
Standard Practice for

**Accreditation Bodies Operating in
the Fields of Construction
Materials Testing and Inspection**

AASHTO Designation: R 89-18¹

**Technical Subcommittee: 5c, Quality Assurance
and Environmental**

Release: Group 1 (April)



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1. SCOPE

- 1.1. This practice describes the requirements for accreditation bodies that evaluate and accredit agencies that perform construction materials testing and inspection. The requirements apply to the assessment and administration activities of the accreditation body.
- 1.2. The accreditation method described in this standard requires the direct demonstration of testing and inspection activities and the detailed examination of any equipment associated with such activities during assessments, whenever possible.

2. REFERENCED STANDARDS

- 2.1. *AASHTO Standard:*
 - R 18, Establishing and Implementing a Quality Management System for Construction Materials Testing Laboratories
- 2.2. *ASTM Standards:*
 - C1077, Standard Practice for Agencies Testing Concrete and Concrete Aggregates for Use in Construction and Criteria for Testing Agency Evaluation
 - C1093, Standard Practice for Accreditation of Testing Agencies for Masonry
 - C1222, Standard Practice for Evaluation of Laboratories Testing Hydraulic Cement
 - D3666, Standard Specification for Minimum Requirements for Agencies Testing and Inspecting Road and Paving Materials
 - D3740, Standard Practice for Minimum Requirements for Agencies Engaged in Testing and/or Inspection of Soil and Rock as Used in Engineering Design and Construction
 - E329, Standard Specification for Agencies Engaged in Construction Inspection, Testing, or Special Inspection
- 2.3. *ISO/IEC Standards:*
 - 17020, Conformity assessment -- Requirements for the operation of various types of bodies performing inspection
 - 17025, General Requirements for the Competence of Testing and Calibration Laboratories
 - 17043, Conformity assessment -- General requirements for proficiency testing

3. SIGNIFICANCE AND USE

- 3.1. The members of AASHTO and other governmental authorities implement laws and regulations covering the approval of materials, products, and services used in the construction, maintenance, and repair of transportation, building, and public works systems. Similarly, in the private sector, purchasers authorizing construction activities develop and implement specifications describing conformity assessment systems.
- 3.2. These authorities and purchasers develop and implement systems for approval aimed at achieving a minimum level of quality in materials and competence in services provided. Such a system should enable comparability, and also ensure competition on equal terms between those agencies that would seek to provide testing and inspection services in support of such activities.
- 3.3. In order for authorities and purchasers to confidently assess the capabilities of testing and inspection agencies, it is desirable to rely on an accreditation body that can provide an unbiased, thorough, and objective assessment of a testing and inspection agency's capabilities. Accreditation should provide confidence to the authority or purchaser that an agency performing tests or inspections is competent to do so.
- 3.4. The use of this standard will facilitate the evaluation of comparability between different accreditation and assessment bodies providing accreditation and assessment services.
- 3.5. Accreditation is often confused with other terms that are related, such as certification, validation, and qualification. Accreditation applies to an agency as opposed to certification, which generally applies to people or products. Likewise, qualification or validation generally refers to a process specified by a governmental body (or other authority) that may include accreditation, but is specific to the requirements of that body for the specified purpose.

4. TERMINOLOGY

- 4.1. *Definitions:*
- 4.1.1. *accreditation*—third-party attestation of an agency's formal demonstration of its competence to carry out specific tasks.
- 4.1.2. *accreditation body*—authoritative body that performs the act of third party recognition to agencies.
Discussion—A typical accreditation body provides the assessment and evaluation of corrective actions following an assessment. However, some accreditation bodies allow for multiple assessment bodies to provide assessments that are then used as the basis for their accreditation decisions.
- 4.1.3. *agency*—an organization that performs testing or inspection services that can be the object of accreditation.
Discussion—Agency is typically what the international accreditation community refers to as a conformity assessment body (CAB).
- 4.1.4. *appeal*—request by an agency for reconsideration of an adverse decision made by the accreditation body related to its desired accreditation status.
Discussion—Adverse decisions might include decisions to deny, suspend, or revoke accreditation or to refuse service.