

General Manual
Title 450 - Science and Technology

Part 401 – Technical Guides
Subpart A – Policy and Responsibilities

KS401.1 Responsibilities

(D) Staff at the State Office or equivalent.

(1) Each STC or equivalent will:

(v) Membership of the Kansas State Technical Guide Committee (STGC) will consist of the state resource conservationist (SRC), state conservation engineer, assistant state conservationist for programs, assistant state conservationist for water resources, and state soil scientist/Major Land Resource Area Office (MO) leader. Participation by other organizations and agencies will be requested as necessary. The SRC will serve as chairman of the STGC.

The STGC will solicit and/or receive input from the state conservationist (STC), state specialists, STGC members, and/or area technical guide committees (ATGC) regarding technical issues and needs. The STGC will develop and provide policy recommendations regarding technical issues to the STC for review and approval. The STGC will convene as necessary to address identified issues and needs.

An ATGC will be established and actively functioning within each of the administrative areas. The ATGC will coordinate and assist with the identification, review, and/or development of technology to address issues and needs. The primary functions of the ATGC include:

- The review and comment on technical materials provided by the STGC
- The identification of area-level technology issues and needs based on solicitation from field offices (FOs)
- The submittal of technological issues and needs that cannot be addressed at the area-level or those that may have state-wide application to the STGC
- The presentation of technical-related topics at area meetings or workshops

The ATGC will be chaired by the assistant state conservationist for field operations (ASTC-FO) or his/her designee. The ATGC will, as a minimum, consist of the ASTC-FO or designee, one area engineer, one

General Manual
Title 450 - Science and Technology

Part 401 – Technical Guides
Subpart A – Policy and Responsibilities

KS401.1 Responsibilities (continued)

area resource conservationist, two district conservationists, one soil conservationist or rangeland management specialist, and one soil conservation technician. Other disciplines may be added as determined necessary by the ASTC-FO. All field membership positions on the ATGC will be changed periodically to give others an opportunity to serve. Membership changes will be staggered to assure continuity. Representatives from other state or federal agencies such as the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts, Kansas Land Improvement Contractors Association, Farm Service Agency, Cooperative Extension Service, Kansas Department of Health and Environment, or Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, may be invited to participate in the meetings depending on issues or needs identified.

The ATGC will convene as determined necessary by the ASTC-FO, but as a minimum will meet once a year.

(x) Materials proposed for posting to the Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG) will undergo either a formal or informal review depending on the nature of the proposed materials. The responsible STGC member with whom the proposed FOTG material originated with will determine if a formal or informal review is needed.

A formal review will consist of review and concurrence by the STGC and other appropriate staff as documented on Form KS-ADS-16, Review of Proposed Directive/Website Information. Following the review and approval by the STC, the material will be posted to the FOTG and notification of the posting will be included in the Weekly Web Update. Some examples of FOTG material updates that would use the formal review process are updates involving:

- new FOTG material
- change of scope or purpose of existing FOTG materials such as practice standards, specifications, statement of work, quality criteria
- existing FOTG material that field offices need to be made aware of through listing in the Weekly Web Update

General Manual
Title 450 - Science and Technology

Part 401 – Technical Guides
Subpart A – Policy and Responsibilities

KS401.1 Responsibilities (continued)

An informal review will consist of approval by the responsible STGC member as documented on the Form KS-ADS-16 and subsequent review by the STC secretary. STC review and approval is not needed. Following the secretarial review, the material will be posted to the FOTG and notification of the posting would not be included in the Weekly Web Update. Some examples of FOTG material updates that would use the informal review process are updates involving:

- grammatical changes to existing FOTG material
- formatting changes to existing FOTG material
- change in content of existing FOTG material that does not change the scope or purpose of the FOTG material

(xi) The ATGC is responsible for providing instructions and training to field offices on managing and using the FOTG.

(xii) The resource conservationist on the State Office Resource Conservation Staff will serve as the FOTG content administrator. The secretary for the State Office Resource Conservation Staff and office assistants for the State Office Engineering and Soils Staffs will serve as FOTG content managers.

General Manual
Title 450 - Science and Technology

Part 401 – Technical Guides
Subpart B – Conservation Practice Standards

KS401.13 Practice Specifications

(3) The purpose of a technical variance is to allow deviation from requirements set forth in practice specifications contained in Section IV of the Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG). The use of technical variances allows the orderly evaluation of new technologies, materials, procedures, etc., that are not currently contained within state practice specifications and to determine if changes in the state specifications are necessary. Technical variances are not to be used to deviate from federal, state, or local program requirements, laws, or ordinances, nor are technical variances to be used to address already initiated or completed practices that do not meet current specifications.

The state conservationist has delegated authority for technical variance request approval to the state resource conservationist (SRC) and the state conservation engineer (SCE).

Technical variance requests shall be submitted using Form KS-TCH-1, Variance Request (see Subpart D, KS480.00), and approved prior to practice initiation. The request shall be routed through the area office and reviewed by the assistant state conservationist for field operations (ASTC-FOs) and area technical staff. If concurred with at the area level, documentation to support the decision shall be prepared by the area staff and submitted, along with Form KS-TCH-1, to either the SRC or the SCE, depending upon the nature of the practice. If the request is not concurred with at the area level, documentation to support the decision shall be provided back to the originating office, as well as a copy to the appropriate state-level official.

Upon receipt of a variance request from the area level, the appropriate state-level discipline and staff shall review and issue an approval or denial of the request. The decision and accompanying documentation shall be provided back to the area office as well as to the originating office.

Tracking the status of all approved variances will be carried out by responsible area staff using Form KS-TCH-2, Technical Variance Record (see Subpart D, KS480.01).

General Manual
Title 450 - Science and Technology

Part 401 – Technical Guides
Subpart B – Conservation Practice Standards

KS401.13 Practice Specifications (continued)

Upon completion of the monitoring period, a final status report with a summary of variance results will be completed by the originating field office (FO) with assistance from the area office (AO). The report will be submitted to the SRC or the SCE. Following review by appropriate state-level discipline staff, a report of finds and conclusions will be prepared and provided to the AO and originating FO.

KS480.00 – Form KS-TCH-1, Variance Request

USDA
NRCS

Variance Request

KS-TCH-1
Rev. 3/07

Field Office _____ County _____ Date _____

Name and Code of Practice Being Addressed:

Nature of Variance:

Application Date Planned:

Justification for Variance: (Attach plan and supporting worksheets, research, etc.)

Annual status reports will be submitted to the area office. A final status report, including a summary of variance results, will be submitted to the state resource conservationist (SRC) or state conservation engineer (SCE).

Variance to be Monitored by _____

Variance Monitoring Procedure _____

Variance Monitoring Period _____

Date Final Status Review to be Submitted to SRC or SCE _____

District Conservationist's Signature _____

Approvals		
_____ Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations	Approved/Not Approved (Circle one)	Date _____
_____ State Office (SO) Specialist	Approved/Not Approved (Circle one)	Date _____
_____ State Resource Conservationist or State Conservation Engineer	Approved/Not Approved (Circle one)	Date _____

SO Comments: _____

