Technical Report Documentation Page

	<u>. </u>		rechnical Repo	of t Documentation Fage	
1. Report No. FHWA/TX-05/0-5135-1	2. Government Accessio	n No.	3. Recipient's Catalog No.	0.	
4. Title and Subtitle		DRECISION	5. Report Date		
INVESTIGATION OF METHODS	FOR IMPROVED	recision	June 2005	a	
OF TEST METHOD TEX-113-E			Resubmitted: Dec		
			6. Performing Organizati	ion Code	
7. Author(s)			8. Performing Organizati	ion Report No.	
Stephen Sebesta and Pat Harris			Report 0-5135-1		
9. Performing Organization Name and Address Texas Transportation Institute			10. Work Unit No. (TRA	IS)	
The Texas A&M University System	า		11. Contract or Grant No.		
College Station, Texas 77843-3135			Project 0-5135		
			0	aniad Covers 1	
12. Sponsoring Agency Name and Address Texas Department of Transportation	n		13. Type of Report and P Technical Report		
Research and Technology Impleme			September 2004-		
P. O. Box 5080			14. Sponsoring Agency C	•	
Austin, Texas 78763-5080					
15. Supplementary Notes					
Project performed in cooperation w	ith the Texas Depar	tment of Transport	ation and the Fede	ral Highway	
Administration.					
Project Title: Improving Correlation	n between Field Co	nstruction of Soils	and Bases and Lab	oratory Sample	
Construction Techniques					
URL: http://tti.tamu.edu/documents/0-5135-1.pdf					
^{16.} Abstract The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) employs the impact hammer method of sample					
compaction for laboratory preparation of road base and subgrade materials for testing. Serious concerns					
exist about the precision of the dry					
efforts to improve the precision of Test Method Tex-113-E, TxDOT					
for aggregate base materials. First, a new sample finishing tool rep					
data from this change indicated a sl					
tests of significance. Additionally,					
method were investigated. All four			• • •	acted test	
specimens. However, two of the m	emous clearly resul	teu în poorer test p			
17. Key Words		18. Distribution Statemen	t		
Laboratory Compaction, Tex-113-E	E, Moisture-		This document is av	vailable to the	
Density, Precision, Computed Axia		public through N	ΓIS:		
CAT Scan			al Information Serv	vice	
		Springfield, Virgi			
		http://www.ntis.g	OV		
19. Security Classif.(of this report)					
Unalogaified	20. Security Classif.(of th	is page)	21. No. of Pages	22. Price	
Unclassified Form DOT F 1700.7 (8-72) Reproduc	20. Security Classif.(of the Unclassified tion of completed page autility of the Unclassified tion of completed page autility of the Unclassified tion of the Unclassified		21. No. of Pages 52	22. Price	

INVESTIGATION OF METHODS FOR IMPROVED PRECISION OF TEST METHOD TEX-113-E

by

Stephen Sebesta Associate Transportation Researcher Texas Transportation Institute

and

Pat Harris, P.G. Associate Research Scientist Texas Transportation Institute

Report 0-5135-1 Project 0-5135 Project Title: Improving Correlation between Field Construction of Soils and Bases and Laboratory Sample Construction Techniques

> Performed in cooperation with the Texas Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration

June 2005 Resubmitted: December 2005

TEXAS TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE The Texas A&M University System College Station, Texas 77843-3135

DISCLAIMER

The contents of this report reflect the views of the authors, who are responsible for the facts and the accuracy of the data presented herein. The contents do not necessarily reflect the official view or policies of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) or the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). This report does not constitute a standard, specification, or regulation. The researcher in charge was Stephen Sebesta.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project was conducted in cooperation with TxDOT and FHWA. The project director, Mike Arrellano, P.E., and program coordinator, Miles Garrison, P.E., provided guidance in the direction of the project, along with the following advisors:

Caroline Herrera, P.E. Tracy Monds Glenn Eilert Chris Starr Lucio Trujillo Mike Young

