

**COURSE NUMBER**

FHWA-NHI-142005

COURSE TITLE**NEPA and the Transportation Decisionmaking Process**

This comprehensive, three-day, instructor-led course presents the historical background and evolution of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and related environmental laws. It discusses their influence on FHWA's policies and procedures for the transportation project development and decisionmaking process. The course examines how the framework of laws, regulations, policies, and guidance integrate social, environmental, and economic factors in making transportation project decisions that are in the best overall public interest.

The course emphasizes the Council on Environmental Quality and FHWA's regulations; FHWA policy and guidance for implementing NEPA, Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act, and related environmental requirements. It discusses the NEPA Essential Elements in detail, including purpose and need, alternatives, impacts, mitigation, public involvement, interagency coordination and documentation. The course presents the requirements and considerations used to decide whether to prepare an environmental impact statement, an environmental assessment or determination that a project is categorically excluded from either. While this is not a course in environmental document writing, it presents the key principles for preparing high quality environmental documents, including the core principles from the FHWA/AASHTO/American Council of Engineering Companies Improving the Quality of Environmental Documents and the FHWA IQED initiative. The course also includes group exercises that allow participants to apply the course concepts to a realistic project scenario involving several transportation, social and environmental considerations.

OUTCOMES

Upon completion of the course, participants will be able to:

- Describe the NEPA principles in relation to transportation project development.
- Describe how the NEPA umbrella concept influences the transportation decisionmaking process.
- Explain the roles and responsibilities of participants in the NEPA process.
- Describe the importance of a reasoned, collaborative process when developing and evaluating alternatives.
- Discuss balancing an array of interests and values in making transportation decisions.
- List the milestones in transportation planning that link to the NEPA project development process.
- Describe the documentation requirements of the NEPA process.
- Discuss environmental streamlining, stewardship, and leadership in managing the NEPA process.

TARGET AUDIENCE

The target audience for this course includes FHWA, State departments of transportation (including consultants acting on behalf of the State), Federal and State environmental resource agencies, local governments, and metropolitan planning organizations who participate in the transportation decisionmaking process. We strongly encourage the sponsoring organization to invite a mix of planning and environmental staff from these agencies.

TRAINING LEVEL: Intermediate

FEE: 2021: \$370 Per Person; 2022: N/A

LENGTH: 3 DAYS (CEU: 1.8 UNITS)

CLASS SIZE: MINIMUM: 20; MAXIMUM: 30

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