Policy and Guidance on Remote Assessments

1. Background and Rationale

1.1. This policy describes when a laboratory may receive a remote assessment. AASHTO re:source will only perform remote assessments in the following situations:
  1.1.1. Supplemental assessments in order to add standards to a laboratory's existing scope of AASHTO Accreditation, and
  1.1.2. As an emergency measure when AASHTO has deemed it is unsafe for its representatives to visit a laboratory on-site.

1.2. **DISCUSSION** – This will be determined at the discretion of AASHTO, using information including, but not limited to The Center for Disease Control (CDC) and U.S. Department of State. Remote assessments may also be used as deemed appropriate or required for any other reason by the Administrative Task Group (ATG). Please see the AASHTO Accreditation Procedures Manual for the Accreditation of Construction Materials Testing Laboratories for more information on the ATG. This policy is not intended to replace normal in-sequence on-site assessments and out-of-sequence on-site assessments as required by the AASHTO Accreditation Procedures Manual.

1.3. Laboratories receiving a supplemental assessment may choose to have a remote assessment or an on-site assessment, as long as AASHTO representatives are able to travel safely to the laboratory location as decided by AASHTO.

1.4. Remote assessments are subject to a different fee structure than on-site assessments, which is described on the Fees page.

1.5. This policy is only for remote assessments through AASHTO re:source that cover the testing scopes of aggregate, asphalt binder, asphalt mixture, emulsified asphalt, iron and steel, pavement preservation, rock, soil, and sprayed fire-resistive material. This policy is not applicable to the Cement and Concrete Reference Laboratory (CCRL). For information on CCRL visit www.ccrl.us or email them at ccrl@astm.org.

2. Terminology

2.1. *assessment tour* – one fully cycle of AASHTO re:source performing in-sequence assessments for all laboratories in all geographical regions across the United States and internationally.

2.2. *in-sequence assessment*- an assessment that takes place in AASHTO re:source's normal cycle of visiting laboratories within a geographical region.

2.3. *on-site assessment* – a laboratory assessment conducted physically at the laboratory's testing facility.

2.4. *out-of-sequence assessment* - an assessment that takes place outside of AASHTO re:source's normal cycle of visiting laboratories within a geographical region.

2.5. *remote assessment* – a laboratory assessment conducted remotely via video conferencing software, such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams.

2.6. *supplemental assessment* – an assessment that is an addition to a laboratory's regular assessment in order to add standards to their current AASHTO accreditation scope.

2.7. *test reports* – the final documentation that summarizes the results of testing performed

3. Laboratory Eligibility Requirements

3.1. In order to be eligible for a remote assessment, the laboratory must be in good standing with AASHTO re:source and/or the AASHTO Accreditation Program. This includes, but is not limited to:
  3.1.1. No recent history of falsified records or other ethical violations as defined in the *AASHTO Accreditation Program Procedures Manual for the Accreditation of Construction Materials Testing Laboratories*.
  3.1.2. No recent history of non-payment and/or overdue invoices.

4. Technology Requirements

4.1. The laboratory shall have access to adequate equipment and resources with which to live stream the assessment. The video and sound need to be of sufficient quality that the details of the test procedures and equipment details are clear.

4.2. **Wi-Fi and/or Cellular Service**: The laboratory shall have reliable Wi-Fi and/or cellular service throughout all areas in the building that testing will be conducted.

4.3. **Software Requirements**: The laboratory shall download ZOOM Software on all computers, tablets, and phones that will be used during the remote assessment.

Note 1 – If your organization does not allow the use of ZOOM, other software, such as Microsoft Teams and Skype are available for use.

5. Application Process

5.1. **Supplemental Assessment**

5.1.1. Request an assessment:

5.1.1.1. Login to the AASHTO re:source website, click Request an Assessment, and select the desired quality system standard(s) and test method(s) (Steps 2 and 3).

5.1.1.2. Select the box to "Request an Out-of-Sequence assessment" (Step 4).

5.1.1.3. Choose the desired assessment date.

5.1.1.4. Submit the request.

5.1.1.5. An AASHTO representative will contact the laboratory to discuss dates for the assessment, whether it will be remote or on-site, and applicable fees.

5.1.2. Submit the required documents and records as specified on the laboratory's Accreditation Events page.

DISCUSSION – The pre-assessment documentation required for a supplemental assessment is typically the records associated with the test methods selected, including the equipment calibration, standardization, or check records, technician training and competency evaluation records, and test reports. More or less documentation may be required, and will be specified by an AASHTO representative, and depending upon whether the assessment will be remote or on-site.

Note 2- In order to obtain AASHTO Accreditation, laboratories must also enroll in the applicable Proficiency Sample Program(s).

5.2. **Remote Assessments as an Emergency Measure**

5.2.1. AASHTO re:source will inform customers of any need to conduct remote assessments as an emergency measure via email, our website, and social media.

5.2.2. For current customers, when notified by email to do so by AASHTO re:source, request an assessment. New customers must register your laboratory before requesting an assessment.