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

List of Figuresviii
List of Tablesix
Executive Summary
Chapter 1. Impact on Precision from Using the Slide Hammer Finishing Tool
Summary
Finishing Method Experimental Design
Results
Conclusions
Chapter 2. Evaluation of Alternative 113-E Procedures
Summary7
Description of Experiment
Dry Density Results
CAT Scan Results
Conclusions
Chapter 3. Conclusions and Recommendations
Summary
Conclusions and Recommendations Regarding TxDOT Impact Hammer Compaction23
Appendix: CAT Scans of Specimens with Four Tex-113-E Variants

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
2.1.	Moisture-Density Relationship for Spicewood Aggregate
2.2.	Mixing in Molding Water with a Mechanical Mixer9
2.3a.	Axial CAT Scans of Spicewood with Current Tex-113-E Compaction (Variant 1)13
2.3b.	Longitudinal CAT Scans of Spicewood with Current Tex-113-E Compaction
	(Variant 1)14
2.4a.	Axial CAT Scans of Spicewood with Tex-113-E Variant 2 (Three Lifts of 67 Blows)15
2.4b.	Longitudinal CAT Scans of Spicewood with Tex-113-E Variant 2
	(Three Lifts of 67 Blows)16
2.5a.	Axial CAT Scans of Spicewood with Tex-113-E Variant 3 (No Hand Placement)17
2.5b.	Longitudinal CAT Scans of Spicewood with Tex-113-E Variant 3
	(No Hand Placement)
2.6a.	Axial CAT Scans of Spicewood with Tex-113-E Variant 4 (Mechanical Mixing)19
2.6b.	Longitudinal CAT Scans of Spicewood with Tex-113-E Variant 4
	(Mechanical Mixing)
2.7	Percent Air Voids with Core Depth from CAT Scans
2.8	Air Void Radius with Core Depth from CAT Scans

LIST OF TABLES

1.1.	Analysis of Impact on Precision from Different Sample Finishing Procedures	4
1.2.	Comparison of Precision between TxDOT and Private Labs	4
2.1.	Recombining Data for Spicewood Aggregate	7
2.2.	Parameters Used in Four Variants of Tex-113-E	8
2.3.	Data for Evaluating Four Tex-113-E Variants	10
2.4.	ANOVA Result from Four Variants of Tex-113-E	11
2.5.	F-Ratios for Examining Precision among Four Tex-113-E Variants	11

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) employs the impact hammer method of sample compaction for laboratory preparation of road base and subgrade materials for testing. Serious concerns exist about the precision of the dry density obtained from this method. Disputes over appropriate field compaction targets or acceptance of field work occur when State and Contractor laboratories produce vastly differing dry densities of compacted specimens. The precision of the test needs improvement to minimize these occurrences. Alternatively, new methods that provide equal or improved precision while improving the correlation of laboratorymeasured properties to field characteristics could be pursued.

This report documents findings from efforts to improve the precision of Test Method Tex-113-E, TxDOT's impact hammer compaction method for aggregate base materials. First, a new sample finishing tool replaced the old finishing method. While data from this change indicated a slight improvement in precision, the change did not hold up to statistical tests of significance. Additionally, four unique variations of laboratory preparation with the impact hammer compaction method were investigated. All four of these methods resulted in the same mean dry density of compacted test specimens. However, two of the methods clearly resulted in poorer test precision. The most precise methods both employed hand mixing the water into the aggregate, and hand placement of rock greater than 7/8 inch into the sample. Analysis of computed-axial tomography (CAT) data on test specimens showed that, visually, samples made without hand placement of the large rock had a more random and uniform distribution of rock particles and binder. However, subsequent image analysis of air void content and pore size with depth among the sample preparation variants tested did not confirm the visual interpretation; therefore, no test variant can be considered superior to another in terms of internal sample structure.

