VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

ENVIRONMENTAL DIVISION

INSTRUCTIONAL AND INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM

DIRECTED TO:	AUTHORITY:
Environmental Division	N/A
District Programming and Investment Managers	
VDOT Contract Managers	
Local Assistance Division	
Alternative Project Delivery Division	
Administrative Services Division	
Professional Services Procurement Office	
Central Office Location and Design	
District Location and Design	
Construction Division	
GENERAL SUBJECT: Environmental Certifications	**NUMBER:** IIM-ED-110.1
SPECIFIC SUBJECT: Environmental Certification Requirements for Consultants	**DATE:** 11-08-2023
	SUPERSEDES: IIM-ED-110
APPROVED: Christopher J Swanson For Public Distribution 2023.11.08 08:49:56-05'00'	

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BACKGROUND

In October 2021, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT or Department) Environmental Division launched the first in a series of environmental certification modules for consultants working on Department projects and/or locally administered projects. These modules are available on the VDOT University (VDOTU) website. The modules review

policies, practices, and guidance for completing environmental tasks, and they highlight the Department's expectations of consultants in order to have an efficient, consistent and defensible statewide program.

This Instructional and Informational Memorandum (I&IM) applies to consultant staff who are preparing, reviewing, and/or responding to environmental documents and deliverables for the Department and/or locally administered projects. Consultant program lead staff shall complete applicable VDOTU modules and provide completed certificates when responding to a Request for Proposals (RFP)/solicitations. Information in this I&IM shall be provided to external users and applicable Department divisions who issue and review RFPs, Invitation for Bids, and related solicitations for services.

PURPOSE

The intent of this document is to provide direction to staff who interact with consultants who have, or have not, received Department issued environmental certifications prior to providing environmental services on behalf of the Department or a locality.

REQUIREMENTS

RFPs, or related solicitations, which include environmental services shall require that the proposed subject matter practitioners provide a copy of the certificate they received upon completing all of the applicable certification modules on VDOTU. The certificate(s) shall be provided by the consultant team in their response to the RFP/solicitation. If certificates are not included in the RFP/solicitation response package, the proposed consultant team shall be considered to not be familiar with Department practices related to the specific certification. Department staff should reference the Environmental Certification SharePoint Online (SPOL) site for available modules and their respective target completion date.

The Environmental Division shall maintain a list of consultants who have completed Department environmental certification modules on the SPOL site (Environmental Certification Tracker). Using this site, Department Environmental Staff should consult the list of certified consultants who have successfully completed environmental certifications upon receiving questions from consultants on Department and/or locally administered projects. If a consultant has not completed all modules of the applicable environmental certification, Department Staff should either encourage completion of training or request engagement from a certified consultant from said consultant firm. If a locality has issued an RFP and would like to confirm if the proposed staff have completed the application certification modules, external staff should email environmental.certification@vdot.virginia.gov to verify with Department staff.

The Environmental Division shall maintain an Environmental Certification Announcement landing page on an internal SPOL site and the Environmental virginiadot.org page to detail module release and completion dates, including the set time frame, for subsequent certification modules.

PROCEDURES/REPORTING

Users that have completed all modules of various environmental certifications shall be posted on the Environmental Division SPOL site. (Environmental Certification Tracker)

OTHER INFORMATION

Environmental Certification FAQ Appendix (see next page)

Environmental Certification SPOL (VDOT Internal Hyperlink)

Environmental Virginiadot.org

https://VirtualCampus.VDOT.Virginia.gov

Environmental Certification Tracker

environmental.certification@vdot.virginia.gov -questions about environmental certification modules

VDOTUniversity@VDOT.Virginia.gov –questions about VDOTU access and logins

Environmental Certification Program Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What is the certification program?**
   The certification program seeks to enhance the knowledge of and consistency in the application of Department environmental processes. Completion of a certification for a specific area of environmental expertise provides an understanding of Department environmental processes and how they can contribute to a more efficient overall project development process.

   The Department produces programs for multiple environmental areas of expertise including but not limited to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), cultural resources, biological resources, air, and noise.

2. **When is certification required?**
   Beginning six months after a new certification program is released, staff proposed to lead that area of environmental expertise in a request for proposal (RFP) from a locality or the Department shall complete the training. For example, by March 31, 2022, any program area lead staff proposed to complete NEPA work for a locality or the Department shall complete the NEPA Certification. In addition, at that time, Department staff who are answering questions or coordinating with staff on NEPA may ask for an individual's certification for the given area of expertise before engaging in detailed conversation or review. This will ensure an understanding of requirements needed to advance the project in an efficient manner. This expectation will be applied to future environmental certification programs, as well.

3. **What does it mean to be "certified"?**
   Certification is achieved by completing the VDOTU curriculum for the given area of expertise. Upon completion of the curriculum, the individual will be provided with a downloadable certificate. Certification applies only to the individual completing the certification, not their employer.

4. **Who is required to go through the certification process?**
   Any program area lead staff providing services to localities or the Department for the given area of environmental expertise shall complete the certification within six (6) months of its release.

5. **How does VDOT inform the professional community that certifications are available and required?**
   The Department will announce each new module on the Environmental Division

virginiadot.org page, Local Assistance Division (LAD) website, through LAD mailing lists (which are distributed to hundreds of locality staff, consultant staff, and Department staff), and through other industry groups such as the Virginia Transportation Construction Alliance (VTCA) and the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC).

6. **What happens if the certification program is updated?**
Updates to a specific resource area will be announced on the Environmental Division virginiadot.org page, LAD website, through LAD mailing lists, and through other industry groups such as VTCA and ACEC. Interested individuals will have a six (6) month window to complete. There are currently no plans to provide such updates in the near term until curricula have been issued for all resource areas.

7. **How much does it cost to complete the certification?**
There is no cost to complete any of the certification modules. Individuals simply need to register for an external VDOTU account at https://VirtualCampus.VDOT.Virginia.gov.

8. **Can my certification expire?**
Certifications do not expire, and remain with the individual staff in the event they change positions or companies.