




Illinois Department of Transportation

Memorandum

To: Regional Engineers
From: Jack A. Elston 
Subject: Special Provision for Performance Graded Asphalt Binder
Date: January 9, 2026

This special provision was developed by the Central Bureau of Materials to allow additional modifiers in performance graded (PG) asphalt binder. Ground tire rubber and softeners were added, as well as criteria to ensure long-term aging performance of our PG asphalt binders with and without modification. It has been revised to transition from Elastic Recovery (ER) to Multiple Stress Creep Recovery (MSCR) testing, where practicable, and to add asphalt binder modifications to increase the options available to asphalt binder sources, in conjunction with ICT Research Projects R27-SP63 and R27-250.

This special provision should be inserted into contracts containing the pay item BITUMINOUS MATERIALS (TACK COAT), or any of the following types of work.

- Section 312 Stabilized Subbase
- Section 355 HMA Base Course
- Section 356 HMA Base Course Widening
- Section 404 Micro-Surfacing and Slurry Sealing
- Section 405 Cape Seal
- Section 406 HMA Binder and Surface Course
- Section 407 HMA Pavement (Full-Depth)
- Section 442 Pavement Patching
- Section 507 Timber Structures
- Section 581 Waterproofing Membrane System
- Section 661 Hot-Mix Asphalt Shoulder Curb
- BDE special provision "Bituminous Surface Treatment with Fog Seal"
- BDE special provision "Full Lane Sealant Waterproofing System"
- BDE special provision "High Friction Surface Treatment"
- BDE special provision "Ultra-Thin Bonded Wearing Course"
- Local Roads & Streets Recurring Special Provision "Reflective Crack Control Treatment"

The districts should include the BDE Check Sheet marked with the applicable special provisions for the April 24, 2026 and subsequent lettings. The Project Coordination and Implementation Section will include a copy in the contract.

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PERFORMANCE GRADED ASPHALT BINDER (BDE)

Effective: January 1, 2023

Revised: April 1, 2026

Revise Article 1032.05 of the Standard Specifications to read:

“1032.05 Performance Graded Asphalt Binder. These materials will be accepted according to the Bureau of Materials Policy Memorandum, “Performance Graded Asphalt Binder Qualification Procedure.” The Department will maintain a qualified producer list. These materials shall be free from water and shall not foam when heated to any temperature below the actual flash point. Air blown asphalt, recycle engine oil bottoms (ReOB), and polyphosphoric acid (PPA) modification shall not be used.

When requested, producers shall provide the Engineer with viscosity/temperature relationships for the performance graded asphalt binders delivered and incorporated in the work.

- (a) Performance Graded (PG) Asphalt Binder. The asphalt binder shall meet the requirements of AASHTO M 320, Table 1 “Standard Specification for Performance Graded Asphalt Binder” for the grade shown on the plans and the following.

Test	Parameter
Small Strain Parameter (AASHTO PP 113) BBR, ΔT_c , 40 hrs PAV (40 hrs continuous or 2 PAV at 20 hrs)	-5 °C min.

- (b) Modified Performance Graded (PG) Asphalt Binder. The asphalt binder shall meet the requirements of AASHTO M 320, Table 1 “Standard Specification for Performance Graded Asphalt Binder” for the grade shown on the plans.

Asphalt binder modification shall be performed at the source, as defined in the Bureau of Materials Policy Memorandum, “Performance Graded Asphalt Binder Qualification Procedure.”

Modified asphalt binder shall be safe to handle at asphalt binder production and storage temperatures or HMA construction temperatures. Safety Data Sheets (SDS) shall be provided for all asphalt modifiers.

- (1) Polymer Modification (SBS). Elastomers shall be added to the base asphalt binder to achieve the specified performance grade and shall be a styrene-butadiene-styrene without oil extension. The polymer modified asphalt binder shall be smooth, homogeneous, and be according to the following requirements for the grade shown on the plans.

Requirements for Styrene-Butadiene Copolymer (SBS) Modified Asphalt Binders			
Separation of Polymer ITP, "Separation of Polymer from Asphalt Binder" Difference in °F (°C) of the softening point between top and bottom portions		4 (2) max.	
Tests on Residue from Rolling Thin Film Oven Test (RTFO), AASHTO T 240			
Multiple Stress Creep Recovery (MSCR), AASHTO T 350			
Asphalt Grade	Test Temperature	Maximum J _{nr} (3.2 kPa)	Minimum % Recovery (3.2 kPa)
SBS 76-22	64 °C	≤ 0.5	≥ 75 %
SBS 70-22		≤ 2	≥ 30 %
SBS 76-28	58 °C	≤ 0.5	≥ 80 %
SBS 70-28		≤ 1	≥ 60 %
SBS 64-28		≤ 2	≥ 30 %