CHAPTER 1

IMPACT ON PRECISION FROM USING THE SLIDE HAMMER FINISHING TOOL

SUMMARY

TxDOT recently introduced a change in the sample finishing procedure in Tex-113-E, employing a schedule of blows with a slide hammer of specified mass from a specified drop height to the finishing tool. The slide hammer replaced the schedule of blows with a plastic mallet and the "firm blows" with a rawhide hammer. TxDOT evaluated this change to reduce the opportunity for test variation due to operator differences. From multiple compaction tests performed at multiple laboratories using both finishing methods, the change did appear to slightly improve the test precision. However, with the number of samples tested, the improvement was not sufficient enough to meet significance requirements for statistical tests.

FINISHING METHOD EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

To investigate the impact of the proposed change in sample finishing methods, TxDOT sent pre-weighed, dried aggregate to numerous TxDOT and commercial laboratories. TxDOT prepared each sample in accordance with standard TxDOT testing methods, and TxDOT performed the moisture-density relationship for the aggregate before shipping out the material. Each laboratory therefore only had to mix in the appropriate amount of water to each pre-prepared specimen and compact the sample, finishing it with the appropriate finishing technique. With the rawhide hammer finishing method, TxDOT performed 42 tests, and private labs performed 11 tests. With the new slide hammer finishing tool, TxDOT performed 34 tests, and private labs performed 8 tests.

To conclude that precision significantly varies between data sets, the tabulated F-ratio must exceed the F-critical value. Given two data sets, dividing the larger variance by the smaller variance yields the F-ratio. The F-critical value was determined based upon a 95 percent confidence level and the appropriate degrees of freedom.

RESULTS

Table 1.1 shows the summary statistics and the information required to investigate the impact on precision from the new finishing method. The table displays analysis results for TxDOT labs only, private laboratories only, and for all labs combined. The mean dry density, expressed in pounds per cubic foot (pcf), did not differ regardless of lab employed or finishing method used. Within TxDOT labs, the change in finishing technique minimally impacted precision as indicated by the F-ratio very near 1.0. Within private labs only, the change in finishing method appears to improve precision as indicated by the 42 percent decline in variance of sample dry density. When pooling data from all labs together, the precision seems to slightly improve due to the influence of the private lab results. However, when subjected to statistical

tests of significance, all the data sets indicate the new finishing method had no statistically significant improvement on precision. To become statistically significant, either more tests would be required (higher degrees of freedom), or the differences in variance must increase to raise the F-ratio above the critical value.

	Only TxDOT Labs		Only Private Labs		All Labs	
	Rawhide	Slide Hammer	Rawhide	Slide Hammer	Rawhide	Slide Hammer
Mean (pcf)	128.5	129.0	130.9	130.5	129.0	129.3
StDev (pcf)	1.598	1.559	2.604	1.985	2.055	1.718
Min (pcf)	123.4	124.8	127.8	127.8	123.4	124.8
Max (pcf)	131.6	131.8	136.6	133.1	136.6	133.1
Count	42	34	11	8	53	42
Range	8.2	7	8.8	5.3	13.2	8.3
Variance	2.555	2.430	6.783	3.940	4.224	2.951
df	41	33	10	7	52	41
F-Ratio	1.05		1.72		1.43	
F-Critical	1.75		3.64		1.65	
Decision	Fail to reject Ho		Fail to reject Ho		Fail to 1	reject Ho

Table 1.1. Analysis of Impact on Precision from Different Sample Finishing Procedures.

Note: Ho: Variances are equal

The collected data also provide an opportunity to investigate whether any specific lab produces more precise results. The results between TxDOT and private labs for a given sample finishing technique can be compared. Table 1.2 shows the results. With the rawhide hammer finishing method, the variability of results in private labs was 2.65 times the variability within TxDOT labs. Given the number of samples tested, this difference is not significant at the 95 percent confidence level. However, the F-critical value at the 90 percent confidence level is 2.13. The data indicate that at the 90 percent confidence level, private labs produce poorer precision than TxDOT labs when using the rawhide hammer finishing technique. In contrast, by changing to the slide hammer finishing technique, the variability in private labs improves to the point that no difference in precision exists between TxDOT and private labs.

