGENCY CONDUCTS SELF ASSESSMENT (IF NOT COMPLETED)

The next step toward accreditation is the completion of a management and operational needs assessment, termed a self assessment, using the *Public Works Management Practices Manual*. Self assessment is an internal review of the Agency's practices combined with a comparison of the recommended practices contained in the manual. To become accredited, the results of the self assessment must be documented and presented to the elected body of the agency. The self assessment findings establish the basis for setting goals and evaluating the Agency's effectiveness in attaining compliance with recommended practices. *The self assessment and improvements to bring the Agency into full or substantial compliance with all applicable practices are required before receiving accreditation.*

Workshops, reference materials, documentation software and on-site training sessions are available from APWA to assist the Agency in conducting a self assessment, documenting the self assessment process, setting goals for improvement and preparing for final accreditation.

Overview of Process: Before the self assessment is initiated, an implementation plan should be developed that includes responsibilities, resources, and processes for conducting the self assessment. One overall manager should be identified, but a team approach to conducting the self assessment is encouraged where feasible. A filing system should be established that creates a file for each applicable practice. Each folder should contain applicable standards and procedures along with background documentation and working documents for bringing the practice into compliance. The Self Assessment Tracking software must be used to document the findings and those findings are required to be submitted to the Council before the site evaluation.

Practice Statements: Practice statements contained in the *Public Works Management Practices Manual* do not represent standards since they do not dictate how a function or activity must be accomplished. Nor do they represent quotas or unit productivity. The recommended practices provide a series of statements and commentary designed to help an agency conduct a self-examination of each aspect of its performance and determine how the practice ensures effective delivery of public works services.

Each recommended practice is composed of two parts: the recommended *practice statement* and a *commentary* intended to assist the Agency staff in understanding the

practice statement. The practice statement is a declarative sentence that places a clear-cut requirement or multiple requirements on the Agency. The practice statement, if applicable, must be met in order for the Agency to become accredited. The Agency must demonstrate that they are in either full or substantial compliance with the recommended practice.

The commentary supports the practice statement as an example, but is not binding on either the Agency or the Council. It serves as an expanded discussion of the practice, which will help the Agency understand the reason for the practice. The commentary can be thought of as a prompt, which provides guidance to clarify the intent of the practice, or as an example of one possible way to comply with the practice. Since the Agency has the latitude to determine how it will comply with the practices to effectively meet its needs, and since the burden of proof to verify this compliance is the Agency's responsibility, it may simply use the commentary as a guideline.

Compliance With Recommended Practices: The Agency must determine whether it complies with the recommended practice. The level of compliance must be classified as one of the following:

- Full Compliance (FC) -- Fully complies with the practice, without exception.
- Substantial Compliance (SC) -- Indicates that the agency consistently meets all major provisions of the practice.
- Partial Compliance (PC) -- Indicates that the agency meets some of the provisions of the practice.
- Non-Compliance (NC) -- Indicates that the agency fails to meet the provisions of the practice
- Non-Applicable (NA) -- The practice does not apply to the agency.
- Waived (WV) -- The practice has been waived. Requires written approval before the site visit.

Waiver requests must be made in writing to the Director of Technical Services, citing the reason for requesting the waiver. Proof of compliance must be demonstrated by review of written records, interviews, and field observations during the on-site evaluation by the accreditation team.

Substantial compliance means that an agency complies with the intent of each recommended practice in a manner that will ensure that the public's interest and investment of capital is protected. Minor areas of non-compliance within a recommended practice will not necessarily preclude an agency from attaining accreditation, so long as a specific goal and an implementation plan is adopted to bring the Agency into compliance.

Each agency is responsible for determining the appropriate practices for its community, subject to concurrence of the site evaluation team. The Agency must be able to demonstrate that it is in full or substantial compliance through documentation, subject to verification during the on-site accreditation visit.

Optional Paths for Self Assessment: Each agency may choose one of three paths to accomplish the self assessment phase –

- **Option 1 - Conduct the self assessment without assistance**

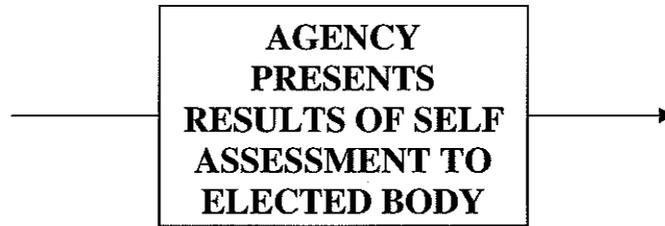
The Agency conducts the self assessment using the Agency's staff in conjunction with reference materials and workshops available from APWA. The Agency could expect tremendous benefit by participating in the self assessment program, even if they stopped at this point. At any time, in the future the Agency could complete the documentation and apply for accreditation.

- **Option 2 - Conduct the self assessment with a Mentor**

Under this option, the Agency would select mentors, public works professionals who have experience with management, self assessment and accreditation, to work with the agency throughout the self assessment and accreditation process. Two or more agencies could work cooperatively to create a self-help mentoring relationship to assist each other through the process. The Agency would complete the required documentation and apply for accreditation.

- **Option 3 - Conduct the self assessment with reviews by peer review team at key points during the self assessment**

In this last option, the Agency could request that a peer review team visit the Agency during the final stages of the self assessment phase. The peer review team could assist the Agency in ensuring that the documentation was satisfactory and assist in establishing goals for improvement of the agency's management practices. The Agency would apply for accreditation upon completion of the self assessment process. Note: This option will significantly increase the cost of accreditation since there would be more than one on-site visitation.



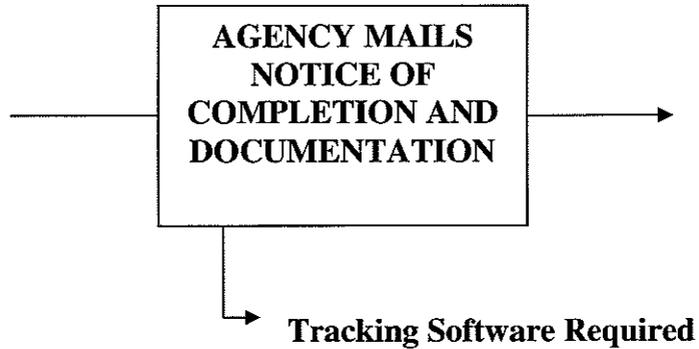
STEP 6: AGENCY PRESENTS RESULTS OF SELF ASSESSMENT TO ELECTED BODY

The Agency must present the results of its self assessment to the local elected body in writing. Agencies are encouraged to present the information to their elected officials when they are comfortable with the results. Agencies may also choose to present the completed self assessment prior to completion of the improvement phase, together with a strategy for improving those practices that the Agency believes are rated as either Partial Compliance or Noncompliance.

The documentation developed during the self assessment should be used as the basis for making such presentations. The presentation must be made in a forum that allows the public the opportunity to comment on the findings and improvements made because of the self assessment.

Most agencies will choose to make the presentation to the elected body at one of their normal meetings. Use of a work session, which is open to the public, is also an excellent way to highlight the accomplishments of the public works agency. The presentation could become part of the formal budget process or an agency-wide strategic planning effort. Each agency will need to determine the appropriate content and venue for such a presentation.

Agencies that complete this process, even if they are not interested in obtaining accredited status, will be recognized by APWA (see Chapter 6).

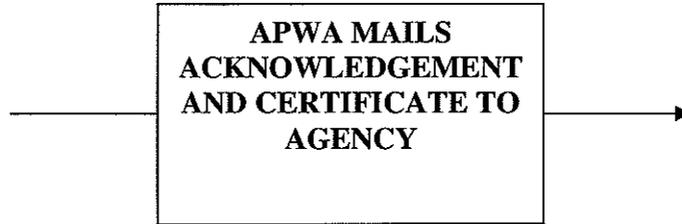


STEP 7: AGENCY MAILS NOTICE OF COMPLETION AND DOCUMENTATION

After presentation of the results of the self assessment to the elected body, agencies must submit the following information as verification of the self assessment to the Director of Technical Services at APWA:

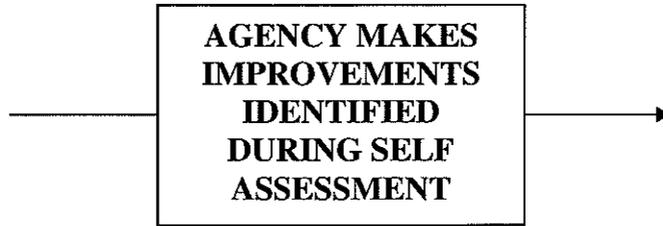
- 1) Cover letter detailing the process and plans for bringing all practices into compliance with the recommended practices.
- 2) Copy of the legal notice for the public meeting and staff report presented to the elected body at that meeting.
- 3) Copy of agenda and minutes from the public meeting where the self assessment results was presented to the elected body.
- 4) Summary of any comments received during the public meeting.
- 5) A copy of the Self Assessment Tracking Software database files.
- 6) Summary table of the Agency's determination of level of compliance for all practices and plan for bringing each practice into compliance.

A checklist form to be used in submitting proper documentation to APWA has been developed and is included as Appendix D and available on the web site at www.apwa.net/About/Accreditation.



STEP 8: APWA MAILS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND CERTIFICATE TO AGENCY

After it is determined that all required documentation is satisfactory, APWA will issue the Agency a letter acknowledging the completion of the self assessment, together with a certificate that can be displayed by the agency. This in itself is a significant accomplishment in the journey for self improvement.

