

## Introduction

Caltrans Division of Engineering Services, Geotechnical Services (GS), has responsibility for development and implementation of uniform standards, procedures, and guidance for the geotechnical products and services for State Highway System Projects. The Geotechnical Manual fulfills this responsibility by documenting the Department’s geotechnical investigative, design, and reporting standards.

Administrative procedures prescribing GS business processes, such as project management and quality assurance, are presented in the Offices of Geotechnical Design Quality Management Plan (OGD-QMP).

## Acknowledgements

The Caltrans Geotechnical Manual is the product of the combined efforts of many Geotechnical Services personnel working with the Office of Geotechnical Design Policies and Practices. Thanks for their work and appreciation for their contributions are extended here.

## Terms and Definitions

The terminology used in this Manual for Standards and Procedures is as follows:

Term	Definition
Standard	A rule or requirement that establishes uniform engineering or technical criteria, methods, processes and practices. Includes investigations, design, and reporting.
Guidance	Advice about what you should do or how you determine a course of action, including institutional knowledge or practice.

Term	Definition
Must, Required	The associated provisions <b>shall</b> be used.
Should	The associated provisions are preferred, or “best” practices.

## Exceptions

Standards associated with the term “must” or “required” require a written exception if not used. A [Request for Exception](#) form must be completed and signatures obtained prior to finalizing or issuing any related document. The completed *Request for Exception* form must be placed in the project archive and the exception(s) documented in the geotechnical report or project plans.

Standards associated with the term “should” do not require written approval. However, they must have Branch Chief concurrence and be documented in the geotechnical report.

## Scope

This manual is not a textbook, or a substitute for law, statute, regulation, code, knowledge, experience, or judgment. This manual includes geotechnical standards and guidelines. In the absence of a documented standard or guidance, professional standards of practice should be followed. Questions regarding technical conflicts will be addressed by the Office of Geotechnical Design Policies and Practices or its delegate and its decisions are final.

## Updates to the Manual

The manual will be reviewed and updated on a periodic basis to stay current with changing or accepted practice. Suggestions to update or revise the manual should have Branch Chief concurrence and be posted to the GS Discussion Board, Geotechnical Manual discussion forum.