

South Carolina Department of Transportation
Engineering Directive Memorandum

Number: 21

Primary Department: Maintenance

Referrals: None

Subject: The Permanent Closing of Department Facilities

The time will come when it will be necessary to close a Department facility in order to consolidate services, because the facility maintenance costs become unreasonable, or because the facility is no longer needed for efficient and effective operations. Once it has been decided that it is in the best interest of their operation to close a particular facility, the appropriate engineering director or district engineering administrator shall follow the procedures outlined in Attachment A. The proposed closing of any Department facility shall be kept confidential until approval is given by the deputy secretary for engineering to proceed with an action plan to terminate operations at the facility in question.

Closing a facility affects not only the employees involved but the community as well, and can be done only through careful planning and effective communication with those involved. Therefore, it is imperative that each step of the process in Attachment A be followed in order for the closure to be accomplished successfully.

Submitted by: _____ Robert I. Pratt
Director of Preconstruction

Submitted by: _____ James J. Feda, Jr.
Director of Maintenance

Recommended by: _____ John V. Walsh
Chief Engineer for Planning, Location, and Design

Recommended by: _____ J. C. Watson
Chief Engineer for Operations

Approved by: _____ Tony L. Chapman
Deputy Secretary for Engineering

Effective Date: _____ December 17, 2008

Original signed by Deputy Secretary for Engineering Tony L. Chapman, P.E. December 17, 2008. All original engineering directives maintained by the Office of the Deputy Secretary for Engineering.

Attachment A

Procedures for the Closing of Department Facilities

I. Facility Closure Request

101 – The time will come when it will be necessary to close a Department facility in order to consolidate services, because the facility maintenance costs become unreasonable, or because the facility is no longer needed for efficient and effective operations. When the resident engineer/manager has sufficient reason to believe that closing a facility is in the best interest of the Department, he/she shall contact their supervisor and discuss their reasons for wanting to close the facility. If their supervisor concurs with the recommendation, they will ask that a closure request report be prepared for submittal to the district engineering administrator or applicable department head.

102 – The proposed closing of any Department facility shall be kept confidential until approval is given by the deputy secretary for engineering to proceed with an action plan to terminate operations at the facility in question.

103 – The resident engineer/manager will prepare the closure request report to include the following:

- The reasons why it is in the best interest of the Department to close the facility.
- The population of the area affected and the road miles served by the facility. A map of the area served by the facility should also be included.
- A brief plan stating how the same level of service for the area will be maintained.
- Known or potential roadblocks to the proposed closing.
- A list of all employees affected by the closing, along with the distance they live from the existing facility and the distance to their new place of operation.
- A list of all external stakeholders that would have an interest in the closing (elected officials, commissioners, prominent businesspersons, etc.).
- A report of the potential savings to the Department that could be realized through the closing of the facility, to include any reduction in the equipment fleet that would be realized by the consolidation of forces. Increased fuel costs, if applicable, should also be included.

104 – The closure report will be submitted to the district engineering administrator or appropriate department head. The resident engineer/manager, if not the person preparing the report, shall inform the person preparing the report that it is confidential and shall not be discussed with any of the employees. No action of any kind shall be taken until approval is received through channels.

105 – If the district engineering administrator or appropriate department head agrees with the proposed closure, they will forward the report to the deputy secretary for engineering for consideration. If they have sufficient reasons to deny the request, a confidential reply should be sent back through channels to the resident engineer/manager with an emphasis placed on confidentiality. The resident engineer/manager shall not discuss this with any employee not involved with the initial request.

106 – The deputy secretary for engineering shall request input and a recommendation from his/her appropriate staff members to include the chief engineer for operations; chief engineer for planning, location, and design; and engineering directors that would have an interest in the facility or its operation.

107 – It is important that the chief engineers and engineering directors provide their recommendations in a timely manner. Any known obstacles or reasons not to close the facility should be adequately explained.

108 – If the deputy secretary for engineering agrees that the proposed closure is in the best interest of the Department, he/she will discuss the proposed closure with the secretary of transportation. If the deputy secretary for engineering does not agree with the need to close the facility, a response will be sent back to the district engineering administrator or department head explaining why the facility should remain open.

109 – The secretary of transportation or a designee will inform the appropriate SCDOT commissioner of the requested closure if in agreement with the closure request. If the commissioner disagrees with the need to close the facility, the request is returned denied.

II. Contact of External Stakeholders

201 – Once the local commissioner approves of the need to close the facility, the deputy secretary for engineering will send a memorandum to the district engineering administrator or department head instructing them to contact the external stakeholders and inform them of the proposed closing.

202 – The district engineering administrator or department head will telephone each person identified in the closure report as an external stakeholder and anyone else that he/she believes to have an interest in the closing of the facility. It is important that the individuals understand the reasons for closing the facility and that the same level of service will be provided to the affected area. This part of the process is very important because the process will stop if any of the external stakeholders object to the closing or raise concerns that cannot be addressed.

