




Illinois Department of Transportation

Memorandum

To: Regional Engineers
From: Jack A. Elston 
Subject: Special Provision for Bridge Deck Concrete Overlays
Date: September 26, 2025

This special provision was developed by the Central Bureau of Materials and the Bureau of Bridges and Structures to combine four Guide Bridge Special Provisions (GBSP 29, 30, 31 & 72) for microsilica, latex, high-reactivity metakaolin, and fly ash or ground granulated blast-furnace slag bridge deck concrete overlays into one BDE Special Provision.

This special provision should be inserted into contracts containing BRIDGE DECK MICROSILICA CONCRETE OVERLAY, BRIDGE DECK LATEX CONCRETE OVERLAY, BRIDGE DECK HRM CONCRETE OVERLAY, or BRIDGE DECK GGBF OR FLY ASH CONCRETE OVERLAY.

The districts should include the BDE Check Sheet marked with the applicable special provisions for the January 16, 2026 and subsequent lettings. The Project Coordination and Implementation Section will include a copy in the contract.

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BRIDGE DECK CONCRETE OVERLAYS

Effective: January 1, 2026

Add the following Section 531 to the Standard Specifications:

“SECTION 531. BRIDGE DECK CONCRETE OVERLAYS

531.01 Description. This work shall consist of constructing a concrete overlay on an existing concrete bridge deck or approach slab.

531.02 Materials. Materials shall be according to the following.

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| Item..... | Article/Section |
| (a) Coarse Aggregate (Note 1) | 1004.02 |
| (b) Packaged, Dry, Rapid Hardening Mortar or Concrete | 1018 |
| (c) Portland Cement Concrete (Note 2) (Note 3) | 1020 |
| (d) Fibers for Concrete (Note 4)..... | 1014 |

Note 1. Coarse aggregate shall be crushed stone or crushed gravel.

Note 2. Concrete shall be Class BS with the following exceptions.

| Overlay Type | Gradation |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Fly Ash Ground Granulated Blast Furnace (GGBF) Slag High Reactivity Metakaolin (HRM) Microsilica | CA 11, CA 13, CA 14, or CA 16 |
| Latex | CA 13, CA 14, or CA 16 |

Slump shall be 2-7 in. (50-175 mm). For latex overlays, the maximum slump may be increased if no visible segregation is observed.

For latex overlays, air content shall be a maximum of 7.0 percent and maximum water/cement ratio shall be 0.40.

For Class F fly ash overlays, fly ash shall replace cement at the maximum rate permitted according to Article 1020.05(c)(1)b. The replacement ratio shall be 1:1.

For Class C fly ash overlays, fly ash shall replace cement at a rate ranging from a minimum of 25 percent to the maximum rate permitted according to Article 1020.05(c)(1)c. The replacement ratio shall be 1:1.

For GGBF slag overlays, GGBF slag shall replace cement at a rate ranging from a minimum of 25 percent to the maximum rate permitted according to Article 1020.05(c)(2)b. The replacement ratio shall be 1:1.

For microsilica and HRM overlays, the cementitious factor (excluding microsilica or HRM) shall be 565 lb/cu yd (390 kg/cu m). The minimum amount of microsilica or HRM added to the mix shall be 33 lb/cu yd (20 kg/cu m) and the maximum shall be 37 lb/cu yd (22 kg/cu m).

For latex overlays, the cementitious factor shall be a minimum of 658 lbs/cu yd (335 kg/cu m), the dosage of the latex admixture shall be 24.5 gal/cu yd (121.3 L/cu m), the coarse aggregate shall be 42-50 percent by weight (mass) of total aggregate, no air entraining admixture shall be used, and water used shall be a maximum of 157 lb/cu yd (93.1 kg/cu m) (including free moisture on the fine and coarse aggregates).

Note 3. For HRM and microsilica overlays, the Contractor shall submit a specific batching sequence for verification by the Engineer. The submittal shall include whether a truck or stationary mixer will be used. For HRM overlays, the submittal shall include whether bulk or bagged HRM will be used. For microsilica overlays, the submittal shall include whether the microsilica to be used is a water based slurry, bulk densified, or bagged densified.

Note 4. Synthetic fibers, when required, shall be according to Article 1014.01, and 1014.04 or 1014.05, as applicable.

