The core team must hold a kick-off meeting early in the environmental process. The purpose of this meeting is to establish core team communication and begin collaborative work on the project. The kick-off meeting may occur while the project scope is still being developed, or after an agreement on the project scope is reached. If the core team has not yet agreed on the project scope, the kick-off meeting is an excellent opportunity for the team members to work out the details and reach agreement.

If the project involves a local government project sponsor, project sponsor participation is recommended. Project environmental team members, including consultants, may be invited at the core team’s discretion. The meeting may be in-person, virtual, or a conference call.

**Meeting Topics**

The kick-off meeting is an opportunity for the core team to discuss a wide variety of issues relating to the project. Depending on the scope and complexity of the project, the core team may discuss the following topics at the kick-off meeting.

1. Completion of project scope, if agreement has not been reached
2. Identification of project environmental team members
3. Project correspondence distribution list
4. Project file maintenance and organization
5. Core team communication
   a. The format and frequency of regular communications, including meetings, conference calls, e-mails, etc.
   b. The person(s) responsible for arranging meetings or conference calls, preparing meeting minutes, and entering information in the Environmental Compliance Oversight System (ECOS)
   c. For projects with local government project sponsors, the person providing any needed documentation to the project sponsor for inclusion in the project file

**Project Correspondence Distribution List Preparation**

The correspondence distribution list is typically prepared as follows.

1. The Environmental Affairs Division (ENV) core team member provides a master list of statewide agency contacts.
2. The district core team member provides a list of contact information for local entities and other interested parties, which are obtained from the project sponsor if appropriate.
3. The core team considers whether to send hard copy or electronic notices, and whether the format will vary by entity.
4. The core team consolidates the list and sends the complete distribution list to the project sponsor.

**Kick-off Meeting Documentation**

The results of the kick-off meeting must be recorded as meeting minutes and should be limited to the following.

1. Date
2. Attendees
3. Brief description of topics discussed
4. Decisions, as warranted
5. Action Items, as warranted

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) NEPA and Project Development Toolkit includes two versions of a template for meeting minutes; one designed to be completed electronically, and one designed to be printed then used. Use of these templates is recommended, but an alternative format is acceptable if it contains the required information without extraneous detail.

**Acronyms and Abbreviations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ECOS</td>
<td>Environmental Compliance Oversight System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENV</td>
<td>Environmental Affairs Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEPA</td>
<td>National Environmental Policy Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>TxDOT</td>
<td>Texas Department of Transportation</td>
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**Revision History**

The following table shows the revision history for this best practice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effective Date Month, Year</th>
<th>Reason for and Description of Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 2015</td>
<td>Version 1 was released.</td>
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