5.2.2.1. Login to the AASHTO re:source website, click Request an Assessment, and select the desired quality system standard(s) and test method(s) (Steps 2 and 3).

5.2.2.2. Submit the request.

5.2.2.3. For current customers, failure to submit a request for an assessment in the time frame requested may result in an out-of-sequence assessment, additional assessment fees, and accreditation action. Please see the AASHTO Accreditation Program Policy and Guidance on Requesting and Receiving In-Sequence Assessments from AASHTO re:source for more information.

5.2.3. Submit the required documents and records as specified on the laboratory's Accreditation Events page by the specified due date.

DISCUSSION – The pre-assessment documentation required will be determined by AASHTO re:source. At a minimum, the following documentation is required: a current organizational chart; the laboratory's current quality manual that includes policies and procedures for all elements of the laboratory's quality management system; the PE information (or ATG approval number) for the

laboratory's Technical Director (however named); and the technicians' certifications in accordance with the ASTM quality system standards C1077, D3666, D3740, and/or E329 (if applicable).

5.2.3.1. If new test methods are added to your accreditation scope during this assessment tour, enroll in Proficiency Sample Program(s), as applicable.

5.2.3.2. In certain situations when a laboratory is scheduled to have an on-site assessment and is not able to proceed due to a safety concern (such as a COVID-19 exposure at the facility), the laboratory and AASHTO may mutually agree to proceed with a remote assessment instead of an on-site assessment on the originally agreed upon assessment date. In this situation, in order to ensure that AASHTO's travel costs are covered, the laboratory will be charged the on-site assessment rate instead of the remote assessment rate for the last-minute remote assessment.

6. Remote Scheduling Process

6.1. Laboratories will be sent an email confirming the date of their assessment. In-sequence laboratories will typically receive the date of their assessment 4-6 weeks prior to the start date.

6.2. The representative shall contact the laboratory and schedule a one-hour **Pre-Assessment Dry Run** (see below) to be conducted via ZOOM.

7. Pre-Assessment Dry Run

7.1. An AASHTO re:source assessor shall call the laboratory at the appointed time via ZOOM, or other agreed-upon software.

7.2. **Tour of Facility**: The laboratory assessor shall conduct a remote tour in order to ensure the reliability of the Wi-Fi and/or cellular service throughout the entire facility.
Note 3 – A tablet or smartphone is recommended for the facility tour.

7.3. **Proposed Testing Schedule**: The assessor shall discuss the proposed testing schedule and confirm which technicians will be perform each test method. Any scheduling conflicts shall be addressed during this time. The assessment shall be scheduled in approximately two (2) hour increments, followed by short breaks.

7.4. If the video and sound quality are deemed sufficient in all areas of the laboratory, the assessor will schedule the remote assessment and email a finalized Assessment Agenda to the laboratory.

8. Remote Assessment Process

8.1. **Assessment Timing**: In order to reduce fatigue on the parts of both the laboratory personnel and the assessor, the assessment shall be conducted in approximately two (2) hour increments, followed by a short break.

8.2. **Opening Meeting**: The assessor shall conduct a brief opening meeting to discuss the purpose of the assessment and accreditation criteria (if applicable), scope of the assessment, and the assessment schedule.
Note 4 – It is recommended that the laboratory manager, quality manager, and all technicians involved in the assessment are present during the opening meeting.

8.3. **Test Method Procedures**: The laboratory shall be prepared to demonstrate the entirety of the requested test method procedures. All samples used for demonstration shall be prepared prior to the assessment using the Assessment Prep Sheets.

8.3.1. In general, the camera must be positioned to keep as much of the technician and testing procedure in view as possible.

8.3.2. If there is a specific view or event that must be captured, the assessor shall communicate that with the laboratory technician prior to beginning the test method.
NOTE 5 – Examples of specific views and events include things like thermometer and pressure gauge readings and compression machine load and/or rate measurements.

8.4. **Checking Equipment**: Depending on the testing scope, the laboratory is required to demonstrate checking the equipment in **Table 1** during the remote assessment. The assessor reserves the right to choose specific laboratory personnel to check the equipment. This pertains only to equipment that is calibrated, standardized, or checked by the laboratory in-house.

8.5. **Video or Audio Recording of Remote Assessment**: No video or audio recording of any portion of the assessment by AASHTO, by the laboratory, or by any other party involved in the assessment will be permitted.