Table 1.2. Comparison of Precision between TxDOT and Private Labs.
--

	Rawhide	Finishing	Slide Hammer Finishing		
	TxDOT Labs Private Labs		TxDOT Labs	Private Labs	
Mean (pcf)	128.5	130.9	129.0	130.5	
StDev (pcf)	1.598	2.604	1.559	1.985	
Min (pcf)	123.4	127.8	124.8	127.8	
Max (pcf)	131.6	136.6	131.8	133.1	
Count	42	11	34	8	
Range	8.2	8.8	7	5.3	
Variance	2.555	6.783	2.430	3.940	
df	41	10	33	7	
F-Ratio	2.65		1.62		
F-Critical	2.66		3.36		
Decision	Fail to re	Fail to reject Ho		eject Ho	

Note: Ho: Variances are equal

CONCLUSIONS

The inter-laboratory testing comparing the rawhide hammer finishing technique to the new slide hammer finishing method shows:

- At the 90 percent confidence level, TxDOT lab results were more precise than private lab results with the rawhide hammer finishing technique.
- No difference in precision exists between TxDOT labs and private labs when using the slide hammer finishing method.
- The improvements in precision by switching to the slide hammer finishing method were not great enough, given the number of samples tested, to meet significance requirements for statistical tests.

Despite the lack of significant statistical evidence indicating improved precision by changing to the slide hammer finishing tool, TxDOT should still employ this finishing method for the following reasons:

- The schedule of blows with the slide hammer clearly eliminates opportunity for differences among multiple operators.
- Use of the slide hammer clearly appeared to be a step in the right direction. Using the slide hammer reduced the variability of data sets, particularly within private labs.
- Employing the slide hammer finishing technique improved the precision of results from private labs to equal the precision of results from TxDOT labs.

CHAPTER 2

EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVE 113-E PROCEDURES

SUMMARY

After determining that the use of the slide hammer finishing tool should be implemented, the research team at TTI conducted additional testing with Spicewood Type A flex base to further evaluate means of improved precision from Test Method Tex-113-E. Four variants of Tex-113-E were used. The mean dry density did not differ between any of the methods used. However, two of the test variants clearly resulted in poorer test precision. The two most precise techniques both employed hand mixing of molding water into the aggregate and hand placement of aggregate retained on the 7/8 inch sieve. The only difference in the most precise methods was the number of lifts. One technique used four lifts, while the other variant used only three lifts. Everything else being equal, no difference in precision existed between specimens constructed with three or four lifts. To wrap up the investigation, CAT scans on specimens constructed with each of the finishing methods were used to investigate interspatial variability within the specimens. In general these tests showed no technique was superior in terms of the resultant internal sample structure.

DESCRIPTION OF EXPERIMENT

Before conducting testing, the research team determined the gradation for recombining test samples according to Test Method Tex-101-E Part II. Table 2.1 shows the results, and Figure 2.1 shows the moisture-density relationship determined according to Tex-113-E. The maximum dry density was 147.9 pcf at 5.7 percent water.

Table 2.1. Recombining Data for Spicewood Aggregate.				
Sieve Size	Cumulative Percent Retained			
1 ³ ⁄ ₄ inch	0			
1 ¼ inch	2.6			
7/8 inch	17.6			
5/8 inch	31.8			
3/8 inch	49.0			
#4	65.5			
Pan	100.0			

 Table 2.1. Recombining Data for Spicewood Aggregate.



Figure 2.1. Moisture-Density Relationship for Spicewood Aggregate.

All four variants of Tex-113-E tested employed the same total compactive effort and the slide hammer finishing tool. However, techniques differed by number of lifts, hand placement of aggregate, and method of mixing in the molding water. Table 2.2 shows the key parameters of each of the four variants tested. For variant 2, which used only 3 lifts, the number of blows per lift was increased to 67 to maintain the same total compactive effort. Variant 4 differed from Variant 1 only in the method of mixing in the molding water. The research team mixed in the molding water with a mechanical mixer in the fourth technique, as Figure 2.2 shows.