203 – Once all external stakeholders have been contacted and it is evident that they will not object to closing the facility, the district engineering administrator or department head will ask that his/her staff prepare an action plan to detail the process to be followed to cease operations at the facility and what steps need to be accomplished to move the operation to another location. The action plan should include:

- A detailed timeline for the closing of the facility.
- A recommendation for the disposal of the property in question.
- If the structure is of no value, a demolition plan that includes the cost for the removal of any underground storage tanks, asbestos surveys, and the cost to raze the structure.
- How employees will be notified of the closing. It is recommended that the district engineering administrator or department head notify them in person.

204 – The action plan will be submitted to the deputy secretary for engineering for approval.

205 – The deputy secretary for engineering will review the action plan and, if satisfied with the plan, notify the district engineering administrator or department head that they have approval to proceed with the closure.

III. Closure of Facility

301 – Once approval is received from the deputy secretary for engineering, the district engineering administrator or department head will review the action plan with staff members to ensure that everyone involved knows the steps to be taken to close the facility. It is imperative that word of the closure not be made public until such time that a meeting can be arranged with the affected employees to outline the changes that will take place along with the closing of the facility.

302 – The district engineering administrator or department head will prepare a letter for the secretary of transportation's signature to the external stakeholders, summarizing the reasons for closing the facility and the steps taken to ensure a successful transition for the affected employees to their new work assignment. The date of the facility closure should be included, and it should also be mentioned that service to the area will not be affected.

303 – The district engineering administrator or department head will meet with the employees of the unit and inform them of the facility's closing, when it will occur, and where their new work assignments will be.

304 – The district engineering administrator or department head will contact the Director of Maintenance Office and request assistance in the removal of underground storage tanks, if applicable, or in obtaining an asbestos survey for any structures that are planned for demolition.

305 – Once all salvageable material has been removed from the facility and non-usable structures have been razed, the district engineering administrator or department head shall notify the Department's asset manager that the facility and/or property can be sold.

306 – The property shall be sold as surplus property.

Closing of Department Facilities

I. Facility Closure Request				
Item	Description	Due Date	Responsible Party	Action Completed
101 -	Resident Engineer/Manager initiates discussion with District Supervisor as to the need to continue operating a particular facility under his/her control	-	Resident Engineer/Manager	
102 -	All discussion relative to the closure of any SCDOT facility shall be kept confidential and shall not be discussed with any employee not directly involved with making the decision to close the facility.	-	-	
103 -	Resident Engineer/Manager prepares closure report.	-	Resident Engineer/Manager	
104 -	Submit closure report to the District Engineering Administrator	-	Resident Engineer/Manager	
105 -	District Engineering Administrator or Department Head forwards report and recommendation for the closure to the Deputy Secretary for Engineering.	-	DEA/Department Head	
106 -	Deputy Secretary for Engineering requests input from appropriate Directors of Engineering	-	DSE	
107 -	Appropriate Engineering Director submits recommendations to include known obstacles to the Deputy Secretary for Engineering.	-	Engineering Director	
108 -	Deputy Secretary for Engineering makes recommendation to the Secretary of Transportation regarding the request to close facility	-	DSE	
109 -	If the Secretary of Transportation is in agreement, then he/she or designee contacts the local SCDOT Commissioner for his/her input into requested closing.	-	Secretary of Transportation	
II. Contact of External Stakeholders				
201 -	If local Commissioner agrees with closing, the Deputy Secretary for Engineering notifies the District Engineering Administrator to begin contact of external stakeholders.	-	DSE	
202 -	District Engineering Administrator or Department Head contacts legislative delegation and elected municipal officials to receive their input into proposed closing.	-	DEA/Department Head	
203 -	If all external stakeholders agree with the proposed closing, the District will prepare an action plan to be followed for the closure of the facility.	-	Resident Engineer/Manager, District Staff	
204 -	District Engineering Administrator or Department Head submits action plan to the Deputy Secretary for Engineering.	-	DEA/Department Head	
205 -	Deputy Secretary for Engineering approves closure plan and notifies District Engineering Administrator that he/she has permission to proceed with closure.	-	DSE	
III. Closure of Facility				
301 -	District Engineering Administrator or Department Head reviews closure plan with staff to ensure that everyone involved understands the order of the steps to be taken to close the facility.	-	DEA/Department Head	
302 -	District Engineering Administrator or Department Head prepares a letter for the Secretary of Transportation's signature to the external stakeholders notifying them of the pending closure and the reasons behind it.	-	DEA/Department Head	
303 -	District Engineering Administrator or Department Head meets with employees and informs them of the events that will occur and how they will be affected by the closure.	-	DEA/Department Head	
304 -	The District Engineering Administrator or his/her designee contacts the Director of Maintenance office for assistance with removal of underground storage tanks, etc.	-	DEA/Department Head	
305 -	The District Engineering Administrator or Department Head notifies the Department's Asset Manager that the facility or property can be sold.	-	DEA/Department Head	
306 -	Facility and/or remaining property is sold at fair market value.	-	R/W Office	