Test Method	Designation(s)	Equipment
Cleveland Flash (COC)	AASHTO T 48 / ASTM D92	Cup dimensions
Penetration	AASHTO T 49 / ASTM D5	Mass of the spindle and weights
Ductility	AASHTO T 51 / ASTM D113	Dimensions of the molds
Tag Open Flash	AASHTO T 79 / ASTM D3143	Cup dimensions and weight
Specific Gravity	AASHTO T 228 / ASTM D70	Pycnometer condition and dimensions
Rolling Thin-Film Oven Test	AASHTO T 240 / ASTM D2872	RTFO bottles, rotation speed, and air jet
Force Ductility	AASHTO T 300	Dimensions of the molds
Elastic Recovery	AASHTO T 301 / ASTM D6084	Dimensions of the molds
Bending Beam Rheometer (BBR)	AASHTO T 313 / ASTM D6648	Dimensions of the end pieces
Toughness and Tenacity	ASTM D5801	Dimensions of spiders
Sweep Test	ASTM D7000	Weight and length of brush head
Wet Track Abrasion of Slurry Surfacing Systems	ISSA TB-100 / ASTM D3910 / ASTM D6372	Diameter of the hose
Measurement of Slurry Seal Consistency (Cone Consistency)	TB-106 / D3910	Dimensions of the test plate (D3910 only)
Set and Cure Development of Slurry by Cohesion Tester	TB-139 / D3910 / D6372	Dimensions of the molds
Preparation of Asphalt Mixtures by Marshall Apparatus	AASHTO R 68 / ASTM D6926	Dimensions of the molds
Compressive Strength of Hot Mix Asphalt	AASHTO T 167 / ASTM D1074	Dimensions of the molds, plungers, and supports
California Kneading Compactor	AASHTO T 247 / ASTM D1561	Dimensions of the molds
Liquid Limit	AASHTO T 89 / ASTM D4318	Dimensions of the grooving tool, wear spot, and thickness of the rim
Moisture-Density (Standard Proctor)	AASHTO T 99 / ASTM D698	Dimensions of the molds and hammers
Moisture-Density (Modified Proctor)	AASHTO T 180 / ASTM D1557	Dimensions of the molds and hammers
Resistance R-Value	AASHTO T 190 / ASTM D2844	Dimensions of the molds
California Bearing Ratio (CBR)	AASHTO T 193 / ASTM D1883	Dimensions of the molds
Direct Shear	AASHTO T 236 / ASTM D3080	Mass and diameter of the top box (D3080 only)
Unconsolidated, Undrained Triaxial Compression (UU)	AASHTO T 296 / ASTM D2850	Mass of the cap
Consolidated, Undrained Triaxial Compression (CU)	AASHTO T 297 / ASTM D4767	Mass of the cap
Expansion Index of Soils	ASTM D4829	Dimensions of the molds and rings
Limerock Bearing Ratio (LBR)	Florida FM1-T180	Dimensions of molds and hammers
Moisture-Density Relationship of Base Materials (Texas)	Texas Tex-113-E	Dimensions of molds and hammers
Unit Weight of Aggregate	AASHTO T 19 / ASTM C29	Condition of the measures
LA Abrasion	AASHTO T 96 / ASTM C131	Mass and dimensions of spheres
Sand Equivalent	AASHTO T 176 / ASTM D2419	Height of the shelf
Aggregate Durability Index	AASHTO T 210 / ASTM D3744	Height of the shelf
Micro-Deval (Coarse Aggregate)	AASHTO T 327 / ASTM D6928	Dimensions of spheres
LA Abrasion (Large-Size Aggregate)	ASTM C535	Mass and dimensions of spheres
Micro-Deval (Fine Aggregate)	ASTM D7428	Dimensions of spheres
Bend Test	AASHTO M 336 / ASTM A1064, AASHTO M 31-T 285 / ASTM A615-E290, AASHTO M 284 / ASTM A775, ASTM A970, ASTM A970-A370	Diameter of the pins

Table 1: Equipment that the laboratory personnel must check during the remote assessment.

8.6. **Test Records**: Depending on the scope of the assessment, the laboratory may be required to share records and data sheets during the remote assessment.

8.7. **Immediate Termination of the Assessment**

8.7.1. Severe cases of misrepresentation of the laboratory testing facilities, personnel, equipment, records, or facilities may lead to the immediate termination of the assessment and/or refusal of service (see the AASHTO Accreditation Program Procedures Manual and Remote Assessment Agreement Laboratory Rights and Responsibilities). This shall be done at the discretion of the assessor conducting the assessment.

8.7.2. In the event that the remote assessment is discontinued before its completion, the laboratory will still be invoiced for the base fee and billable hours of assessment time.

8.8. **Preliminary Report and Closing Meeting**: The assessor shall share the preliminary report with the laboratory and conduct a brief meeting to discuss any findings noted during the assessment.

Note 6 – It is recommended that the laboratory manager, quality manager, and all technicians involved in the assessment are present during the closing meeting.

8.9.

9. Post-Assessment Process

9.1. The laboratory shall receive an email notification that the final report is ready to view, and nonconformities may be responded to at this time.

9.2. The laboratory shall be invoiced for the remote assessment.

10. Remote Assessment Fees

10.1. See LAP Fees for the information on the remote assessment fees.

11. Resources

11.1. The AASHTO Accreditation Program Procedures Manual for the Accreditation of Construction Materials Testing Laboratories

11.2. Remote Assessment page

11.3. AASHTO re:source Remote Assessment Documentation Guide

11.4. Assessment Prep Lists