

# Project Administration for Road Projects

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## Introduction

Virtually all forest road construction and road improvement projects are performed under timber sale contracts, with a few being accomplished by general service contracts or by district road crews. Regardless of the approach that is used a project/contract administrator will be designated for each project.

The construction phase is when planning and design decisions are carried out on the ground. Well-designed projects and good execution of plans will result in well-constructed projects that will minimize impacts to the watershed and environment. Thus, the knowledge, skill and abilities of the project administrator will play a key role in accomplishing successful road construction projects.

## Goals of Project Administration

The goals of contract administration are to:

1. Insure that construction/improvement projects are completed according to design/contract specifications.
2. Initiate appropriate changes in the design/contract specifications to accommodate unforeseen problems.

## Objectives of Project Administration

The objectives of contract administration are to:

1. Establish good communication with contractors and operators.
2. Make inspections as frequently as needed to ensure contract compliance.
3. Issue clear written and verbal instructions in timely manner.
4. Answer operator's questions in a timely manner.
5. Utilize professional level expertise and input (geotechnical specialists, engineers, biologists, etc.) for sensitive and/or unique operations. The same level of expertise will be utilized when it is necessary to make changes to the design/contract specifications.

## **Project Administration Strategies**

Project administration strategies are the specific actions and standards that will lead to achieving the goals and objectives of this section of the manual.

### **KSA's for Project Administrators**

Project administrators will have the following knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA's) to successfully administer road construction/improvement projects:

- Knowledge and understanding of the project's design and/or contract specifications and the ability to efficiently and effectively administer them.
- Knowledge of Oregon Forest Laws, rules, policies and administrative procedures related to forest practices, fire protection and the management of state-owned forest land.
- Knowledge of basic engineering practices related to forest road construction/improvement and the ability to evaluate their application on the ground.
- Knowledge of basic geology, forest soils, and hydrology for the local area and the relationships between these factors and forest road operations.
- Knowledge of basic water quality management, aquatic biology and wildlife biology; and the impacts forest road operations might have on these factors; and knowledge of the appropriate measures for avoiding or lessening adverse impacts to these factors caused by forest road operations.
- Ability to give clear oral and written instructions.
- Ability to work effectively with operators, contractors, and other agencies.
- Ability to develop and maintain an effective record keeping system including reports, instructions, and records.
- Ability to recognize when corrective action is needed and to take appropriate measures to get the desired results.

### **Before Construction Begins**

The supervisor responsible for the project will assign a project administrator with the appropriate KSA's, as listed above. The project administrator will review and understand all requirements of the project. Any unclear requirements will be reviewed with the supervisor and/or the designer of the project. The project administrator will be the State's designated field representative(s) and will be authorized to receive notices, inspect progress of the work, and issue instructions in regard to performance on the project.

A pre-operations meeting is required by all timber sale contracts to be held between the State (Department of Forestry) and Contractor, and an Operations Plan is required to be submitted and approved by State, prior to the contractor beginning any work. All designated representatives of the contractor and the State should attend this meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to explain the requirements of the contract and to answer any questions from the contractor. The contractor will be given copies of any special designs required by the contract. The project administrator will explain:

- Any threatened or endangered species concerns or requirements.
- Oregon Forest Practices Act requirements such as written plans.
- Timing of construction for projects.

- Specifications and requirements for all projects.

The pre-operations meeting is the ideal time for the project administrator to begin the important process of communication. The project administrator should be prepared to answer most questions at this meeting. Any questions not answered by the administrator at the meeting will be researched, and the answers provided to the contractor within a reasonable time.

The project administrator will thoroughly understand the operations plan and pre-operations meeting requirements of the contract.

Similar meetings will be conducted when road construction/improvement projects are completed through a service contract or by Department of Forestry personnel and equipment.

### **Responsibilities of Project Administrators During Construction**

The project administrator should attempt to establish a good working relationship with the contractor early in the contract. In addition, the administrator will make every effort to ensure that the contractor and their representatives fully understand all of the contract requirements and will explain the reasons for the requirements and what will be expected of the contractor.

After the pre-operations meeting, the administrator will document the meeting with the use of the standard form letter developed for this purpose. The letter will summarize what was discussed at this meeting.

Administrators will make sure that other required written documents have been submitted and approved prior to the contractor beginning any work, such as Notifications of Operations, Written Plans required by the Forest Practices Act, and Rock Pit Development Plans.

Administrators will make field inspections as often as required to make sure that the contractor is complying with all specifications required by the contract, and to answer questions from the operator. This may be a minimum of two per week for normal road construction, or continuously during critical road construction projects. Whenever the administrator cannot be on site continuously during critical road construction projects, he/she will arrange for an on-site observer for the critical projects. Critical projects may include:

- Installation of fish passage culverts.
- Removal of existing road fills over 15 feet in height.
- Full bench road construction.
- Installation of road fills over 15 feet in height.
- Areas of critical alignment such as switchbacks.
- Installation of special structures such as retaining walls

Administrators are responsible for recognizing and initiating needed changes during construction that were unforeseen or unrecognizable in the design phase. Prior to initiating any changes to a contract, the administrator must first verify the need to make a

change. This may require review and input from a geotechnical specialist, engineer, and/or biologist. New design specifications will be developed for substantial changes. The administrator will review proposed changes with his/her supervisor prior to initiating any changes. Guidance on changes to a timber sale contract is well covered in the "Timber Sale Contract Administration Handbook" and these guidelines will be followed for any contract changes.

The contract administrator will keep a log of all inspections and telephone conversations with the contractor and/or their representatives.

Administrators will issue written and verbal instructions as necessary to direct the contractor to comply with all specifications and requirements of the contract and/or other written plans. These will be on standard forms when applicable, such as: Weekly Inspection Reports, Status Reports, Important Notice, and Work To Do letters.

Administrators will take immediate action anytime a contractor violates the Forest Practices Act, does not operate within the scope of the contract, or causes unnecessary environmental disturbance.

The approved operations plan becomes a part of the contract and the administrator should refer frequently to the operations plan to determine if the contractor is complying with the plan. If the contractor deviates from the original plan and fails to file a supplemental plan or begins work that is not covered by the plan, those portions of the operation not adequately covered by a plan will be halted until the appropriate plan is submitted.

### **Final Inspection and Approval**

As required by the timber sale contract, the project administrator will inspect projects within 10 days after a written notification of completion has been received from the contractor. Work in this case must be an entire project or projects, and not a portion of a project. If, for some reason, the contract administrator cannot make an inspection within the 10-day period, the contractor will be notified in writing of this fact and given an estimate of when the inspection will be made.

After a final inspection has been made, the administrator will complete an inspection report and indicate whether the work was acceptable or not acceptable. If the work was acceptable, the administrator will also submit a status report to the division office indicating the work that has been accepted.

If the work is not fully acceptable, the administrator will issue an inspection report specifying the work that is acceptable, and what work is not acceptable. For work that is not acceptable, clear instructions must be given to the contractor that describe what will be required to make the project(s) acceptable.

The administrator cannot approve a project until all portions of the project are completed according to the contract. The State's ability to collect costs for uncompleted project work may be forfeited if final approval is given prior to the total completion of a project.