- (2) Ground Tire Rubber (GTR) Modification. GTR modification is the addition of recycled ground tire rubber to liquid asphalt binder to achieve the specified performance grade. GTR shall be produced from processing automobile and/or truck tires by the ambient grinding method or micronizing through a cryogenic process. GTR shall not exceed 1/16 in. (2 mm) in any dimension and shall not contain free metal particles, moisture that would cause foaming of the asphalt, or other foreign materials. A mineral powder (such as talc) meeting the requirements of AASHTO M 17 may be added, up to a maximum of four percent by weight of GTR to reduce sticking and caking of the GTR particles. When tested in accordance with Illinois Modified AASHTO T 27 "Standard Method of Test for Sieve Analysis of Fine and Coarse Aggregates" or AASHTO PP 74 "Standard Practice for Determination of Size and Shape of Glass Beads Used in Traffic Markings by Means of Computerized Optical Method", a 50 g sample of the GTR shall conform to the following gradation requirements.

Sieve Size	Percent Passing
No. 16 (1.18 mm)	100
No. 30 (600 µm)	95 ± 5
No. 50 (300 µm)	> 20

GTR modified asphalt binder shall be tested for rotational viscosity according to AASHTO T 316 using spindle S27. GTR modified asphalt binder shall be tested for original dynamic shear and RTFO dynamic shear according to AASHTO T 315 using a gap of 2 mm.

Requirements for Ground Tire Rubber (GTR) Modified Asphalt Binders		
TESTS ON RESIDUE FROM ROLLING THIN FILM OVEN TEST (AASHTO T 240)		
Elastic Recovery ASTM D 6084, Procedure A, 77 °F (25 °C), 100 mm elongation, %	60 min.	70 min.

- (3) Softener Modification (SM). Softener modification is the addition of organic compounds, such as engineered flux, bio-oil blends, modified vegetable oils, amines, and fatty acid derivatives, to the base asphalt binder to achieve the specified performance grade. Softeners shall be dissolved, dispersed, or reacted in the asphalt binder to enhance its performance and shall remain compatible with the asphalt binder with no separation. Softeners shall not be added to modified PG asphalt binder as defined in Article 1032.05(b)(2).

An Attenuated Total Reflectance-Fourier Transform Infrared spectrum (ATR-FTIR) shall be collected for both the softening compound as well as the softener modified asphalt binder at the dose intended for qualification. The ATR-FTIR spectra shall be collected on unaged softener modified binder, 20-hour Pressurized Aging Vessel (PAV) aged softener modified binder, and 40-hour PAV aged softener modified binder. The ATR-FTIR shall be collected in accordance with Illinois Test Procedure 601. The electronic files spectral files (in one of the following extensions or equivalent: *.SPA, *.SPG, *.IRD, *.IFG, *.CSV, *.SP, *.IRS, *.GAML, *. [0-9], *.IGM, *.ABS, *.DRT, *.SBM, *.RAS) shall be submitted to the Central Bureau of Materials.

Requirements for Softener Modified (SM) Asphalt Binders		
Test	Asphalt Grade	
		SM PG 46-28
	SM PG 52-28	SM PG 52-34
	SM PG 58-22	SM PG 58-28
	SM PG 64-22	
Small Strain Parameter (AASHTO PP 113) BBR, ΔT_c , 40 hrs PAV (40 hrs continuous or 2 PAV at 20 hrs)	-5 °C min.	
Large Strain Parameter (Illinois Modified AASHTO T 391) DSR/LAS Fatigue Property, $\Delta G^* _{peak}$, 40 hrs PAV (40 hrs continuous or 2 PAV at 20 hrs)	≥ 54 %	

- (4) Polymer/Softener Modification (SBS/SM). Polymer/Softener modification is the addition of organic compounds, such as engineered flux, bio-oil blends, modified vegetable oils, amines, and fatty acid derivatives, used in combination with SBS modified PG asphalt binder as modified in accordance with Article 1032.05(b)(1) to achieve the specified performance grade. Polymer/Softeners shall be compatible with

each other and dissolved, dispersed, or reacted in the asphalt binder to enhance its performance and shall remain compatible with the asphalt binder with no separation. Polymer/Softeners shall not be added to modified PG asphalt binder as defined in Article 1032.05(b)(2).