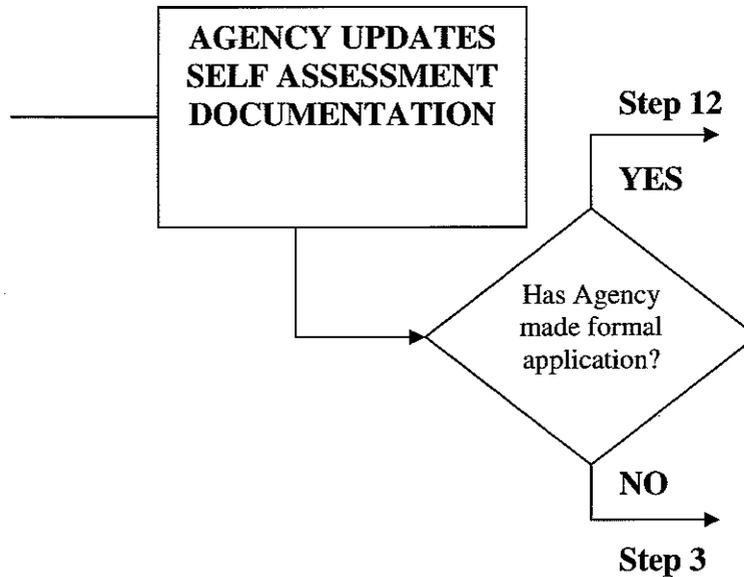


STEP 9: AGENCY MAKES IMPROVEMENTS IDENTIFIED DURING SELF ASSESSMENT

One of the primary goals in conducting a self assessment, as well as the entire accreditation process, is to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the Agency. Besides taking the first critical step toward self improvement through a process of self evaluation, the next most important step is to take action to address those areas needing improvement. In many cases, bringing an Agency's practice into compliance may simply require documenting existing processes or standards more completely. Others may require a complete reevaluation of the Agency's policies, practices or procedures.

The practice statements in the *Public Works Management Practices Manual* contain those elements considered necessary to minimally address a given subject matter. They do not state how an agency must satisfy a given practice, only that the Agency must adequately address the requirements of the practice. Other public works practitioners developed these practices over a long period. By doing so, the Agency is comparing itself against this set of recommended practices.

During this step, the Agency should modify or establish processes, standards, and procedures that it finds to be in less than substantial compliance. Agencies are also encouraged to make improvements where feasible and practical to bring all practices into full compliance.



STEP 10: AGENCY UPDATES SELF ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

Following all modifications to agency policies, standards, and procedures that the Agency believes is necessary to attain an acceptable level of compliance, the Agency updates the documentation, including the required tracking software in Step 7.

At this time the Agency might consider performing a “mock” on-site evaluation, or a peer review, as a final check of documentation prior to fully committing to beginning the remainder of the accreditation process and committing to further expenditures. This “mock” evaluation or peer review is purely optional, but if performed, this simulation should utilize knowledgeable practitioners in the role of the assessors and be conducted as stringently as the actual on-site evaluation.

Form of Documentation. Preparing for accreditation requires that each applicable practice be documented -- that is, that proof of compliance is provided. Each agency desiring accreditation must provide the documentation through use of **required tracking software**³ that provides many of the details needed for the accreditation review.

Agencies are required to maintain a central filing system containing all written documentation, interview results and copies of supporting documents during the site visit by the accreditation evaluation team. If several of the practices apply to one document (a snow and ice plan for example) only one copy is required, however multiple copies of applicable sections placed in files for each management practice help to speed the on-site review in Step 18.

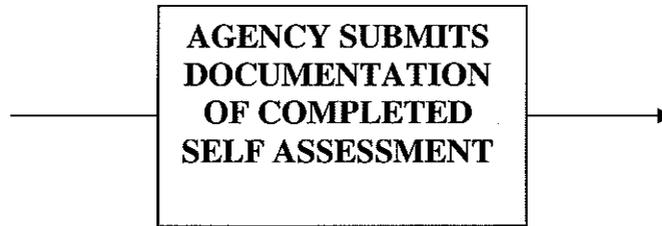
³Agencies not applying for accreditation are not required to use APWA's tracking software. Any logical database or word processing program may be used to document the findings of the self assessment.

For Agencies submitting hard copy documentation, a completed copy of an Individual Practice Status Report (IPSR) for ALL practices contained in the applicable edition of *Public Works Management Practices Manual* must be submitted.

All agencies applying for accreditation must use the required tracking software that corresponds to the edition of the *Manual* being used.

Agencies not desiring accreditation are encouraged to use the tracking software to assist in the self assessment process.

The Agency should not proceed to the next step until the chief public works officer is personally satisfied that all documentation has been updated and that it is ready to commit to the additional costs of the on-site evaluation (see Step 11).



STEP 11: AGENCY SUBMITS DOCUMENTATION OF COMPLETED SELF ASSESSMENT

The Agency completes and submits the following items:

- Transmittal letter
- The dates that the self assessment was started and completed.
- Public meeting agenda and proof of publishing
- Minutes of meeting
- Complete copy of agenda package submitted to elected officials
- Remaining accreditation fees, if the payment option was selected in the Accreditation Agreement
- The updated documentation in approved format (software files)

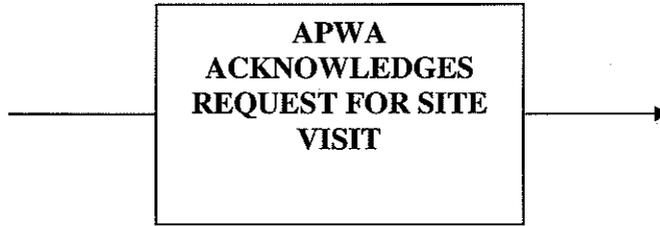
If this step is applicable, APWA will respond by combining Steps 4 and 13.



STEP 12: AGENCY MAILS REQUEST FOR SITE VISIT

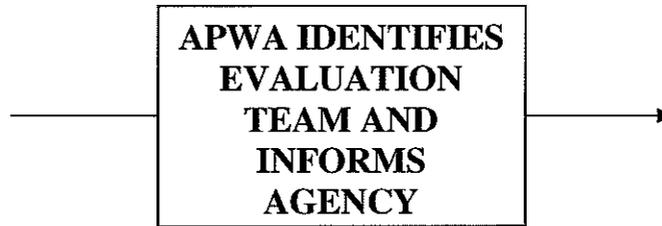
The package must include this information:

- A confirmation or a request to adjust the practices from the original application (Step 3) that are not applicable, along with a waiver request.
- Documentation on why waiver is justified
- The preferred schedule for the on-site evaluation by the evaluation team. A minimum of 90 days is required from receipt of the complete application package. Every effort will be made to accommodate the Agency's requested dates for the accreditation team visitation; however, the Accreditation Council and APWA reserve the right to establish the actual dates of the site visit
- Five copies of a brief narrative (three to five pages) describing the community served (demographics, highlights, etc.) and the agency's organizational structure, services offered, etc.
- Five copies of the latest adopted budget for the Agency being accredited, including summary information for the entire parent agency
- Five copies of any additional information that may help the site evaluation team understand how the Agency fits into the parent organization, including information about other public works related departments, which are not being evaluated.
- One full set of the printed forms from the Tracking Software, in a three-ring binder with index tabs.
- List of individuals that will be the responsible for explaining the documentation, listed by area (i.e. chapter.)
- The balance of accreditation fees, if not already paid in full.



STEP 13: APWA ACKNOWLEDGES REQUEST FOR SITE VISIT

The AWPA will provide a formal acknowledgement for the request for a site visit. The acknowledgement will describe in detail the process to be used and probable schedule.



STEP 14: APWA IDENTIFIES EVALUATION TEAM AND INFORMS AGENCY

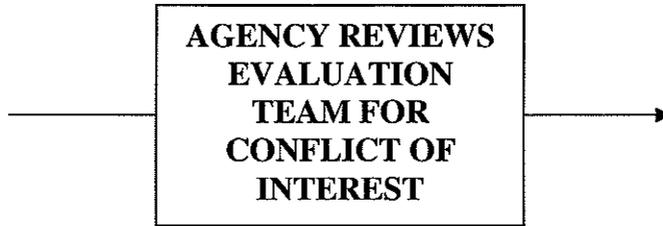
Upon receipt of the invitation, the Staff develops a list of potential evaluation team members. No fewer than three persons constitute a team to visit an Agency, except by mutual agreement between the Council and the Agency. The list of potential team members is then submitted to the Agency for information and identification of potential conflicts of interest.

The Director of Technical Services will select the on-site evaluation team. Wherever possible team members and support staff will be selected based on relevant experience in agencies that are comparable to the agency being accredited.

Depending upon the number of functional areas (chapters in the *Management Practices Manual*) being reviewed and the size of the organization, the typical assessment team may range in size from 3 to 5 evaluators and will include an APWA staff member. Large organizations with multiple sites or large numbers of staff may require larger teams, longer visits, or both.

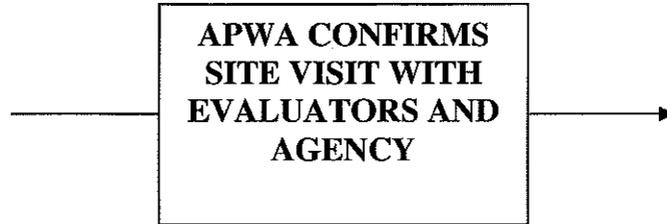
An evaluation team leader will be designated from one of the evaluators. The team leader is responsible for conducting the review with the Agency's project manager. The team leader will provide an orientation at the beginning and a debriefing at the conclusion of the on-site review. The team leader is responsible for assuring that the accreditation team follows the adopted procedure, provides support to the team members and is responsible for logistical issues related to the on-site evaluation.

During the on-site evaluation, the evaluators acting as representatives of the Council will review the Agency's management practices against recommended practices contained in the then-current edition of the *Public Works Management Practices Manual* in effect at the time that the Accreditation Agreement is executed.



