National Sign Standards Program
Mandatory Center of Expertise (MCX)
Charter

I. Mission

To provide technical guidance and support to Corps of Engineers divisions, districts, and projects to be in compliance with the Sign Standards Program (defined by ER 1130-2-500, Chapter 6 and further described by EP 1130-2-500, Chapter 6) and the *Sign Standards Manual* (EP 310-1-6a and 6b). The MCX also provides engineering expertise for lock, dam and waterway signs (in accordance with EP 310-1-6a and b).

II. Organization

The MCX operates under the direction of the National Sign Program Manager, serving in a dedicated role to provide the necessary expertise to accomplish the mission. Additional interdisciplinary support from Operations, Safety, Office of Counsel, and Engineering is assigned as needed in a dedicated or intermittent role. The MCX operates under the direction of the HQUSACE proponent in Operations, Construction and Readiness Division, Natural Resources Management Branch.

III. Sign Advisory Work Group

The Sign Advisory Work Group is established to provide oversight and assistance to the MCX (see the Sign Advisory Work Group Charter).

IV. Functions

The MCX provides for the day-to-day operation and provides technical expertise regarding the Corps of Engineers sign program perform the following functions:

1. *Approval of Safety Critical Signs*

   a. Coordinate requests for approval for Caution, Warning, and Danger legends with the Sign Advisory Work Group and HQUSACE.

   b. Issue letters explaining approvals or denials to the requesting MSC and district with copies to Sign Advisory Work Group members. Notify UNICOR and Corps sign shops of additional approved legends.

   c. Maintain file copies of all Caution, Warning, and Danger signs approved and denied. Maintain a complete list of all safety legends approved for use throughout the Corps and posts those on the Natural Resources Management (NRM) Gateway.

2. *Engineering of Waterways Signs*

   a. Perform pre-engineering investigations and develop guidelines for common size (those using a single aluminum panel) signs and their support structures. These standards will include definitive types of substructures and superstructures for mounting common signs, and will be sent to all districts for their use in site adapting and ordering of signs.

   b. Design and develop general criteria to include specifications and guidance for custom signs, i.e., large signs that must be fabricated from more than one aluminum

panel. This guidance and criteria will include types of superstructures and substructures for mounting custom signs to insure uniformity across all Civil Works projects (value engineering studies will be permitted by other field offices in coordination with the MCX). Perform pre-engineering investigations and develops guidance and specifications for a modular sign system, which will ensure uniformity and facilitate ease of fabrication by UNICOR and erection by project or contractor field crews.

c. Provide a final, technical review of all detailed engineering drawings developed by the districts.

d. Provide design services for lock, dam, and waterways signs for individual districts on a reimbursable basis. Conduct field inspections of sites to verify foundation conditions, wind, ice load potential, and other factors affecting location and mounting of signs.

e. Develop and monitor quality control/quality assurance methods for accepting products. Resolve all problems between the Corps districts and the fabricator.

3. *Communication with UNICOR*

a. Coordinate quality assurance issues, clarify specifications, and resolve problems.

b. Coordinate with UNICOR's Washington, D.C. Central Office, Denver Product Services Support Center and fabrication centers on non-policy issues.

c. Communicate changes and additions to the Sign Standards Program.

d. Coordinate fabrication waivers as requested by districts.

e. Monitor Corps and UNICOR non-policy related commitments and ensure they are completed.

4. *Coordination with Material Suppliers and Contractors*

a. Stay current with the latest technologies and materials relating to sign construction and maintenance.

b. Provides contractors with artwork and answers questions related to sign construction.

5. *Sign Standards Manual Maintenance*

a. Review suggestions and makes decisions to improve, change specifications, and correct problems.

b. Solicit input from and coordinate revisions with the Sign Advisory Work Group.

c. Notify divisions and districts of changes to the Sign Standards Program. Post changes electronically on the NRM Gateway.

d. Coordinate revisions of the ER and EPs with HQUSACE.

6. *SignPro Management*

a. Perform software administrator functions such as adding, editing, and deleting users and signs, and providing help-desk support to users.

b. Serve as primary point of contact with ACE-IT to meet agency software requirements.

c. Coordinate technical problems and repairs with the software contractor.

    d. Manage the software maintenance contract.

7. *Online Communication*

    • Manage the NRM Gateway National Sign Standards Program Web Pages.

        a. Perform periodically review and edits content to keep information current and accurate.

        b. Coordinate web content changes with NRM Gateway point of contact.

        c. Ensure minutes of all SAWG meetings and calls are posted.

