

United States Department of Agriculture



Natural Resources Conservation Service
210 Walnut Street, Room 693
Des Moines, IA 50309-2180

October 19, 2007

GENERAL MANUAL (GM)
450 – TCH
AMENDMENT IA7 (Part 407)

SUBJECT: TCH – TECHNOLOGY

Purpose. To amend Part 407 – Documentation, Certification, and Spot Checking.

Effective Date. Upon receipt.

Contact: If there are questions about this amendment, contact Jim Ayen, State Resource Conservationist, at 515 323-2223 or jim.ayen@ia.usda.gov, or Mark Jensen, State Conservation Engineer, at 515 323-2220 or mark.jense@ia.usda.gov.

Filing Instructions.

Immediately After

Title 450, Subpart A
Title 450, Subpart B
Title 450, Subpart C

/s/

Richard Van Klaveren
State Conservationist

Attachment

GM

Title 450 – Technology

Part 407 – Documentation, Certification, and Spot Checking

Subpart A – Policy

IA407.0 General

- Ensuring that conservation practices are planned and applied according to NRCS policy, standards and specifications is integral to carrying out our mission. Each employee is responsible to adhere to that principle.

IA407.2 Responsibilities

- Spot checking will be done on a calendar year basis.

Title 450 – Technology

Part 407 – Documentation, Certification, and Spot Checking

Subpart B – Documentation and Certification

IA407.10 Supporting Data

- Statements of Work for each conservation practice provide documentation requirements. Statements of Work are in the eFOTG, Section IV within the specific practice folder.

IA407.11 Checking Completed Work

- Work may be accepted from Technical Service Providers who have been certified by an approved certifying organization. Technical Service Providers are responsible for ensuring the quality of their own work. Their work is subject to spot checking/quality reviews as described in Subpart C.
- In addition to Technical Service Providers, NRCS may accept technical services and/or documentation on a recurring basis from other non-NRCS sources. Before accepting these services or documentation, the non-NRCS source must demonstrate a level of expertise which allows NRCS field office personnel to have confidence in their ability. A technical services file will be developed for each non-NRCS source from which technical services are accepted on a recurring basis. The contents of the file will include a training plan; log of jobs for survey, layout, design, and/or checkout; training provided; spot checking results; and pertinent correspondence. Records of technical services from non-NRCS sources may be accepted for survey, layout, design, construction checkout, or any combination of these functions. Work performed by non-NRCS sources is subject to spot checking as described in Subpart C.

Title 450 – Technology

Part 407 – Documentation, Certification, and Spot Checking

Subpart C – Spot Checking

IA407.20 Procedure

- Frequency
 - Spot checking of agronomic, engineering and management practices will be done in every office every year on a calendar year basis.
 - A representative sampling of practices applied in each office will be spot checked each year. Three to five practice applications should be sufficient even though a literal application of the 5% rule would identify more.
 - Over a 3-year period, all installed/applied practices will be spot checked in each field office.
 - In addition, all field office employees (NRCS and partners) shall have technical practices spot checked during this 3-year period.
 - The ASTC-FO may require additional spot checking as a result of suggestions from area staff, state staff, field office personnel, etc. Additional, spot checks are to be conducted:
 - If significant errors were noted from the previous year's spot checks.
 - For recurring problems until they are rectified.
 - For jobs completed by new employees until they become experienced with the practice(s).
 - For jobs completed by new TSPs and/or other non-NRCS sources.
 - Spot checking should occur throughout the year so that time specific practices, such as the Residue Management practices (329, 345, 346), are spot checked at the appropriate time.
- Personnel
 - District Conservationists will inform their ASTC-FO when NRCS employees own or have interest in a farm that had conservation practices installed.
 - ASTC-FOs will select staff to spot check practice application on farms that NRCS employees own or have an interest in.

- Reporting
 - By March 31 of each year, the ASTC-FO is to submit to the State Conservationist the previous calendar year spot check report. The report is to contain:
 - (1) Practices spot checked (number)
 - (2) Deficiencies identified
 - (3) Corrective actions taken
- Follow-up
 - Identified training needs will be entered in AgLearn for the employee with completion dates set.