STEP 15: AGENCY REVIEWS EVALUATION TEAM FOR CONFLICT OF INTEREST

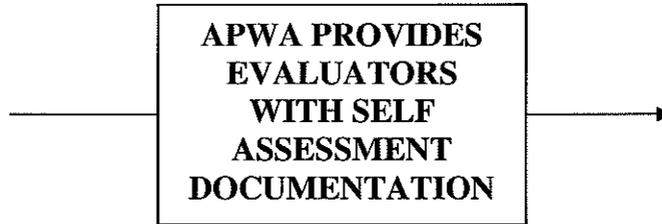
The Agency shall have thirty (30) days from the date of the notification to provide the Council with a list of the proposed evaluators who they believe might not be objective in their evaluation of the Agency's application. The Agency is not required to provide any reason but is expected to act professionally in making such a response. Requesting removal of an evaluator is only to be requested when the Agency has specific knowledge of a team member's potential conflict of interest.



STEP 16: APWA CONFIRMS SITE VISIT WITH EVALUATORS AND AGENCY

After an Agency has responded to the notification of the proposed evaluation team, or thirty days after the notice was sent, whichever occurs first, APWA's Director of Technical Services will send the Agency official notification of the evaluation team and leader. The Agency is responsible for contacting the director of technical services to set a proposed date for the site evaluation visit.

Detailed arrangements for the site visit are made through direct contact between the Agency and the Director of Technical Services, who may designate the team leader as the primary contact. The exact dates of the on-site evaluation will be negotiated based on the Agency's and team members' schedules. A tentative agenda will be proposed by the team leader based on the number of practices to be reviewed and the number of team members. The Agency will offer suggestions for site tours, group dinners, and other agenda items and the agenda will be adjusted as mutually agreed. See Appendix E for a sample agenda.



STEP 17: APWA PROVIDES EVALUATORS WITH SELF ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

Evaluators are provided in advance with self assessment documentation prepared by the Agency along with other pertinent information on the locality or agency provided by the Agency in Step 12. Agencies are encouraged to submit copies of supporting documentation, which will be furnished to the evaluator assigned to review the related practices.



STEP 18: EVALUATORS CONDUCT SITE VISIT AND PREPARE REPORT

The site visit, also known as an on-site evaluation or site evaluation, constitutes an essential and unique step in the initial award and renewal of accreditation. It provides for peer interaction between experienced professional members of the evaluation team and professionals associated with the Agency and appropriate elected or appointed officials of the parent agency.

Through discussions with members of the parent agency staff, Agency staff, support personnel, and by inspection of facilities and equipment, the evaluators are able to form professional judgments about the Agency's degree of compliance with the Criteria. The evaluation team will review and rate the Agency's compliance with each recommended practice on one of the levels of compliance described in Figure 1 (Page 3-11).

In order to be accredited, the Agency must demonstrate "full or substantial compliance" with all applicable practices. Evaluators will be looking for evidence that the Agency's stated practices are actually being followed by the Agency. This will include copies of completed forms, rather than blank ones, to demonstrate the program is actually being used.

The accreditation team is responsible for validating the Agency's compliance with all applicable practices through interviews and observations. The accreditation team will provide the Agency with feedback on its progress during and at the conclusion of the site visit.

On-Site Arrangements: Upon arrival in the agency's city, the evaluation team will secure transportation to various agency facilities to allow inspection and observation. Any expenses that are related to the site visit incurred by the evaluation team are subject to reimbursement by the Agency, this includes meals, airfare, and lodging. Agencies are expected to make arrangements for hotel rooms to be direct billed to the agency and to arrange for payment of the evaluation team's expenses for group meals and entertainment while on-site. Additional normal expenses will be reimbursed by expense voucher. Agencies are cautioned to avoid extravagant or "special" arrangements that would be inconsistent with travel policies in effect for the Agency's own management or executive personnel.

The Agency should arrange for appropriate opportunities to introduce key staff to the evaluators. The Agency should also provide a brief orientation, e.g., briefing and tour to acclimate the evaluators to the Agency and its environment.

During the site visit, the Agency must provide the evaluators with all reasonable assistance to facilitate their on-site review. There are three caveats:

1. The burden of proof regarding compliance rests with the Agency.
2. **Evaluators do not need to review sensitive or confidential documents to confirm compliance.** Appropriate alternatives may be substituted.
3. Evaluators are bound by the confidentiality provisions of the Accreditation Agreement and are not permitted to discuss their findings with persons outside of the Agency or Council, unless authorized by the Agency.

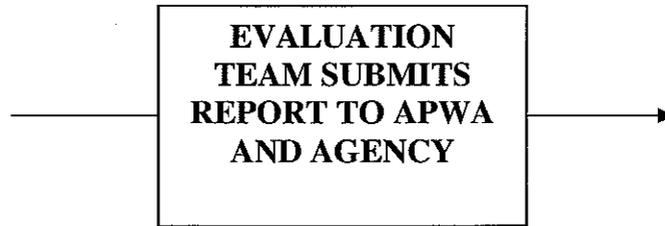
Physical arrangements for evaluators to conduct reviews must take into account the following things:

1. Number of host agency staff to participate with individual reviewers
2. Noise level of multiple groups in one room
3. Access to jointly required files or agency documentation
4. Computer connections if documentation is to be viewed on intra-net

Amenities should include:

- Easy access to water, coffee, soda
- Light snacks
- Easy access to restrooms
- One area with computer access to the internet

Lunch each day will be provided on-site by the Agency and a private room should be available for the Team to meet together during the lunch break.



STEP 19: EVALUATION TEAM SUBMITS REPORT TO APWA AND AGENCY

Within forty-five (45) days of the completion of the site visit, the team leader forwards a written report to the Agency and chair of the Council, in a format prescribed by the Council. The Report includes a recommendation to the Council of the accreditation status to be awarded the Agency. This recommendation is advisory to, but not binding on the council.

The recommendation of the site visit team is transmitted to the Agency along with the detailed site evaluation report. The written report of the team should clearly distinguish between statements of actual or potential deficiencies in meeting criteria, and consultative statements offering recommendations to the Agency.

In addition to providing the Council with a report of the team findings, the site visit is expected to be of benefit to the Agency in its quest for excellence.

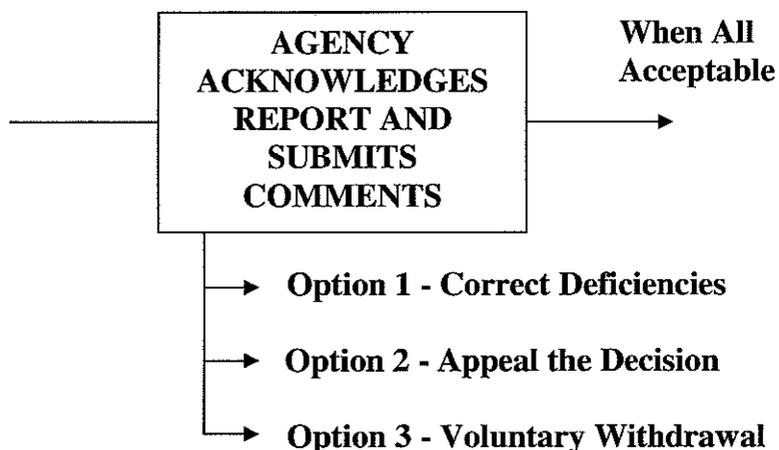
The team leader is responsible for preparing a written report that details the activities and findings of the accreditation review. This formal report is forwarded to the Agency, with a copy to the Director of Technical Services. It will become part of the accreditation submittal to the Council. The site visit team may recommend that the Agency complete additional work on documentation, set additional goals, or improve specific practices before final review by the Council.

The Director of Technical Services will prepare the final accreditation package for submission to the Accreditation Council for action. The report will contain a synopsis of the Agency's application for accreditation, including initial documentation, and the accreditation team's findings and report.

The site evaluation team's report includes:

- A chronological description of events that occurred during the on-site evaluation;
- Team chapter assignments (i.e., which chapters were reviewed by which evaluators);
- Copies of self assessment logs, duly annotated with compliance indicators;
- Documentation of practices with which the Agency was not in compliance or came into compliance during the on-site evaluation;
- Information about operational programs, policies, or procedures that the on-site evaluation team considered as worthy of comment and inclusion in the APWA's database of model practices; and

If the final report indicates areas of noncompliance or other unresolved conditions, APWA staff coordinates their completion with the Agency, the evaluators, or both.



STEP 20: AGENCY ACKNOWLEDGES REPORT AND SUBMITS COMMENTS

The Agency acknowledges receipt of, and may file with the Council a written response ("Response") to the site visit team's Report. The Response is filed within forty-five (45) days of receipt of the Report by the Agency; however, upon written request, the period for responding may be extended for an additional 30 days. The Agency includes in its Response any objections, corrections, additional facts, exhibits, or comments it has to the Report of the site visit team. Any statement of fact in the Report that is not disputed in the Response is considered by the Council to be undisputed.

If the final report reflects full or substantial compliance with all applicable practices, the Agency accreditation review will be scheduled for the next Accreditation Council meeting. If the site visit team or APWA's Director of Technical Services determine that the Agency has not completed all of the requirements for accreditation, the Agency has three options:

Option 1 - Correct Deficiencies

The Agency corrects any deficiencies identified during the accreditation process, thereby fully complying with the recommended practices. The Agency then provides supplemental proof of compliance within 90 days of the receipt of the site visit team's written report. The Evaluation Team may recommend up to 180 days for providing supplemental proof of compliance, if included in their report.

Option 2 - Appeal the Decision.

The Agency has the option to request an appeal of the decision of the site visit team or the Director of Technical Services. The Agency shall submit a written request for appeal to the Accreditation Council, setting forth the specific issues being appealed and the reason that the Council should allow a full hearing on the application for accreditation.

The Director of Technical Services shall submit the request to the Accreditation Council within 30 days of receipt of a written request for appeal. The Council will consider the appeal at the next regularly scheduled meeting, provided the request is received at least 15 days before the meeting. The Agency is not required to send a representative and can request a conference call as an alternative. The application for accreditation cannot be considered at the same meeting as the appeal.