8. *Training*

        Assesses training needs, makes recommendations, and provides input to help the Sign Advisory Work Group develop and provide training. Provides training related to contents of the Sign Standards Manual and Corps SignPro software with the assistance of the Sign Advisory Work Group. Provides workshops on the Sign Standards Program to districts as requested by district sign program managers (districts will provide classrooms, training computers, and travel funds for instructor(s)).

9. *Communication*

    a. Communicate with division and district sign program managers on issues, technical information, problems, and questions regarding the National Sign Standards Program.

    b. Prepare draft memorandums and letters communicating information about the sign program or software for the Chief of Operations Division and the Director of Civil Works.

    c. Prepare and provides briefings to the Corps and UNICOR.

    d. Maintain and update district and division sign program managers list on the Sign Standards Program NRM Gateway SmartBook - Points of Contact.

10. *Program Quality Control*

        Develop and monitor quality control/quality assurance methods using a checklist for IG inspections and audits related to the Sign Standards Program.

11. *Annual Report*

        Submit an annual program report by 15 November of each year and will cover the preceding fiscal year's activities. This report will include:

    a. Status of the national sign program

    b. Accomplishments of MCX for the reporting year

    c. Detailed information on budget expenditures

    d. Status of sign standards compliance by district and division

    e. Goals to accomplish in the next year

National Sign Standards Program
Sign Advisory Work Group Charter

I. Mission

The mission of the national Sign Advisory Work Group (SAWG) is to be a resource and provide assistance to HQUSACE, divisions, and districts in implementing and maintaining the Corps of Engineers Sign Standards Program. The SAWG also provides oversight and assistance of the Sign Standards MCX.

II. Functions

1. Review, recommend and approve technical program changes and recommend policy changes in cooperation with the MCX.

2. Review safety critical sign related items.

3. Ensure division/district commanders, sign program managers, and others understand the requirements of the Sign Standards Program.

4. Provide oversight of MCX activities and assistance for the MCX as requested.

5. Assist the MCX in developing and conducting training.

6. Report annually on the progress of the MCX to HQUSACE.

7. Act as a sounding board for the MCX.

8. Recommend changes in work group function as the program evolves.

III. Operating Guidelines

1. *Structure.* The SAWG consists of:
   a. Operations representative from each division
   b. HQ Sign Proponent
   c. HQ Navigation
   d. HQ Office of Counsel
   e. HQ Safety Office
   * Membership for the SAWG is maintained at
     https://corpslakes.erdc.dren.mil/employees/sign/workgroup.cfm

2. *Roles*
   a. Chair (chosen from one of the division representatives)
      1. Coordinate communication between the SAWG and the MCX
      2. Consolidate SAWG responses and provides to the MCX
      3. Coordinate with the MCX and HQ to schedule annual meetings
      4. Develop the agenda for annual meetings
      5. Support the MCX as needed

b. Division Members

    1. Communicate sign issues to/from their districts

    2. Act on every email with "SIGN ACTION" as the subject

    3. Attend every SAWG meeting

  c. HQ Members

    1. Review safety sign request packages submitted by the MCX after review and recommendations by the SAWG.

    2. Attend every SAWG meeting if possible.

IV. Review Procedures

1. *Response Time.* Provide responses within 10 business days from receipt of action request unless otherwise stated.

2. *Scope of Review.* Focus on sign standards issues. Avoid addressing non-sign issues, unless necessary.

3. *Meeting Minutes Search.* To avoid reworking the same issue or unknowingly contradicting previous decisions, the SAWG member from the requesting division shall search all meeting minutes for related issues and bring to the group's attention.

4. *External Coordination.* If a significant sign issue falls within the purview of another group, coordination should occur to avoid duplicated effort or contradiction. Example issues include but are not limited to navigation, occupational safety, security, language translation, symbols, and water safety.

5. *Response Format.* To make it easier for the Chair to consolidate comments into a group response to the MCX, members should reply to issues with:

  a. *Clear Vote.* Approve, approve with modification, or disapprove.

  b. *Comments.* Provide a concise supporting argument with any suggested modification. If member's vote is to disapprove, a suggestion for an alternative solution is to be included.

6. *Email Protocol*

  a. *Signal Words.* Emails requesting action by the SAWG or MCX shall have a subject line beginning with "SIGN ACTION." This is to prevent action emails from being overlooked.

  b. *Subject Line.* Subject lines should have a helpful description of the issue so conversation threads are easy to identify. The subject should not change during the conversation. If a separate issue spins off, then a new conversation should be started with a new subject line.

  c. *Reply to All.* Email discussions should include the entire Work Group.