531.03 Equipment. Equipment shall be according to the following.

| Item..... | Article/Section |
|--|-----------------|
| (a) Concrete Equipment (Note 1) | 1020.03 |
| (b) Finishing Equipment | 503.03 |
| (c) Fogging Equipment | 1103.17(k) |
| (d) Mechanical Scarifying Equipment (Note 2) | 1101.16 |
| (e) Hydro-Scarification Equipment (Note 3) | |
| (f) Hand-Held Blast Cleaning Equipment (Note 4) | |
| (g) Mechanical Blast Cleaning Equipment (Note 5) | |
| (h) Pull-Off Test Equipment (Note 6) | |

Note 1. For latex concrete overlays, a mobile portland cement concrete plant shall be used according to Articles 1020.12 and 1103.04.

Note 2. Mechanical scarifying equipment shall be capable of uniformly scarifying or removing the old concrete surface and new patches to the depth required. The minimum width of the equipment shall be 3 ft (1 m).

Note 3. Hydro-scarification equipment shall consist of filtering and pumping units operating with a computerized, self-propelled robotic machine capable of removing sound concrete in a single pass to the specified depth and operating at a 16,000 psi (110 MPa) minimum water pressure with a 55 gal/min (208 L/min) minimum water flow rate.

Note 4. Hand-held blast cleaning shall be performed by high-pressure waterblasting or abrasive blasting. High-pressure waterblasting equipment shall have a minimum water pressure of 7000 psi (48 MPa) and have oil traps.

Note 5. Mechanical blast cleaning shall be performed by high-pressure waterblasting or shotblasting capable of removing weak concrete at the surface, including the microfractured concrete surface layer remaining as a result of mechanical scarification, and shall have oil traps.

Mechanical high-pressure waterblasting equipment shall be mounted on a wheeled carriage, include multiple nozzles mounted on a rotating assembly, and shall be operated with a 7000 psi (48 MPa) minimum water pressure. The distance between the nozzles and the deck surface shall be kept constant and the wheels shall maintain contact with the deck surface during operation.

Note 6. Equipment used to perform pull-off testing shall be on the Department's qualified product list "Pull-Off Test Equipment for Bridge Deck Overlays".

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

531.04 General. The Contractor shall control the runoff water generated by the various construction activities in such a manner as to minimize, to the maximum extent practicable, the discharge of untreated effluent into adjacent waters, and shall properly dispose of the solids generated according to Article 202.03. The Contractor shall submit a water management plan to the Engineer specifying the control measures to be used. The control measures shall be in place prior to the start of runoff water generating activities. Runoff water shall not be allowed to constitute a hazard to adjacent or underlying roadways, waterways, drainage areas or railroads nor be allowed to erode existing slopes.

531.05 Preparation. Sidewalks, curbs, drains, reinforcement, existing transverse and longitudinal joints, and other appurtenances which are to remain in place shall be protected from damage during scarification and cleaning operations.

- (a) Scarification. The scarification shall consist of removing the concrete using mechanical and hydro-scarifying equipment to the depth specified on the plans. The depth specified shall be measured from the existing concrete surface to the grout line between aggregates remaining after scarification. Power-driven hand tools shall be used for removal around areas to remain in place and areas not accessible to the scarifying equipment. Power-driven hand tools include jackhammers lighter than the nominal 45 lb (20 kg) class. Jackhammers or chipping hammers shall be operated at an angle less than 45 degrees measured from the surface of the slab.

Mechanical scarification equipment shall be used to remove the initial 1/4 in. (25 mm) minimum depth of concrete, creating a uniform roughened concrete surface. If the Contractor's use of mechanical scarifying equipment results in exposing, snagging, or

dislodging the top mat of reinforcing steel, the mechanical scarifying depth shall be reduced as necessary immediately. If the exposing, snagging, or dislodging the top mat of reinforcing steel cannot be avoided, the mechanical scarifying shall be stopped immediately and the remaining removal shall be accomplished using the hydro-scarification equipment. All damage to the existing reinforcement resulting from the Contractor's operation shall be repaired or replaced at no additional cost to the Department. Replacement shall include the removal of any additional concrete required to position or splice the new reinforcing steel. Undercutting of exposed reinforcement bars shall only be as required to replace or repair damaged reinforcement. Repairs to existing reinforcement shall be according to Section 530.