Option 3 - Voluntary Withdrawal.

If accreditation is not recommended by either the accreditation team or the Director of Technical Services, the Agency will be provided with a written report outlining the steps required to attain full compliance with the recommended practices. An agency that does not choose to continue the accreditation process is requested to notify the Director of Technical Services in writing.

Any agency that does not respond in writing of their intent to continue the accreditation process within 90 days of receipt of the written report on the findings of the site visit team, will be deemed to have voluntarily withdrawn its application for accreditation. The Agency may reapply for accreditation at any time.

Agencies who voluntarily withdraw from the accreditation process shall have three years from their withdrawal to re-apply for accreditation under the re-accreditation program.



STEP 21: ACCREDITATION COUNCIL MEETS TO CONSIDER AGENCY ACCREDITATION

Applications for accreditation are evaluated by experienced public works professionals from across the United States and Canada. APWA's Director of Technical Services is responsible for coordinating the accreditation program through the Council, which is the governing body with the sole authority to award or deny accreditation.

Documentation of Basis for Decisions. Before rendering a decision on the award, denial, renewal, placement on probation, or revocation of accreditation, the Council reviews the current self assessment by the Agency (application or mid-term report), the most recent site visit report, the Agency's Response to that Report, and other relevant materials and the Agency's comments on these materials. The Council may make a decision or may defer action until its next scheduled meeting in order to obtain more information on which to base a decision. The decision of the Council is recorded in the minutes and transmitted not later than thirty (30) days following the decision to the chief public works officer of the Agency, together with a statement of the factual basis for the decision and, in the case of an adverse decision, the criteria the Agency did not meet. That communication of the final accrediting decision clearly distinguishes between statements speaking to actual or potential deficiencies in meeting criteria and statements offering consultative recommendations to the Agency. In the decision letter, the Council encourages the Agency to share information about its accredited status appropriately.

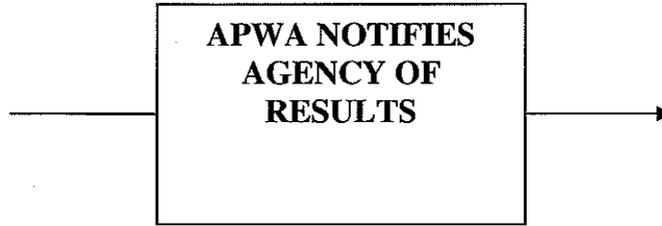
Award, Renewal, or Denial of Accreditation. Four types of decisions may be made by the Council to award, renew, or deny accreditation.

(1) In the case of a new Agency applying for accreditation, the Council first votes whether to grant accreditation. If the Council votes not to grant full accreditation, then the Council votes whether to grant provisional accreditation. Agencies that receive neither provisional nor full accreditation are denied accreditation.

(2) In the case of a provisionally accredited Agency, the Council first votes whether to grant full accreditation. If the Council votes not to grant full accreditation, the Council votes whether to renew provisional accreditation for a specified period. Agencies that receive neither accreditation nor continued provisional accreditation have their provisional accreditation revoked.

(3) In the case of a fully accredited Agency, the Council votes whether to re-accredit the Agency. An Agency whose full accreditation is not renewed is automatically placed on probation for a period of not less than one full year.

(4) In the case of an Agency on probation, the Council votes whether to reinstate full accreditation. If the Council votes against reinstatement, it then votes whether to continue probation for a specified period. An Agency that is neither reinstated nor granted continued probation has its accreditation revoked.



STEP 22: APWA NOTIFIES AGENCY OF RESULTS

The Council will make a decision based on the report of the on-site evaluation team and other information supplied by the Director of Technical Services. The Council will deny accreditation to those agencies not meeting the minimum criteria. The Council has two options to approve accreditation:

Full Accreditation. Accreditation represents a mark of excellence that recognizes agencies for their commitment to improving the quality of service provided to the community. Agencies that achieve full accreditation are expected to maintain the recommended practices that were documented as part of the accreditation process. In addition, it is expected that accredited agencies will continue to improve their management practices as a condition of continued accreditation.

Provisional Accreditation. The Council may grant provisional accreditation to agencies that complete the on-site evaluation but are not in full compliance with all applicable recommended practices. Accreditation may be granted on a provisional basis, subject to conditions imposed by the Council.

The Agency shall have 90 days to comply with the conditions imposed by the Council and submit documentation to the Director of Technical Services. The Director of Technical Services will determine whether the Agency has complied with the conditions set by the Accreditation Council in their action, and is empowered to enroll the Agency as a fully accredited agency if the conditions are met. If in the opinion of the Director of Technical Services the Agency has not met the conditions, a written determination will be sent to the Agency and the matter will be scheduled for the next Council meeting.

The Council also has the power to revoke or cancel accreditation based on due process. The Council has the power to award provisional accreditation, or to place an accredited agency on probation if the Council suspects that an agency is no longer able to assure compliance with established standards.

The Council will require accredited agencies to maintain compliance and live by the letter and spirit of the accreditation program. There is a presumption on the part of the Council that all accredited agencies will operate in compliance with the established practices, in a manner that most effectively meet the needs of their Agency and the citizens they serve.

Accreditation is granted for a set period, four (4) years, at which time the Agency's accreditation shall expire.

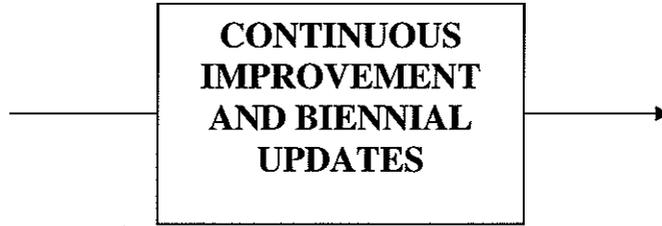


STEP 23: CERTIFICATE OF ACCREDITATION AWARDED TO AGENCY

The Council and APWA will jointly award accreditation to the Agency. Representatives of the Council and APWA will present the award at a meeting of the Agency's elected officials. APWA will issue a press release from national headquarters recognizing the achievement of accreditation by the Agency.

Recognition for achieving accreditation will also be given at the International Public Works Congress. All agencies achieving accreditation since the last Congress will be recognized at the annual awards reception. Recognition will also be given in APWA's official publication, *The Reporter*, or other publications.

Effective Date of a Decision and its Public Announcement. Award of full or provisional accreditation is effective as of the adjournment of the Council meeting in which the decision was made. The next site visit is scheduled from this same date. An annual listing of accredited agencies will be placed in an appropriate professional journal selected by the Council. The listing reflects the latest decisions of the Council, including revocations, except that no change in the status of an Agency will be made if the Agency has filed an appeal still under evaluation. In the same public listing, notice is given of agencies that voluntarily withdraw from accredited status. The Council will make every effort to correct in a timely manner any errors of fact or possibly misleading statements in its public listing.



STEP 24: CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND ANNUAL UPDATES

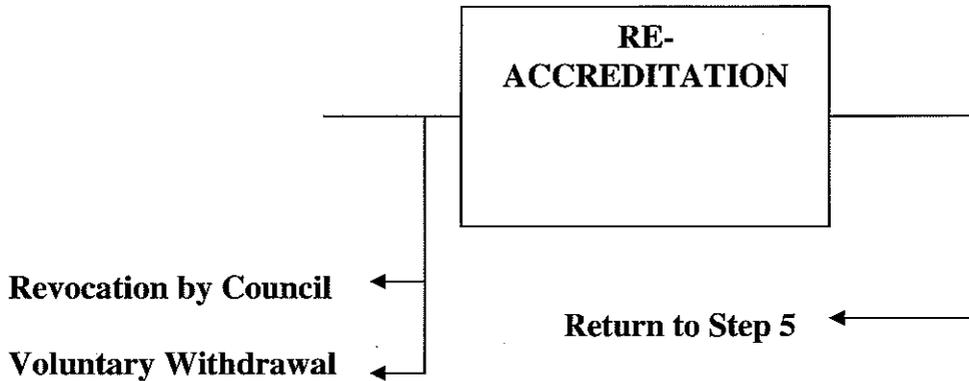
Agencies are strongly encouraged to constantly strive to improve their practices, regardless of accreditation status. For those agencies that are granted accreditation, biennial written updates are required to demonstrate continuing compliance and progress with self-imposed goals for improvement.

Agencies awarded accreditation must submit a biennial update, due on the second anniversary date of the original accreditation. The mid-term report must address significant changes in the Agency. The report must include an overview of changes in the parent agency that might affect management or operation of the Agency.

It is expected that an accredited agency will work toward improvement of its management and operational practices on a continual basis. The report should address the goals set during the accreditation process and may propose changes in existing goals or new goals. The reporting process provides a framework for measuring the Agency's progress since the original accreditation. The report must include the following:

1. A description of improvement efforts completed during the past year.
2. Identification and discussion of practices, which had a change in applicability to a given agency.
3. Certification that the Agency is still in full or substantial compliance with *all* of the applicable practices.

Reports should be submitted to the Director of Technical Services at APWA Headquarters.



STEP 25: RE-ACCREDITATION

Re-Accreditation is required every four (4) years. In order to be considered for re-accreditation, the Agency must have submitted the required biennial update of the documentation described in the previous step.

An on-site evaluation team will visit the Agency and conduct a re-accreditation review in a similar manner as utilized for the initial accreditation review but will likely be less intensive. Agencies that are in full compliance with all applicable recommended practices will be expected to focus on how the Agency is going to improve its level of service to the community.

The intent of the accreditation process is to provide a continuous cycle of self assessment, evaluation, and continuous improvement. Accreditation, or re-accreditation, is not an end product of a linear process. Rather it can be likened to an element of a circular process often referred to as continuous improvement.