	Table 2.2. I af ameter's Used in Four variants of Tex-115-E.							
Tex-113-E	Number of	Hand Placement of	Method of Mixing in					
Variant	Lifts	Aggregate > 7/8 inch	Molding Water					
1	4	Yes	Hand					
2	3	Yes	Hand					
3	4	No	Hand					
4	4	Yes	Mechanical Mixer					

Table 2.2. Parameters Used in Four Variants of Tex-113-E.



Figure 2.2. Mixing in Molding Water with a Mechanical Mixer.

The research team molded 24 test specimens with each of the test variants, for a total of 96 specimens. According to ASTM D 4855, 24 observations with each test variant will allow for statistically concluding that a difference in precision exists if one method is at least twice as precise as another. The research team computed the dry density of each specimen by using the measured dimensions of the specimen after molding and the oven-dry weight.

DRY DENSITY RESULTS

Table 2.3 shows the results of the testing and the summary statistics for each data set. The research team examined the data to answer two questions:

- Does any test variant result in a difference in mean sample density?
- Does any test variant have superior precision to the other preparation methods?

A simple analysis of variance (ANOVA) test examines whether the mean density of a data set differs from another. Table 2.4 shows the ANOVA result from the four data sets collected in the experiment. Since the F-ratio does not exceed the F-critical value, the data show no difference in mean density exists between the four Tex-113-E variants employed.

	Dry Density Values					
	for Four Tex-113-E Variants (pcf)					
Observation	Variant 1	Variant 2 Variant 3		Variant 4		
1	146.0	146.5	146.8	146.9		
2	146.8	146.9	147.1	147.0		
3	146.9	146.3	147.3	147.4		
4	146.9	147.0	147.4	146.4		
5	146.5	146.0	147.3	146.8		
6	147.0	146.7	146.9	145.7		
7	147.0	147.4	148.2	147.2		
8	147.3	146.7	146.9	147.1		
9	147.0	146.9	145.3	145.7		
10	146.5	146.8	145.2	147.2		
11	147.0	147.0	147.0	146.7		
12	146.7	147.1	146.6	146.6		
13	145.5	146.9	146.2	147.3		
14	147.1	147.2	147.2	145.2		
15	147.1	146.4	146.0	147.2		
16	146.3	147.3	147.1	146.0		
17	146.7	146.8	145.6	146.7		
18	146.8	146.6	144.9	147.3		
19	147.1	147.3	146.7	146.6		
20	146.9	145.4	145.1	146.5		
21	146.8	147.2	147.6	147.1		
22	147.3	146.1	147.7	147.9		
23	147.1	146.7	147.5	145.8		
24	147.2	146.3	146.8	147.5		
Mean (pcf)	146.8	146.7	146.7	146.7		
StDev (pcf)	0.416	0.471	0.901	0.671		
Min (pcf)	145.5	145.4	144.9	145.2		
Max (pcf)	147.3	147.4	148.2	147.9		
Variance	0.1730	0.2215	0.8125	0.4499		

 Table 2.3. Data for Evaluating Four Tex-113-E Variants.

SUMMARY						
Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance		
Variant 1	24	3523.81	146.825	0.1730094		
Variant 2	24	3521.51	146.73	0.2214737		
Variant 3	24	3520.33	146.68	0.8124609		
Variant 4	24	3521.96	146.748	0.4498568		
ANOVA	~~~					
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F-crit
Between Groups	0.26104	3	0.08701	0.2100789	0.88919	2.70359
Within Groups	38.1064	92	0.4142			
Total	38.3675	95				

Table 2.4. ANOVA Result from Four Variants of Tex-113-E.

After determining that all four variants of Tex-113-E tested result in the same mean specimen dry density, the research team proceeded with evaluation of precision of the methods. The F-ratio computed by dividing the larger variance by the smaller variance among the different sample preparation techniques provides the basis for determining if a difference in precision exists. Table 2.5 shows which test variants have significantly different precision. The data show that methods employed in variants 3 and 4 resulted in poorer precision than test variants 1 and 2. The research team believes poorer precision in test variant 3 resulted from the lack of separation of the aggregate greater than 7/8 inch. The reason for the reduced precision in test variant 4 is not known.

