

Part 404 – Compliance – Internal and External

Subpart D – Spot Checks

404.30 Policy

- A. Spot Checks of Completed Conservation Practices Installed by NRCS Staff
- (1) States will complete spot checks on conservation practices installed during the current fiscal year by December 31.
 - (2) Annually, 5 percent of practices reported in a State will be spot checked. In States where large numbers of a single practice are installed, less than 5 percent of the total number of practices installed may be spot checked. See Title 450, General Manual (GM), Part 407, Subpart C, Section 407.20D. This subpart sets forth NRCS policy and responsibility for spot checking of all completed conservation practices for compliance with standards and specifications.
 - (3) Each field office will be spot checked at least every 3 years.
 - (4) Spot checks will be conducted by the area quality assurance team, State quality assurance team, or both. Spot checks will be conducted independently from the State quality assurance review. Results of the spot checks will be reported to the State Conservationist (STC), with copies to the State resource conservationist and State conservationist engineer.
 - (5) If waste, fraud, or abuse is suspected during the course of a spot check review, the spot check for that practice will be suspended and the incident will be reported immediately to the State Conservationist and the director of the Compliance Division, Strategic Planning, and Accountability. All supporting documentation will be gathered before leaving the spot check site and included in the report.
 - (6) Additional information on spot checking is found in 450-GM, Part 407, Subpart C.
- B. Spot Checks of Conservation Practices or Practice Components Completed by Technical Service Providers (TSPs)
- (1) States will complete spot checks on conservation practices installed during the current fiscal year by December 31.
 - (2) If waste, fraud, or abuse is suspected during the course of a spot check review, the spot check for that practice will be suspended and the incident will be reported immediately to the State Conservationist, the director of the Compliance Division, Strategic Planning and Accountability, and the National Headquarters (NHQ) TSP director. All supporting documentation will be gathered before leaving the spot check site and included in the report.
 - (3) Additional information on documentation, certification, and spot checking is found in 450-GM, Part 407.

404.31 Responsibilities

- A. The Deputy Chief for Strategic Planning and Accountability is responsible for developing policy for spot checks and overall oversight and monitoring.
- B. The Deputy Chief for Science and Technology (S&T) is responsible for establishing procedures for the technical aspects of spot checks.
- C. The Regional Conservationists are responsible for—

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- (1) Oversight of spot checks.
- (2) Providing monitoring to address results from spot check activities, reviews, risk assessments, and evaluations to appropriate staff for corrective actions.
- (3) Correcting and addressing any findings, deficiencies, risks, vulnerabilities, fraud, waste, and abuse revealed by spot checks.

D. STCs and Directors, Pacific Islands and Caribbean Areas, are responsible for reporting to agency leadership on spot check issues and—

- (1) Ensuring quality and integrity of technical assistance within the State.
- (2) Implementing a spot check compliance policy.
- (3) Designating who will complete the spot checks and the assignments for each.
- (4) Ensuring that those responsible for conducting spot checks have the required knowledge, skills, and abilities or have access to specialists who can provide the required expertise, if needed.
- (5) Tracking corrective actions or identified problems and ensuring that the corrective actions are taken.
- (6) Requesting functional reviews, if necessary, from the Compliance Division, Strategic Planning and Accountability, if significant quality problems occur.
- (7) Providing a yearend spot check report to their Regional Conservationist and to the director of the Compliance Division, Strategic Planning and Accountability.

E. State TSP coordinators are responsible for—

- (1) Monitoring the results of TSP spot checks.
- (2) Determining if any further management or administrative actions should be taken when spot check deficiencies exist.
- (3) Providing a deficiencies report to the NHQ TSP coordinator.

F. State or area offices are responsible for—

- (1) Developing plans for corrective actions identified of spot check deficiencies.
- (2) Overseeing the implementation of corrective actions taken.