Revocation of Accreditation. A provisionally approved Agency that receives neither full accreditation nor continued provisional accreditation has its provisional accreditation revoked. An Agency on probation that is neither reinstated to full accreditation nor granted continued probation has its accreditation revoked.

An Agency on full accreditation that does not have its full accreditation continued is automatically placed on probationary status for a period of not less than one year. The placement of an Agency on probation is a clear warning that, if it does not substantially correct the deficiencies noted by the Council, the Agency would have its accreditation revoked at the end of the probationary period.

The Council has the authority to delete an Agency from the list of approved agencies when the Council has sufficient documentary evidence that the Agency is no longer a functional entity. At a subsequent time, the Agency may reapply for accreditation without prejudice.

Voluntary Withdrawal From Accredited Status: The chief elected or appointed official of the community may request the removal of an agency from the published list of accredited agencies. The Council will comply with that request and delete the Agency's name from the list. At a subsequent time, the Agency may reapply for accreditation without prejudice.

Chapter 4 **APPEAL PROVISIONS AND PROCEDURES**

The fee for appeal will be due with the appeal filing.

a. Documentary Basis for Decisions. Before rendering a decision on the award, denial, renewal, placement on probation, or revocation of accreditation, the Council reviews the current self assessment by the Public Works Agency (application or mid-term report), the most recent site visit report, the Public Works Agency's Response to that Report, and other relevant materials and the Public Works Agency's comments on these materials. The Council may make a decision or may defer action until its next scheduled meeting in order to obtain more information on which to base a decision. The decision of the Council is recorded in the minutes and transmitted not later than thirty (30) days following the decision to the chief public works officer of the Public Works Agency, together with a statement of the factual basis for the decision and, in the case of an adverse decision, the criteria the Public Works Agency did not meet. That communication of the final accreditation decision clearly distinguishes between statements speaking to actual or potential deficiencies in meeting criteria and statements offering consultative recommendations to the Public Works Agency. In the decision letter, the Council encourages the Public Works Agency to share information about its accredited status appropriately.

b. Award, Renewal, or Denial of Accreditation. Four types of decisions may be made by the Council to award, renew, or deny accreditation.

See Step 21 (page 3-32) for detail of this process.

c. Effective Date of a Decision and Its Public Announcement. Award of full or provisional accreditation is effective as of the adjournment of the Council meeting in which the decision was made. The next site visit is scheduled from this same date. An annual listing of accredited agencies will be placed on the APWA web site. The listing will reflect the latest decisions of the Council, including revocations, except that no change in the status of a Public Works Agency is reflected for a Public Works Agency that has an unresolved appeal. In the same public listing, notice is given of agencies that voluntarily withdraw from accredited status. The Council will make every effort to correct in a timely manner any errors of fact or possibly misleading statements in its public listing.

d. Revocation of Accreditation. A provisionally approved Public Works Agency that receives neither full accreditation nor continued provisional accreditation has its provisional accreditation revoked. A Public Works Agency on probation that is neither reinstated on full accreditation nor granted continued probation has its accreditation revoked.

A Public Works Agency on full accreditation that does not have its full accreditation continued is automatically placed on probationary status for a period of not less than one year. The placement of a Public Works Agency on probation is a clear warning that, if it does not substantially correct the deficiencies noted by the Council, the Public Works Agency would have its accreditation revoked at the end of the probationary period.

The Council has the authority to delete a Public Works Agency from the list of approved agencies when the Council has sufficient documentary evidence that the Public Works Agency is no longer a functional entity. At a subsequent time, the Public Works Agency may reapply for accreditation without prejudice.

APPEAL OF DECISION OF THE COUNCIL

a. Filing an Appeal. The chief elected or appointed official of the public agency, or the chief public works officer may appeal any of the decisions of the Council within 30 days of receipt of written notice of the Council's decision. The appeal must specify the grounds on which the appeal is made. The appeal should be addressed to the Executive Director of the American Public Works Association. The burden of presenting the argument initially, and/or persuading the appeals body, rests with the Public Works Agency filing the appeal.

b. Appealable Decisions. Only the following decisions of the Council may be appealed:

- (1) In the case of a Public Works Agency applying for an initial site visit, a denial of the initial visit;
- (2) In the case of a Public Works Agency applying for accreditation, a denial of full or provisional accreditation;
- (3) In the case of a Public Works Agency applying for accreditation, the award of provisional instead of full accreditation;
- (4) In the case of a provisionally or full accredited Public Works Agency, a denial of full accreditation, continued provisional accreditation, or revocation of provisional accreditation;
- (5) In the case of a provisionally accredited Public Works Agency, a decision to place the Public Works Agency on probation;
- (6) In the case of a Public Works Agency on probationary status, a decision to continue probation or to revoke accreditation;
- (7) In the case where the Council decides to request the next site visit in a fewer number of years than the normal intervals defined in Section 4.b. above.

(8) In the case where the Council denies re-accreditation of any Agency.

c. Formation of ad hoc Appeal Panel. Within 30 days of receipt of the appeal, the Executive Director of the American Public Works Association will name three members of an ad hoc Appeal Panel and three alternates. None of the designees will have had affiliation with the Public Works Agency filing the appeal or with the accreditation process relating to that Public Works Agency. Staff of the Council determines the willingness of the designated principals and alternates to serve and notifies the Public Works Agency of the names of the three principals. If the Public Works Agency shows good cause why a named principal is unacceptable, an alternate who is acceptable to both parties is selected.

d. The Meeting of the Appeal Panel. The Appeal Panel shall meet within 90 days of the date on which the Public Works Agency submits an appeal to the Council or on a date mutually acceptable to the Public Works Agency, the Appeal Panel, and the Council representative. The Public Works Agency may have one or more representatives appear before the Panel to make an oral and/or written presentation and to respond to questions from the Panel. The Chairperson of the Council designates a representative to appear before the Appeal Panel to support the decision of the Council and to respond to questions of the Appeal Panel. Counsel may represent either party; however, the proceeding is conducted on an informal basis. The Appeal Panel may request the assistance of counsel to provide guidance in the interpretation and resolution of legal or procedural problems that may arise in the context of an appeal.

e. Documents To Be Considered by the Appeal Panel. The issues addressed by the Appeal Panel are limited to those included in the appeal made by the Public Works Agency. The panel, the appellant, the Council's representative, and legal counsel will be furnished with all of the documents reviewed by the Council in making its decision and the letter notifying the Public Works Agency of the Council's decision. The Appeal Panel may not consider changes that may have been made by the Public Works Agency that would alter the nature of the programs described in these documents.

f. Decisions of the Panel. The function of an Appeal Panel in a given case is to review the decision of the Council based on the record that was before the Council at the time of its decision. In the event that the decision of the Council is not upheld, the case will be remanded to the Council for disposition in a manner consistent with the findings of the Appeal Panel. The decision of the Council shall stand if the Appeal Panel does not remand the appeal to the Council.

g. Reporting of the Decision of the Panel. The report of the Panel, including the decision and reasons for such, is prepared within 30 days and is addressed to the Executive Director of the American Public Works Association. Copies are forwarded to the chief elected or appointed official of the public agency, to the chief public works officer, and to the chairperson of the Council.

Chapter 5 **PROCESS CONCERNS, DISPUTES AND COMPLAINTS**

The following section describes procedures that will be followed for handling concerns regarding the accreditation process, status of a Public Works Agency, or about evaluators during the conduct of the on-site evaluation. The section also discusses complaints received from third parties about accredited agencies.

a. Complaints on the Operation of an Accredited Agency from a Third Party. To be considered by the Council, a complaint about the operation of an accredited Public Works Agency must:

- (1) Be written and signed;
- (2) Identify the individual group or legal entity represented by the complainant;
- (3) Present substantial evidence that the subject Public Works Agency is not in compliance with one or more of the criteria in use at the time referred to in the complaint;
- (4) Demonstrate, when reasonably possible, that serious effort has been made to pursue all review procedures provided within the public agency in which the Public Works Agency is located; and
- (5) Grant permission to send the complaint, in its entirety, to the Public Works Agency.

Receipt of a complaint meeting these requirements is acknowledged by Council staff and sent to the Public Works Agency for comment. Both complaint and comment are placed on the Council agenda for its next scheduled meeting. The Council may reach a decision at that meeting, wherein the matter is resolved and the Public Works Agency will be so informed. Alternatively, the Council may vote to pursue the matter further, either by further correspondence with the Public Works Agency or by means of a special site visit to provide additional information on which to reach a decision on the accreditation status of the Public Works Agency. The Public Works Agency is afforded the opportunity to comment on any additional information provided to the Council by means of a special site visit. The Council communicates the disposition of the complaint, in writing, to the complainant and the Public Works Agency.

b. Against Actions of Site Evaluation Team Members or Visitors. The chief elected or appointed official of the public agency, or the chief public works officer may file a complaint regarding the actions of the site evaluators. That official must notify the Council of the Agency's intent to file a complaint within 14 days after completion of the site visit. Subsequently, the complaint should be addressed to the Council and must:

- (1) Be written and signed by the chief public works official;
- (2) Be sent *before* the host institution has received the written report from the site visit team and within 30 days after completion of the site visit;
- (3) Provide a clear description of the critical incident(s) in question; and,

- (4) Grant permission to send the complaint, in its entirety, to the evaluation team members or others named in the complaint.

Receipt of a complaint meeting these requirements is acknowledged by the Council's staff and held until the Report of the evaluation team is received. The complaint is sent to all members of the evaluation team with request for comment within 30 days. At the same time, the site evaluation Report is sent to the Public Works Agency for comment. Upon receipt of (1) the comments by evaluators on the complaint and (2) the Response of the Public Works Agency to the site visit report, both sets of documents are placed on the Council's agenda for its next scheduled meeting.