An Attenuated Total Reflectance-Fourier Transform Infrared spectrum (ATR-FTIR) shall be collected for both the polymer and the softening compound as well as the polymer/softener modified asphalt binder at the dose intended for qualification. The ATR-FTIR spectra shall be collected on unaged polymer/softener modified binder, 20-hour Pressurized Aging Vessel (PAV) aged polymer/softener modified binder, and 40-hour PAV aged polymer/softener modified binder. The ATR-FTIR shall be collected in accordance with Illinois Test Procedure 601. The electronic files spectral files (in one of the following extensions or equivalent: *.SPA, *.SPG, *.IRD, *.IFG, *.CSV, *.SP, *.IRS, *.GAML, *.[0-9], *.IGM, *.ABS, *.DRT, *.SBM, *.RAS) shall be submitted to the Central Bureau of Materials.

Requirements for Polymer/Softener Modified (SBS-SM) Asphalt Binders			
Separation of Polymer ITP, "Separation of Polymer from Asphalt Binder" Difference in °F (°C) of the softening point between top and bottom portions		4 (2) max.	
Tests on Residue from Rolling Thin Film Oven Test (RTFO), AASHTO T 240			
Multiple Stress Creep Recovery (MSCR), AASHTO T 350			
Asphalt Grade	Test Temperature	Maximum J_{nr} (3.2 kPa)	Minimum % Recovery (3.2 kPa)
SBS-SM 76-22	64 °C	≤ 0.5	≥ 75 %
SBS-SM 70-22		≤ 2	≥ 30 %
SBS-SM 76-28	58 °C	≤ 0.5	≥ 80 %
SBS-SM 70-28		≤ 1	≥ 60 %
SBS-SM 64-28		≤ 2	≥ 30 %
Small Strain Parameter (AASHTO PP 113) BBR, ΔT_c , 40 hrs PAV (40 hrs continuous or 2 PAV at 20 hrs)			-5 °C min.
Large Strain Parameter (Illinois Modified AASHTO T 391) DSR/LAS Fatigue Property, $\Delta G^* _{peak}$ τ , 40 hrs PAV (40 hrs continuous or 2 PAV at 20 hrs)			≥ 60 %

The following grades may be specified as tack coats.

Asphalt Grade	Use
PG 58-22, PG 58-28, PG 64-22	Tack Coat"

Revise Article 1031.06(c)(1) and 1031.06(c)(2) of the Standard Specifications to read:

“(1) RAP/RAS. When RAP is used alone or RAP is used in conjunction with RAS, the percentage of virgin ABR shall not exceed the amounts listed in the following table.

HMA Mixtures - RAP/RAS Maximum ABR % ^{1/ 2/}			
Ndesign	Binder	Surface	Polymer Modified Binder or Surface ^{3/}
30	30	30	10
50	25	15	10
70	15	10	10
90	10	10	10

1/ For Low ESAL HMA shoulder and stabilized subbase, the RAP/RAS ABR shall not exceed 50 percent of the mixture.

2/ When RAP/RAS ABR exceeds 20 percent, the high and low virgin asphalt binder grades shall each be reduced by one grade (i.e. 25 percent ABR would require a virgin asphalt binder grade of PG 64-22 to be reduced to a PG 58-28).

3/ The maximum ABR percentages for ground tire rubber (GTR) modified mixes shall be equivalent to the percentages specified for SBS polymer modified mixes.

(2) FRAP/RAS. When FRAP is used alone or FRAP is used in conjunction with RAS, the percentage of virgin asphalt binder replacement shall not exceed the amounts listed in the following table.

HMA Mixtures - FRAP/RAS Maximum ABR % ^{1/ 2/}			
Ndesign	Binder	Surface	Polymer Modified Binder or Surface ^{3/}
30	55	45	15
50	45	40	15
70	45	35	15
90	45	35	15
SMA	--	--	25
IL-4.75	--	--	35

1/ For Low ESAL HMA shoulder and stabilized subbase, the FRAP/RAS ABR shall not exceed 50 percent of the mixture.

2/ When FRAP/RAS ABR exceeds 20 percent for all mixes, the high and low virgin asphalt binder grades shall each be reduced by one grade (i.e. 25 percent ABR would require a virgin asphalt binder grade of PG 64-22 to be reduced to a PG 58-28).

- 3/ The maximum ABR percentages for GTR modified mixes shall be equivalent to the percentages specified for SBS polymer modified mixes.”

Add the following to the end of Note 2 of Article 1030.03 of the Standard Specifications.

“A dedicated storage tank for the ground tire rubber (GTR) modified asphalt binder shall be provided. This tank shall be capable of providing continuous mechanical mixing throughout and/or recirculation of the asphalt binder to provide a uniform mixture. The tank shall be heated and capable of maintaining the temperature of the asphalt binder at 300 °F to 350 °F (149 °C to 177 °C). The asphalt binder metering systems of dryer drum plants shall be calibrated with the actual GTR modified asphalt binder material with an accuracy of ± 0.40 percent.”

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