	0		0
Confidence level: 95%)		
	\mathbf{F}	F-crit	Different Precision?
Variant 3/Variant 1	4.70	2.01	Yes
Variant 3/Variant 2	3.67	2.01	Yes
Variant 3/Variant 4	1.81	2.01	No
Variant 4/Variant 1	2.60	2.01	Yes
Variant 4/Variant 2	2.03	2.01	Yes
Variant 2/Variant 1	1.28	2.01	No

Table 2.5. F-Ratios for Examining Precision among Four Tex-113-E Variants.

CAT SCAN RESULTS

To examine the internal sample structure of specimens compacted with each of the Tex-113-E variants, the research team performed computed-axial tomography tests on four specimens prepared with each test variant, for a total of 16 test samples. Scans on all specimens included five axial scans and three verticals scans. From these scans, the research team noted differences in internal sample structure between the four test variants. As a final analysis, one representative specimen from each test variant was submitted to the University of Texas for extensive CAT analysis where a transverse scan was collected every 0.5 mm throughout the sample profile. Following this data collection, Dr. Eyad Masad at TTI performed image analysis on the data.

The Appendix presents all the collected CAT scans, and Figures 2.3a through 2.6b show scans from representative samples for each of the four test variants. In the scanning process, the X-ray source moves in a concentric circular path around the scan circle. X-ray attenuation data are gathered by stationary detectors located outside the path followed by the source. Due to the circular geometry of the CAT-scanner, there are artifacts that developed in the longitudinal scans. The dark areas in the middle of the specimens in the longitudinal scans are not low density areas but rather are artifacts of the scans. These samples are too large and dense for the X-rays to penetrate through the sample longitudinally, so the dark areas in the middle of the longitudinal scans are where the X-ray beam attenuated so much that the detectors could not receive data from this region. Evaluation of the visual CAT scan data shown in Figures 2.3a through 2.6b indicates:

- Specimens prepared with test variants 1 and 2 exhibit high-void interfaces between the bottom and second lift. This interface area contains a concentration of large aggregate.
- Specimens prepared with variant 2 (compacted in three lifts of 67 blows with hand placement of rock >7/8 inch) in general exhibited the most severe concentrations of voids.
- Specimens prepared with variant 3 (no hand placement of rock >7/8 inch) show the most uniformity throughout the sample profile in terms of even and random distribution of coarse aggregate and void areas.
- Specimens prepared with variant 4, which only differed from variant 1 in the method of mixing in the molding water, in general did not exhibit as severe internal sample structure variations as method 1 but were also not as homogeneous internally as specimens prepared with variant 3.



Figure 2.3a. Axial CAT Scans of Spicewood with Current Tex-113-E Compaction (Variant 1).



Figure 2.3b. Longitudinal CAT Scans of Spicewood with Current Tex-113-E Compaction (Variant 1).



Figure 2.4a. Axial CAT Scans of Spicewood with Tex-113-E Variant 2 (Three Lifts of 67 Blows).



Figure 2.4b. Longitudinal CAT Scans of Spicewood with Tex-113-E Variant 2 (Three Lifts of 67 Blows).



Figure 2.5a. Axial CAT Scans of Spicewood with Tex-113-E Variant 3 (No Hand Placement).



Figure 2.5b. Longitudinal CAT Scans of Spicewood with Tex-113-E Variant 3 (No Hand Placement).



Figure 2.6a. Axial CAT Scans of Spicewood with Tex-113-E Variant 4 (Mechanical Mixing).



Figure 2.6b. Longitudinal CAT Scans of Spicewood with Tex-113-E Variant 4 (Mechanical Mixing).