In mailing the agenda to the Council members, the complaint is covered separately and not bound with the site visit report and Public Works Agency's response in the main agenda book. In preparation for the meeting, Council members are requested to observe the following procedures. Each member is asked to review the complaint and evaluators' comments, and then to review the site visit Report and Response to it and to form an opinion as to whether the action(s) of the evaluators were such to void the site visit report.

Based upon its review of the relevant materials, the Council may reach the following decisions by a majority vote:

- (1) Deny the complaint, thereby sustaining the evaluators;
- (2) Sustain the complaint, thereby requiring a reprimand of the evaluators, which may include deletion from the list of potential evaluators maintained by the Council; or
- (3) Vote to pursue the matter further, by further correspondence either with the parties involved, or by means of a special fact-finding group, to provide additional information on which to reach a decision.

In the event the Council votes to sustain the complaint, it then must determine whether the critical incident(s) influenced the content of the site evaluation report. If the incident is determined to have influenced the site visit report, the Council voids the site visit Report and will schedule a second on-site evaluation at the Council's expense. If the incident is determined not to have influenced the site visit Report, the Council proceeds with its decision regarding the Public Works Agency's compliance.

In no case is the Council's decision regarding the Public Works Agency's compliance with the Criteria made until the complaint has been disposed of by the Council. The Council communicates the disposition of the complaint, in writing, to the chief public works officer and to the evaluators.

c. Processing of Accreditation Complaint that is in Litigation. If in the course of processing a complaint, the Council finds that the party against which the complaint is filed is involved in litigation over the same issue, the Council, upon advice from legal counsel, may exercise its discretion in determining the most appropriate action to take. That discretion can be guided by a number of factors, including whether the individual expressing the complaint is willing to cooperate with the Council, how protracted the litigation is likely to be. Whether the failure to initiate action against the Public Works Agency immediately might damage the public interest, and the impact on the confidentiality of the Council's deliberations if its files are subpoenaed during the course of litigation. In all instances, the Council should consider the potential effect of its action upon the interests of the public and the profession.

Chapter 6 **RECOGNITION AND AWARDS**

Awards. Two levels of recognition are provided for agencies that participate in the Self Assessment and/or Accreditation processes. The two awards are for:

- (1) Completion of the self assessment process and submission of the results to the elected body; and
- (2) Achieving full accreditation or re-accreditation through an on-site evaluation.

Recognition. Any agency that completes the Self Assessment process, whether or not it intends to apply for accreditation, is eligible for recognition by APWA. Requirements for recognizing an agency include completion of the Self Assessment, including preparation of complete documentation, presentation of a report to the Agency's elected officials at a public hearing, and submission of documentation to the Director of Technical Services. The recognition is available to any agency, regardless of its intention to apply for full accreditation.

Full Accreditation. A representative of APWA will present a plaque to the Agency at a meeting of the Agency's elected board. A press release will be issued from APWA Headquarters to news media in the Agency's service area. In addition, the Agency will be recognized in APWA's official magazine, *The APWA Reporter* and/or other publications of the Association.

APPENDIX A

SAMPLE LETTER OF APPLICATION

(Print on Agency Letterhead)

Date

American Public Works Association
Director of Technical Services
2345 Grand Blvd, Suite 500
Kansas City, MO 64108-2641

Subject: Application for Accreditation

The [insert Parent Agency name] is pleased to submit an application for Accreditation of the [insert Agency/Department name].

[Insert a statement of support from the elected body, or appointed CEO, indicating that the whole agency will support the Self Assessment and Accreditation phases of the program]

[Insert additional text as desired to indicate support]

Enclosed is a completed application, Accreditation Agreement, and [check or purchase order information, including amount].

Please contact [insert name and contact information] if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

[insert name]

[insert title—must be chief elected or appointed official]

Enclosures



**ACCREDITATION COUNCIL
OF THE
AMERICAN PUBLIC WORKS ASSOCIATION
APPLICATION FOR
VOLUNTARY ACCREDITATION**

Agency Name: * _____

*An entire operating division of a public works agency can apply for accreditation if it is a separate, semi-autonomous unit of government.

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Mailing Address: _____

(If different from street address)

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

• Parent Agency's Chief Executive Officer: _____

Title: _____ Elected - Or Appointed -

• Public Works Agency's Chief Executive: _____

Title: _____ Elected - Or Appointed -

Phone: _____ FAX: _____ E-Mail _____

APWA Member? -- Yes, I.D. Number _____ -- No

APWA Agency Member? -- Yes, Contact Individual _____ -- No

Web address: _____

• Public Works Agency's Accreditation Manager: _____

Title: _____

APWA Member? -- Yes, I.D. Number _____ -- No

Phone: _____ FAX: _____ E-Mail _____

The public works agency is responsible for the Functional Areas, which are checked on the reverse side of this application form. The agency is responsible for complying with all recommended practices in the Functional Areas for which the public works agency has responsibility. Each area is covered by a separate chapter in the *Public Works Management Practices Manual* and forms the basis for fees charged for the accreditation process.

We hereby apply for voluntary accreditation by the Accreditation Council of the American Public Works Association. By means of this application, the agency acknowledges its commitment to accreditation and is willing to devote the resources necessary to complete the accreditation process. The agency is prepared to provide such information necessary for the Council to fairly evaluate the agency's eligibility for accreditation.

Agency will indemnify and hold harmless APWA and the Council from liability, claims, suits, expenses, including court costs and attorneys' fees, and other obligations arising out of or attributable to APWA's and the Council's negligence in such accreditation. Agency releases APWA and the Council, and will indemnify them against and hold them harmless from, any claim or liability of Agency or its employees and agents, for damages for defamation, libel or slander, arising out of, or attributable to, Agency's Application for Accreditation and/or the approval, denial, renewal or termination thereof.

Enclosed is a letter of commitment from the parent agency's Chief Executive Officer, a completed Accreditation Agreement and a check or purchase order for the fees. We understand that our agency is entering into a non-adversarial, collaborative relationship with the Council for the purpose of attaining accredited status. The agency can terminate its application status at any time upon notice as indicated in the aforementioned Accreditation Agreement, Sections 4.2, 6.2, and 6.4, but will be eligible for only a partial refund as contained in the Agreement.

Executed this ____ day of _____, 200__.

By: _____, Title: _____

(Typed or printed name)

APPENDIX C

ACCREDITATION AGREEMENT

This agreement is entered into between the _____ (full name of agency) with principal offices located at _____ herewith referred to as the "Agency"; the "Accreditation Council of the APWA", herewith referred to as the "Council"; and the APWA, a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation, herewith referred to as "APWA."

WITNESSETH

The Agency and the Council, for and in consideration of the mutual covenants set forth in this Agreement and the compensation to be paid to the APWA, acting as the fiduciary agent for the Council, as hereafter specified, covenant and agree to be bound by the provisions, terms, and covenants contained herein. WHEREFORE, each party covenants and agrees as follows:

Section 1. PURPOSE OF THIS AGREEMENT:

1.1 The purpose of this Agreement is to establish the relationships between, and set the responsibilities of, the parties of the Agreement (a) by the Council assessing the Agency's compliance with recommended practices established by the APWA in order for the Council to determine if the Agency is eligible for designation as accredited, and (b) by the Agency's maintaining compliance with those standards by which they were accredited.

Section 2. AGENCY'S RESPONSIBILITIES:

The Agency agrees to:

- 2.1 Provide all information, using its best and honest judgment in good faith, requested by the Council.
- 2.2 Provide all documents, files, records, and other data as required by the Council and APWA so far as the same may be provided in accordance with laws, regulations, and ordinances of the state, county, locality, or municipality in which the agency is located.
- 2.3 Conduct a self assessment as to compliance with recommended practices, and provide full and accurate results thereof to the Council using software developed and approved by the Council.
- 2.4 Provide one or more persons to assist the Council representatives, hereafter referred to as the "Evaluators," in making the necessary inquiries and assessments of agency information relative to compliance with recommended practices; provide access to files and records; and provide necessary facilities that are requested by the Evaluators*.
- 2.5 Respond to all communications from the Council within ten (10) business days from the receipt thereof.

Section 3. COUNCIL'S RESPONSIBILITIES:

The Council agrees to:

- 3.1 Provide necessary documentation, forms, and instructions regarding the accreditation process.
- 3.2 Provide Evaluators for the purpose of conducting an on-site evaluation of the Agency's compliance with recommended practices, *
- 3.3 Promptly analyze compliance data and advise the Agency of the results of the on-site evaluation and the need for additional information, if any. *
- 3.4 Conduct a hearing and certify the Agency as accredited if the relevant standards are complied with. *
- 3.5 If the Agency is accredited, (a) provide a certificate, and (b) make available indicia of accreditation.
- 3.6 If the Agency is not accredited following an examination of compliance with recommended practices, provide the Agency with reasons for the Council decision.

*This provision applies only after payment of on-site evaluation costs by the agency.

Section 4. TIME PERIOD COVERED BY THIS AGREEMENT:

- 4.1 This agreement shall take effect when the Agency's Chief Executive Officer, or authorized representative, and the Executive Director of the APWA, acting on its behalf, sign the Agreement. This Agreement shall be effective upon signing by the second party.
- 4.2 The terms and covenants of this Agreement shall terminate in the following circumstances:
 - (a) Upon execution of a Re-accreditation Agreement between the Agency and Council: or

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- (b) Upon expiration of the 36th month following the effective date of this Agreement unless a successful on-site evaluation if completed within that period of time; or
- (c) Upon written notice by the Agency that it withdraws from the accreditation process; or
- (d) Upon termination pursuant to Section 5.2 or 6.3 hereof; or
- (e) Upon expiration or revocation of the Agency's accredited status.

4.3 Council may, at its discretion, upon request by the Agency, extend this Agreement in accordance with Section

Section 5. MODIFICATION:

5.1 There shall be no modifications of this Agreement except in writing, signed by both parties, and executed with the same formalities as this document.