- (b) Sounding. Just prior to performing hydro-scarification, the deck shall be sounded, with unsound areas marked on the deck by the Engineer. A trial section, in an area of sound concrete, on the existing deck surface will be designated by the Engineer to calibrate the equipment settings to remove sound concrete to the required depth, in a single pass, and provide a highly roughened bondable surface. The trial section shall consist of approximately 30 sq ft (3 sq m). After calibration in an area of sound concrete, the equipment shall be moved to a second trial section, as designated by the Engineer, in an area containing unsound concrete to verify the calibrated settings are sufficient to remove the unsound concrete. If the calibrated settings are insufficient to remove the unsound concrete, the equipment may be moved back to an area of sound concrete and the calibration settings verified.

After the equipment settings are established, they shall be supplied to the Engineer and include the following.

- (1) Water pressure
- (2) Water flow rate
- (3) Nozzle type and size
- (4) Nozzle travel speed
- (5) Machine staging control (step/advance rate)

Hydro-scarification may begin after the calibration settings have been approved by the Engineer. At least the last 1/2 in. (13 mm) of removal shall be accomplished with hydro-scarification equipment.

The removal depth will be verified by the Engineer. If sound concrete is being removed below the desired depth, the equipment shall be recalibrated.

- (c) Cleaning. After hydro-scarification, the concrete shall be vacuum cleaned before the water and debris are allowed to dry and re-solidify to the deck. The vacuum shall be equipped with fugitive dust control devices capable of removing wet debris and water in the same pass. The vacuum shall also be capable of washing the deck with pressurized water prior to the vacuum operation to dislodge all debris and slurry from the deck surface. The use of alternative cleaning and debris removal methods to minimize driving heavy

vacuum equipment over the exposed reinforcement may be used subject to the approval of the Engineer.

531.06 Patching. After scarification and cleaning, the Engineer will sound the scarified concrete and survey the existing reinforcement condition. All remaining unsound concrete and unacceptably corroded reinforcement bars will be marked for additional removal and/or repairs and shall be completed according to Section 530 except as noted below.

In areas where unsound concrete extends below the specified removal depth and hydro-scarification completely removes unsound concrete, a full-depth repair shall be required when the bottom mat of reinforcement is exposed.

Full-depth patches shall be struck off to the scarified surface and then roughened with a suitable stiff bristled broom or wire brush to provide a rough texture. Hand finishing of the patch surface shall be kept to a minimum to prevent overworking of the surface.

Any removal required or made below the specified depth for scarification, which does not result in full-depth repair, shall be filled with the overlay material at the time of the overlay placement.

Undercutting of exposed reinforcement bars shall only be as required to replace or repair damaged or corroded reinforcement, or to perform a full depth repair.

531.07 Final Surface Preparation. Final surface preparation shall include the cleaning of all dust, debris, concrete fines, and other foreign substances from the surface including vertical faces of curbs, previously placed adjacent overlays, barrier walls up to a height of 1 in. (25 mm) above the overlay, depressions, and beneath reinforcement bars using hand-held blast cleaning methods.

If spoils from the scarification operation are allowed to dry and re-solidify on the surface, the surface shall be cleaned with mechanical blast cleaning equipment. Areas determined by the Engineer to be inaccessible to scarifying equipment shall be blast cleaned with hand-held equipment.

The Engineer may require surface pull-off testing of areas inaccessible to scarifying equipment. The Contractor shall provide the testing equipment in accordance with Illinois Test Procedure 304 "Pull-Off Test (Surface Method)". Prior to the start of testing, the Contractor shall submit to the Engineer a technical data sheet and material safety data sheet for the epoxy used to perform the testing. For solvents used to clean the equipment, a material safety data sheet shall be submitted. The Engineer will determine each test location, and each individual test shall have a minimum strength of 175 psi (1,207 kPa). In the case of a failing test, the Contractor shall adjust the blast cleaning method and re-clean the area. Testing will be repeated until satisfactory results are attained.

Exposed reinforcement bars shall be free of dirt, detrimental scale, paint, oil, and other foreign substances which may reduce bond with the concrete. Loose, scaling rust shall be removed by

rubbing with burlap, wire brushing, blast cleaning, or another method approved by the Engineer. Loose reinforcement bars, as determined by the Engineer, shall be retied.

Dust, concrete fines, debris, and water resulting from the surface preparation shall be confined and immediately removed. If concrete placement does not follow immediately after the final cleaning, the area shall be protected with anchored white polyethylene sheeting.

531.08 Equipment Preparation. Before placing the overlay, the finishing machine shall be operated over the full length of bridge segment to be overlaid to check support rails for deflection and confirm the minimum overlay thickness. If adjustments are needed, another check shall be performed.