Figures 2.7 and 2.8 show the percent air voids and air void size with depth for each of the specimens tested at the University of Texas. According to Dr. Masad, these data indicate:

- Specimens prepared with variant 4 (mixed with a mechanical mixer) exhibit less increases in percent air voids and air void size at the lower lift interface.
- No significant difference exists among specimens prepared with variants 1, 2, or 3.

From the CAT scan data, the visual and quantitative analysis contradict each other. From the visual scans, variant 3 (no hand placement) appeared to have the most uniform distribution of rock particles and binder. From the quantitative data, the only difference among any of the variants was the extent of the increase in air voids at the lowest lift interface. Due to the contradictory nature of the data, no evidence exists that any test variant is superior in terms of internal sample structure.



Figure 2.7. Percent Air Voids with Core Depth from CAT Scans.



Figure 2.8. Air Void Radius with Core Depth from CAT Scans.

CONCLUSIONS

Of the Tex-113-E variants examined, data show two techniques offer the best precision for bulk sample dry density in Tex-113-E style compaction. These two methods differ only according to the number of lifts used.

- Mix the molding water into the aggregate by hand.
- Separate the wetted aggregate over the 7/8 inch sieve before molding.
- Hand place the aggregate retained on the 7/8 inch sieve.
- Compact the specimen in either four lifts of 50 blows or three lifts of 67 blows.
- Finish the specimen with a schedule of blows from the slide hammer finishing tool.

The research team believes the techniques described above which yield the best precisions in terms of sample bulk dry density do not represent a random distribution of particles such as would be expected in the field. However, CAT scan analysis performed on the specimens does not confirm the superiority of any technique. Therefore, if the desire is to obtain the most precision of the specimen molded dry density, no justification currently exists to abandon the separation of the 7/8 inch rock.

CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY

The first phase of this research project studied several aspects of TxDOT Tex-113-E style laboratory sample preparation in efforts to identify the most precise methods for constructing laboratory test specimens. Efforts focused on evaluating the impact of a new finishing tool and evaluation of the precision offered by four different variants of Tex-113-E compaction.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING TXDOT IMPACT HAMMER COMPACTION

The data collected and analyzed support the following conclusions regarding TxDOT impact hammer style compaction:

- The new slide hammer finishing tool did not offer a statistically significant improvement in precision of the dry density of laboratory-compacted specimens.
- The new slide hammer finishing tool did, however, improve the precision of private labs to equal that of TxDOT labs.
- Of the four variants of Tex-113-E employed in the lab, two variants clearly resulted in the best precision. Both of these methods employed hand mixing of the water with the aggregate and separation and hand placement of aggregate retained on the 7/8 inch sieve. The methods varied only according to the number of lifts used.
- Visual analysis of CAT scan data collected on specimens constructed with each of the four Tex-113-E variants indicated differences in sample structure existed among the methods. In particular, the "mix and dump" method seemed to exhibit a more random and uniform orientation of rock particles and binder. However, image analysis did not confirm these observations, and therefore no justification currently exists to abandon the separation of the 7/8 inch rock.

Based upon these observations, the research team offers the following recommendations:

- Continue use of the slide hammer finishing tool instead of the schedule of blows with the rawhide hammer. In particular, make it a requirement of private labs performing work for TxDOT construction projects to employ the slide hammer finishing technique.
- Continue Tex-113-E compaction with the following basic procedure for optimum precision:
 - Mix the molding water into the aggregate by hand.
 - After the required setting period, separate the wetted aggregate over the 7/8 inch sieve before molding.

- Separately place the aggregate retained on the 7/8 inch sieve in the middle of the passing 7/8 inch fraction for each lift.
- Compact the specimen in four lifts of 50 blows.
- Finish the specimen with the prescribed schedule of blows from the slide hammer finishing tool.

At this stage of the project, following these recommendations will ensure TxDOT achieves the best precision in terms of sample bulk dry density. A future phase of this project will study differences in test results between specimens constructed with impact hammer compaction versus specimens constructed with new, alternative lab compaction techniques.

APPENDIX

CAT SCANS OF SPECIMENS WITH FOUR TEX-113-E VARIANTS


























