5.2 The Agency recognizes and acknowledges that it will be necessary for the Council to make reasonable modifications and amendments to this Agreement and other related documents, including but NOT limited to the accreditation standards and procedures thereof and hereby agrees to endorse all modifications and amendments, which the Agency deems reasonable. In the event the Agency deems such modifications or amendments unreasonable, the Council reserves the right to terminate this Agreement after due consideration thereof by giving notice by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, that in the event the Agency refuses to accept and execute such modifications or amendments, then and in such event, this Agreement will be terminated.

Section 6. TIME AND MANNER OF PAYMENTS:

6.1 The Agency may elect one of two options (lump sum or installment) for payment of the accreditation fee, which is not refundable (except as noted in Section 6.3). Under either option, the fees do not include the Agency's responsibility to reimburse for costs associated with the on-site evaluation. On-site evaluation costs will be determined by the APWA and will be billed separately upon completion of the on-site evaluation.

The Agency agrees to one of the following options by checking the appropriate block

(a) Lump Sum Option

The Agency is responsible for directly or indirectly administering, managing or providing public works related services in _____ functional areas, more fully described on the Agency's Application for Accreditation, which is hereby incorporated into this agreement. The Agency will remit to APWA a single payment in the lump-sum amount for processing of the accreditation of \$ _____, upon the signing of this Agreement by the Agency's Chief Executive Officer.

The total amount of \$ _____ is herein remitted to the American Public Works Association via check number _____; or

Purchase Order No. _____ is herein remitted to the APWA in the amount of \$ _____.

OR

(b) Installment Option

The Agency is responsible for directly or indirectly administering, managing or providing public works related services in _____ functional areas, more fully described on the Agency's Application for Accreditation, which is hereby incorporated into this agreement. The Agency will remit to APWA a total payment of \$ _____ for processing of the accreditation. The first installment of \$ _____ (50% of total fee) is due at the signing of this Agreement by the Agency's Chief Executive Officer. The second installment of \$ _____ (remaining 50% of fee) is payable by the end of the eighteenth (18th) month from the effective date of this Agreement or at the time of submission of the completed self evaluation and request for the onsite evaluation, whichever occurs first

The first installment of \$ _____ is herein remitted to the American Public Works Association via check number _____; or

Purchase Order No. _____ is herein remitted to the APWA in the amount of \$ _____.

*The Council reserves the right to terminate this Agreement if an installment payment is delinquent by more than sixty days.

6.2 If the Agency is determined ineligible to apply for participation in the accreditation program, subsequent to execution of this Agreement and payment of fees, a refund of fees received will be paid to the Agency, less a \$1,000 processing fee.

6.3 The Agency may be invoiced for the Council's and APWA's projected on-site evaluation costs plus a 10% contingency (based on estimated costs,) and payment would be required at least thirty (30) days before the on-site evaluations. If the projected costs exceed the actual on-site costs, the excess amount deposited will be returned promptly to the Agency by APWA. If the actual costs exceed the deposit, the Agency agrees to reimburse APWA within thirty (30) days of receipt of an invoice for the additional costs.

6.4 If an Agency voluntarily withdraws its application for Accreditation subsequent to execution of this Agreement, the Agency shall receive a refund based on the following schedule, based on the effective date of this agreement:

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Less than one-year:	Seventy percent (70%) of the total fee
More than one-year, but less than two years:	Fifty percent (50%) of the total fee
More than two-years	No refund allowed

Refunds shall not exceed the amount actually paid by the Agency.

6.5 If the Agency requires more than 36 months to complete a successful on-site evaluation, the Agency agrees to pay a non-refundable annual fee amounting to 25% of the fee in effect on the effective date of this Accreditation Agreement. This annual fee shall be due and payable 36 months after the effective date of this Agreement, and every 12 months thereafter, until a successful on-site evaluation has been achieved or this Agreement has been terminated in accordance with Section 4 supra. No such additional fee will be levied where the Council or APWA delays the on-site evaluation for their convenience or where the on-site evaluation cannot be reasonably scheduled within the original 36-month period.

6.6 If the Agency's initial on-site evaluation is not successful (i.e., work after the initial on-site evaluation is required to achieve compliance with recommended practices), the Agency shall prepay estimated costs, plus a 10% contingency, (based on estimated costs) for a subsequent on-site evaluation and/or additional staff/evaluator assistance required on or off site. The additional work required (on and/or off site) must be completed within six (6) months. If the projected costs exceed the actual costs, the APWA will promptly return the excess amount to the Agency.

Section 7. CONFIDENTIALITY:

7.1 The Council shall receive and hold confidential any and all reports, files, records and other data obtained from the Agency pursuant to this Agreement. The Council shall not disclose, distribute, or release to any person or organization, except authorized Agency officials, employees or agents, or upon order of any court, state or federal, any materials or contents thereof, either provided by the Agency or developed by the Council and APWA in the furtherance of its responsibilities under this Agreement. Notwithstanding anything in this Agreement to the contrary including the above, the Council is authorized, but not required, in the exercise of its sole discretion, to conduct an open meeting regarding the Agency's candidacy for accreditation or its continued compliance with applicable standards, including but not limited to all factual matters relating to the assessment, appraisal, and determination of accreditation and all comments which form a basis for the opinion either in favor of or against accreditation, unless specifically notified by the Agency in writing to the contrary, in which case such meeting shall be closed to the public. Nothing herein shall be construed to require the Council to conduct all or part of its meeting in public, including but not limited to the right of the Council, in the exercise of its sole discretion, to terminate an open meeting at any time and conclude such meeting in a closed session.

7.2 In response to inquiries concerning the Agency, the Council's reply will be to identify the Agency's status. All other requests for information will be directed to the Agency's Chief Executive Officer.

Section 8. NEWS RELEASES:

8.1 Notwithstanding any provision of this Agreement to the contrary, the Council and APWA shall have the right to identify the Agency in news releases and its publicity program after the Agency's on-site evaluation has been scheduled; the purpose of said news release and publicity program will be to identify the Agency as seeking accreditation. Where specific mention of the Agency is used in this regard, a copy of the news release or publicity material will be provided to the Agency for its information.

8.2 The Agency shall provide Council with a copy of all its news releases or publicity material concerning its accreditation activities.

8.3 The Council and APWA may release the identity of the Agency to other agencies considering or involved in either a self assessment or accreditation. The express purpose of releasing the identity is to encourage, promote and facilitate networking among agencies.

Section 9. THE COUNCIL AS AN INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR:

9.1 In all matters pertaining to this Agreement, the Council shall be acting as an independent contractor, and neither the Council and APWA nor any officer, employee, or agent of the Council and APWA will be deemed an employee of the Agency. The selection and designation of the personnel of the Council and APWA in performance of its responsibilities under this Agreement shall be made by the Council and APWA.

9.2 In all matters pertaining to this Agreement and the relationship between the parties thereto, the Executive Director of the Council and APWA will act in the name of the Council and APWA.

Section 10. INDEMNIFICATION:

10.1 The Agency shall indemnify and hold harmless the Council and APWA from all claims, demands, suits, and actions against the Council and APWA as a result of the distribution by the Agency to third persons of any reports, results of analyses, recommendations, or other communications furnished to it by the Council and APWA.

10.2 The Agency shall indemnify and hold harmless the Council and APWA, its officers, employees, and agents from any and all liability, loss or damage, which may be suffered or incurred as a result of claims, demands, suits, or actions arising out of the performance of either party to this Agreement.

10.3 The person signing on behalf of the Agency hereby represents and warrants that he or she has the power and authority to execute this Agreement and to bind said Agency to all terms and covenants contained herein including, but not limited to, the provisions of this Section 10.

10.4 Agency will indemnify and hold harmless APWA and the Council from liability, claims, suits, expenses, including court costs and attorneys' fees, and other obligations arising out of or attributable to APWA's and the Council's negligence in such accreditation. Agency releases APWA and the Council, and will indemnify them against and hold them harmless from, any claim or liability of Agency or its employees and agents, for damages for defamation, libel or slander, arising out of, or attributable to, Agency's Application for Accreditation and/or the approval, denial, renewal or termination thereof.

Section 11. INTEGRATION:

11.1 This instrument embodies the whole Agreement of the parties. The parties warrant that there are no promises, terms, conditions, or obligations other than those contained herein. This Agreement shall supersede all previous communications, representations, or agreements, either verbal or written, between the parties hereto.

Section 12. SEVERABILITY:

12.1 If any provision of this Agreement or the application of such provision to any person or circumstance shall be held invalid, the remainder of this Agreement and the application of such provisions to persons or circumstances other than those to which it is held invalid shall not be affected thereby.

Section 13. CHOICE OF LAW:

13.1 This Agreement and the rights of the parties hereunder shall be governed by and interpreted in accordance with the law of the State of Missouri.

Section 14. MAINTAINING THE AGENCY'S ACCREDITATION STATUS:

14.1 When the Agency is awarded accreditation by the Council, the Agency agrees to maintain compliance with those applicable standards under which accreditation was awarded. After award of accreditation, the Agency agrees to (a) file a mid-term report on forms supplied by the Council that testify to its continuing compliance, and (b) promptly notify the Council when it cannot or does not maintain compliance with recommended practices.

14.2 As regards maintaining the agency's accreditation status, the Agency and the Council acknowledge and agree to be bound by the provisions of the Accreditation Process Guide.

Section 15. WARRANTY NOT INTENDED OR IMPLIED:

15.1 It is understood that the Council's award of accreditation does not constitute a warranty, express, or implied, of total or continued compliance by the Agency with all recommended practices of accreditation and, further, that it is not a substitute for the Agency's ongoing and in-depth monitoring and evaluation of its activities and the quality of its services.

Section 16. WAIVER:

16.1 Any waiver by the Council or any breach of this Agreement by the Agency shall relate only to that particular breach and shall not amount to a general waiver.

Section 17. NOTICE:

17.1 Any notice between the parties shall be in writing and set postage prepaid, to the addresses as specified in the preamble of this Agreement or to such other address as either party may specify in writing in accordance with this section.