531.09 Placing. Concrete placement shall be according to Article 503.07, 503.16, and the following.

The surface shall be cleaned to the satisfaction of the Engineer and shall be thoroughly wetted and maintained in a dampened condition with water for at least 12 hours before placement of the overlay. Excess water shall be removed by compressed air or by vacuuming prior to the beginning of overlay placement. Water shall not be applied to the surface within one hour before or at any time during placement of the overlay.

Internal vibration shall be performed along edges, adjacent to bulkheads, and where the overlay thickness exceeds 3 in. (75 mm). Internal vibration along the longitudinal edges of a pour shall be performed with a minimum of two hand-held vibrators, one on each edge of the pour. Hand finishing shall be performed along the edges of the pour from sidewalks, curbs, or work bridges.

A construction dam or bulkhead shall be installed in case of a delay of 30 minutes or more in the concrete placement operation.

Construction joints shall be formed. When required by the Engineer, the previously placed overlay shall be sawed full-depth to a straight and vertical edge before fresh concrete is placed. The Engineer will determine the extent of the removal. When longitudinal joints are not shown on the plans, the locations shall be subject to approval by the Engineer and shall not be located in the wheel paths.

The Contractor shall stencil the date of construction (month and year) and the appropriate letters into the overlay before it takes its final set, as follows.

- (a) MS, for MicroSilica
- (b) MSFA, when fly ash is used in the silica fume mix design, for MicroSilica Fly Ash
- (c) MSF, for MicroSilica with Fibers
- (d) MSFAF, when fly ash is used in the silica fume mix design, for MicroSilica Fly Ash with Fibers
- (e) LX, for LateX
- (f) LXF, for LateX with Fibers

- (g) HRM, for High-Reactivity Metakaolin
- (h) HRMFA, when fly ash is used in the HRM mix design, for High-Reactivity Metakaolin Fly Ash
- (i) HRMF, for High-Reactivity Metakaolin with Fibers
- (j) HRMFAF, when fly ash is used in the HRM mix design, for High-Reactivity Metakaolin Fly Ash with Fibers
- (k) FA, for Fly Ash
- (l) FAF, for Fly Ash with Fibers
- (m) GGBF, for Ground Granulated Blast Furnace slag
- (n) GGBFF, for Ground Granulated Blast Furnace slag with Fibers

The stencil shall be in a noticeable location, as determined by the Engineer, for each stage of construction outside of the grooving where possible and within 3 ft (1 m) of an abutment joint. The characters shall be 3 to 4 in. (75 to 100 mm) in height, 1/4 in. (5 mm) in depth and face the centerline of the roadway.

531.10 Weather and Other Limitations. Temperature control for concrete placement shall be according to Article 1020.14(b). The concrete protection from low air temperatures during the curing period shall be according to Article 1020.13(d). Concrete shall not be placed when rain is expected during the working period. If night placement is required, illumination and placement procedures will be subject to approval by the Engineer.

Concrete delivery vehicles driven on the structure shall be limited to a maximum load of 6 cu yd (4.6 cu m).

Truck mixers, concrete pumps, or other heavy equipment will not be permitted on any portion where the top reinforcing mat has been exposed. Conveyors, buggy ramps, and pump piping shall be installed in a way that will not displace undercut reinforcement bars. Air compressors may be operated on the deck only if located directly over a pier and supported off undercut reinforcement bars. Compressors will not be allowed to travel over undercut reinforcement bars.

Concrete removal may proceed during final cleaning and concrete placement on adjacent portions, provided the removal does not interfere with the cleaning or placement operations.

Water or contaminants from the hydro-scarification shall not be permitted in areas where the new overlay has been placed until the overlay has cured a minimum of 24 hours.

No concrete shall be removed within 6 ft (1.8 m) of a newly-placed overlay until the concrete has obtained a minimum compressive strength of 3000 psi (20,700 kPa) or flexural strength of 600 psi (4,150 kPa).

531.11 Curing. For silica fume, HRM, GGBF, and fly ash concrete overlays, the surface shall be continuously wet cured for at least seven days according to Articles 1020.13(a)(5) or (a)(6).

For latex modified concrete overlays, the surface shall be continuously wet cured for at least 48 hours according to Articles 1020.13(a)(3), (a)(5), or (a)(6). After the wet cure is completed, all layers of covering materials shall be removed to allow for a dry cure for at least 48 hours. If the ambient temperature falls below 45°F (10°C) during either the wet or dry curing periods, the time below 45°F (10°C) will not be included in the 96 hour curing period. If there is sufficient rain to wet the surface of the overlay for more than one hour of the dry cure period, the wet time will not be included in the 48 hour dry cure period.