Section 18. HEADINGS:

18.1 The heading of this Agreement shall not be deemed part of it and shall not in any way effect its construction.

Section 19. ESTABLISHMENT OF RECOMMENDED PRACTICES:

19.1 The Agency and Council agree that the Fifth Edition of the *Public Works Management Practices Manual* (referred to as the "Manual") published in September 2004, shall be the basis for the self assessment conducted by the Agency, unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the Council.

19.2 The Council's evaluation of the self assessment prepared by the Agency and determination of the Agency's compliance with recommended practices and thus eligibility for accreditation shall be based on the edition of the Manual cited in Section 19.1.

19.3 The Agency agrees to submit results of the self assessment using software developed and approved by the Accreditation Council for use with the Fifth Edition of the Manual.

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19.4 The Agency has read the following documents and agrees to and accepts them:

- (a) *Public Works Management Practices Manual, Fifth Edition*
- (b) Accreditation Process Guide

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Agency has caused this Agreement to be executed in duplicate on this ____ day of _____, 200__.

Witness: By: _____

(Typed name)

(Title)*

Witness: By: _____

(Typed name)

(Title)*

*Title of the Agency's Chief Executive Officer or Chief Elected Official and title and that of the appropriate civil authority in the event such signature is required to effect this Agreement. If not required, please so note in this signature block.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Council has caused this Agreement to be executed by the Executive Director of the American Public Works Association, acting on its behalf.

Witness: By: _____

M. Kaye Sullivan
Deputy Executive Director, COO

ACCREDITATION COUNCIL
OF THE
AMERICAN PUBLIC WORKS ASSOCIATION

CHECKLIST FOR
REQUESTING SITE EVALUATION FOR
VOLUNTARY ACCREDITATION
Public Works Management Practices Manual - Fifth Edition

Agency Name: * _____

*An entire operating division of a public works agency can apply for accreditation if it is a separate, semi-autonomous unit of government.

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Mailing Address: _____
(if different from street address)

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

• Parent Agency's Chief Executive Officer: _____

Title: _____ Elected - Or Appointed -

• Public Works Agency's Chief Executive: _____

Title: _____ Elected - Or Appointed -

Phone: _____ FAX: _____ E-Mail _____

APWA Member? -- Yes, I.D. Number _____ -- No

APWA Agency Member? -- Yes, Contact _____ -- No

• Public Works Agency's Accreditation Manager: _____

Title: _____

APWA Member? -- Yes, I.D. Number _____ -- No

Phone: _____ FAX: _____ E-Mail _____

The public works agency is responsible for the Functional Areas, which are checked on the reverse side of this application form. A total of _____ Functional Areas have been checked. The agency is responsible for complying with all recommended practices in the Functional Areas which the public works agency has responsibility. Each area is covered by a separate chapter in the *Public Works Management Practices Manual* and forms the basis for fees charged for the accreditation process.

We hereby apply for a site evaluation for voluntary accreditation by the Accreditation Council of the American Public Works Association. By this application, the agency affirms that we are in compliance with all applicable practices, have submitted the findings of the Agency's Self Assessment to the elected governing body, and are prepared to demonstrate compliance through written documentation. The agency is prepared to provide such documentation and information necessary for the Council to fairly evaluate the agency's eligibility for accreditation.

Agency will indemnify and hold harmless APWA and the Council from liability, claims, suits, expenses, including court costs and attorneys' fees, and other obligations arising out of or attributable to, APWA's and the Council's negligence in such accreditation. Agency releases APWA and the Council, and will indemnify them against and hold them harmless from, any claim or liability of Agency or its employees and agents, for damages for defamation, libel or slander, arising out of, or attributable to, Agency's Application for Accreditation and/or the approval, denial, renewal or termination thereof.

The Agency hereby requests that a site evaluation be scheduled upon the determination by the Accreditation Council that the required information has been submitted, as enumerated in this checklist or subsequent correspondence.

Executed this _____ day of _____, 20____.

By: _____, Title: _____

(typed or printed name)

APPLICABLE FUNCTIONAL AREAS

Which of the following functions does your department administer, manage or provide services -- either directly or through a contractor or outside vendor? Explain reason for not being responsible for a particular functional area.

FUNCTIONAL AREA (Chapter Number)	YES	NO	REASON FOR NON-RESPONSIBILITY
Chapter 1-9			
Planning and Development (10)			
Engineering Design (11)			
Bid Process (12)			
Project Management (13)			
Right-of-Way Management (14)			
Utility Coordination (15)			
Facilities Management (16)			
Equipment and Fleet Management (17)			
Parks, Grounds and Forestry (18)			
Solid Waste Management (19)			
Solid Waste Collection (20)			
Solid Waste Recycling and Reuse (21)			
Solid Waste Disposal (22)			
Street Maintenance (23)			
Street Cleaning (24)			
Snow Removal and Ice Control (25)			
Storm Water and Flood Management (26)			
Vector Control (27)			
Potable Water (28)			
Wastewater Collection and Conveyance (29)			
Wastewater Treatment and Disposal (30)			
Traffic Operations (31)			
Parking (32)			
Cemeteries (33)			
Airports (34)			
Transit Operations (35)			
TOTALS (please enter a number for both Yes and No)			

TIMELINE/REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION	YES	NO	COMMENTS OR EXPLANATION
90 days prior to site visit			
Preferred Date of Site Visit			
45 days prior to site visit			
Copy of Original Accreditation Application			
Copy of Original Accreditation Agreement			
Final Payment of Accreditation Fees (if not already paid)			
List of agency staff members and their responsibilities relating to individual practices			
Written Request for Waivers			
30 days prior to site visit			
Individual Practice Statement Records (IPSR's) divided equally among five binders (must be in written form, complete and clearly state Agency's practice)			
Tracking Software Files Containing IPSR's (must be in standard format)			
Verification that Outline of Self Assessment Findings have been conveyed to Elected Governing Body			
Brief Description of Community and Agency			
Maps and Guides of Agency's Service Area			
Maps and Guides of Surrounding Region			

APPENDIX E

(Name of Agency)

Accreditation Site Visit Agenda

Typical Schedule for Medium Size Agency Responsible for 22 Chapters

Saturday

Location	Time	Activity
		Travel to Agency
	4:00 – 9:00 P.M.	Register at Hotel
		Dinner On Your Own

Site Visit Team Lead: Evaluator 1

Chapter Assignments: Evaluator 1: 1, 9, 15, 16, 18, 24, and 25
 (_____ Edition) Evaluator 2: 3, 4, 11, 17, and 30
 Evaluator 3: 2, 5, 6, 12, and 27
 Evaluator 4: 8, 7, 10, 13, and 14
 APWA Staff: Logistical Support and Quality Control

Chapters Represented as Not Applicable: 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 28, 29, and 31.

A total of 339 Practices will be reviewed

(Numbers in parentheses are total number in chapter—not all apply)

Sunday

Location	Time	Activity
	9:00 A.M.	Meet in lobby
	11:30 – 1:30	Lunch with PW staff and Evaluation Team; Orientation, Agency presentation
	1:30 – 3:30 p.m.	Tour of Agency (Includes drive-by of major facilities, but does not include detailed inspection)
	3:30-4:30 P.M	Joint Review of Chapter 1
	4:30-5:00 P.M.	Wrap-up and Discuss Agenda for Monday
	6:00 P.M.	Reception and/or Dinner – Evaluation Team & Agency Self Assessment Team, Elected Officials, Others

Monday

Location	Time	Activity
Hotel	6:30-7:30 A.M.	Evaluator Breakfast – Meet at Hotel Coffee Shop
	7:45 A.M.	Team Departs for Meeting Facility
	8:00 – 12 Noon	Review of Chapters by Evaluators and local agency staff Evaluator 1 – Chapter 2 Evaluator 2 – Chapter 26, 27 Evaluator 3 – Chapter 5, 6 Evaluator 4 – Chapter 10, 11
	12 Noon – 1:00 p.m.	Working lunch provided for Evaluator Team
	1:00-5:00 P.M.	Afternoon Session Reviews: Evaluator 1 – Chapters 24 Evaluator 3 – Chapters 5, 6 Evaluator 4 – Chapters Chapter 8 Evaluator 2 – Chapter 3, 17 APWA Staff – Waiver Requests and N/A Chapters 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 28, 29, and 31.
Hotel	5:00 P.M.	Return to Hotel
Restaurant	6:00 P.M.	Dinner for Evaluators (on their own)
Hotel	8:00 P.M.	Return to Hotel – Discussion of Requirements for Partial & Non-Compliant Practices as needed

Tuesday

Location	Time	Activity
Hotel	6:30-7:30 A.M.	Breakfast – On Your Own
	7:45 A.M.	Evaluators leave for Meeting Facility
	8:00 – Noon	Morning Session Reviews: Evaluator 1 – Chapters 15, 18, 25 Evaluator 2 – Chapter 30 Evaluator 3 – Chapters 12, 27 Evaluator 4 – Chapters 10, 13
	Noon-1:00 P.M	Working Lunch – catered by Agency
	1:00-5:00 P.M	Afternoon Session Reviews: Evaluator 1 – Chapter 9, 16 Evaluator 2 – Chapter 4, 11 Evaluator 3 – Chapter 2 Evaluator 4 – Chapters 7, 14
	5:00 P.M.	Evaluators return to hotel
Restaurant	7:00-11:00 P.M.	Dinner and Debriefing (Evaluation Team Only)

Wednesday

Location	Time	Activity
Hotel	6:30-7:30 A.M.	Breakfast – On Your Own
	7:45 A.M.	Transportation to Meeting Facility
	8:30 - 10:00 A.M.	Missed Practices and Prepare Report
	10:30 A.M.	Review Findings with Department Director. Discussion of practices requiring further action.
	11:30 A.M.	Depart for Airport