When the mats or blankets have been pre-dampened, excess water shall not be allowed to drip onto the overlay during placement.

531.12 Testing. The Engineer reserves the right to conduct pull-off tests on the overlay to determine if any areas are not bonded to the underlying concrete. The overlay will be tested according to the Illinois Test Procedure 305 "Pull-Off Test (Overlay Method)", and the Contractor shall provide the test equipment. Prior to the start of testing, the Contractor shall submit to the Engineer a technical data sheet and material safety data sheet for the epoxy used to perform the testing. For solvents used to clean the equipment, a material safety data sheet shall be submitted. Each individual test shall have a minimum strength of 150 psi (1,034 kPa). If the test results are unacceptable, the overlay shall be removed and replaced at the locations determined by the Engineer. When removing portions of an overlay, the saw cut shall be a minimum depth of 1 in. (25 mm).

If the overlay is to remain in place, all core holes due to testing shall be filled with a rapid set mortar or concrete. Only enough water to permit placement and consolidation by rodding shall be used, and the material shall be struck-off flush with the adjacent material.

For a rapid set mortar mixture, one part packaged rapid set cement shall be combined with two parts fine aggregate, by volume; or a packaged rapid set mortar shall be used. For a rapid set concrete mixture, a packaged rapid set mortar shall be combined with coarse aggregate according to the manufacturer's instructions; or a packaged rapid set concrete shall be used. Mixing of a rapid set mortar or concrete shall be according to the manufacturer's instructions.

531.13 Opening to Traffic. No traffic or construction equipment will be permitted on the overlay until after the cure period and the concrete has obtained a minimum compressive strength of 4000 psi (27,500 kPa) or flexural strength of 675 psi (4,650 kPa).

531.14 Method of Measurement. Scarification will be measured for payment in square yards (square meters). No additional payment will be made for multiple passes of the equipment.

The concrete overlay will be measured for payment in square yards (square meters).

Additional concrete placed with the overlay, required to fill all depressions below the specified thickness will be measured for payment in cubic yards (cubic meters). The volume will be determined by subtracting the theoretical volume of the overlay from the ticketed volume of overlay delivered minus the volume estimated by the Engineer left in the last truck at the end of the overlay placement. The theoretical cubic yard (cubic meter) quantity for the overlay will be

determined by multiplying the plan surface area of the overlay times the specified thickness of the overlay.

Partial depth removal in concurrence with hydro-scarification will not be measured for payment.

531.15 Basis of Payment. Scarification will be paid for at the contract unit price per square yard (square meter) for BRIDGE DECK SCARIFICATION, of the depth specified.

Silica fume concrete overlay will be paid for at the contract unit price per square yard (square meter) for BRIDGE DECK MICROSILICA CONCRETE OVERLAY, of the thickness specified. Latex modified concrete overlay will be paid for at the contract unit price per square yard (square meter) for BRIDGE DECK LATEX CONCRETE OVERLAY, of the thickness specified. HRM concrete overlay will be paid for at the contract unit price per square yard (square meter) for BRIDGE DECK HRM CONCRETE OVERLAY, of the thickness specified. GGBF or fly ash concrete overlay will be paid for at the contract unit price per square yard (square meter) for BRIDGE DECK GGBF OR FLY ASH CONCRETE OVERLAY, of the thickness specified.

The additional volume of overlay required to fill all depressions below the specified thickness and/or for grade adjustments will be paid for at the Contractor's actual material cost for the concrete per cubic yard (cubic meter) times an adjustment factor. For volumes 15 percent or less over the theoretical volume of the overlay, the adjustment factor will be 1.15. For volumes greater than 15 percent, the adjustment factor will be 1.25 for that volume over 15 percent of the theoretical volume of the overlay.

Concrete protected according to Article 1020.13(d) will be paid according to Article 503.22.

Areas requiring additional partial depth or full depth removal of unsound concrete after hydro-scarification, as determined by the Engineer, will be paid according to Article 109.04.

Reinforcement bars repaired in-kind, as approved by the Engineer, will be paid according to Article 109.04.

When the Engineer conducts pull-off tests on the existing surface or overlay and they are acceptable, Contractor expenses incurred due to testing and filling core holes will be paid according to Article 109.04. Unacceptable pull-off tests will be at no additional cost to the Department."