

# Alaska Flexible Pavement Design Manual

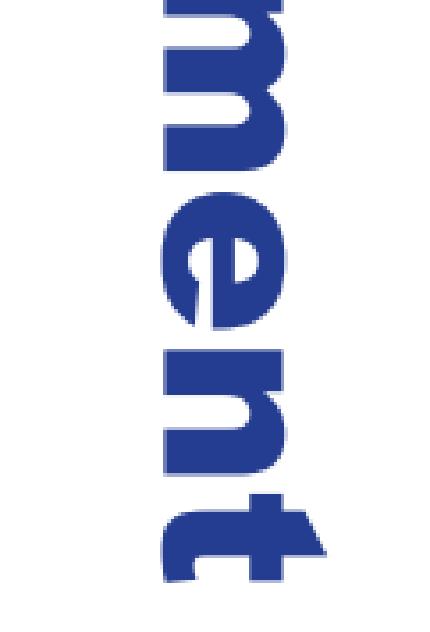


Alaska Department of Transportation  
and Public Facilities

Effective July 1, 2020

**Cover photo, Seward Highway MP 110: Jack Stickle, Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities**

# Alaska Flexi- Pavement Design Manual



# Table of Contents

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| <b>Table of Contents .....</b>  | i   |
| <b>Preface .....</b>  | vii |
| <b>1      Introduction .....</b>  | 1-1 |
| <b>1.1 Pavement Design Focus .....</b>  | 1-1 |
| <b>1.2 Background .....</b>   | 1-1 |
| <b>1.3 The “Pavement Structure”.....</b>  | 1-2 |
| <b>1.4 Excess Fines Design Method .....</b>   | 1-3 |
| <b>1.5 Mechanistic Design Method .....</b>  | 1-3 |
| <b>1.6 Pavement Drainage .....</b>  | 1-3 |
| <b>2      Policies and Required Considerations in the Pavement Design Process .....</b>   | 2-1 |
| <b>2.1 General Policy (GP) Statements.....</b>  | 2-1 |
| <b>2.2 Policy on Selecting the Correct AKFPD Design Procedure.....</b>  | 2-2 |
| 2.2.1 For Designing New Highway Pavements with ESALs < 1.0 Million.....   | 2-2 |
| 2.2.2 For Designing New Highway Pavements with ESALs > 1.0 Million.....   | 2-2 |
| 2.2.3 For Designing Overlays of Existing Highway Pavements.....   | 2-3 |
| 2.2.4 For Non-Highway Pavement Designs .....  | 2-3 |
| <b>2.3 Policy on Base Course Stabilization.....</b>   | 2-3 |
| <b>2.4 Policy on Life-Cycle Cost Analysis.....</b>  | 2-3 |
| <b>3      Excess Fines Design.....</b>  | 3-1 |
| <b>3.1 Introduction .....</b>   | 3-1 |
| <b>3.2 Summary of Excess Fines Design .....</b>   | 3-1 |
| <b>3.3 Principal Concepts .....</b>   | 3-1 |
| 3.3.1 Relationship Between P <sub>200</sub> Content and Pavement Surface Deflection (A Measure of Pavement Structural Strength) ..... | 3-2 |
| 3.3.2 Relationship Between Pavement Surface Deflection and Pavement Service Life .....  | 3-4 |
| 3.3.3 Calculations Used in the Excess Fines Method.....   | 3-4 |
| <b>3.4 Stepping Through the Design Process: An Example .....</b>  | 3-7 |
| <b>3.5 Excess Fines Design Using the AKFPD Computer Program.....</b>  | 3-9 |
| 3.5.1 Generalized Steps Through the Excess Fines Module .....   | 3-9 |

|   |             |
|---|-------------|
| 3.5.2 Example 1—Getting Started and Performing a Simple Design .....  | 3-9         |
| 3.5.3 Recalling Files and Modifying Files.....  | 3-15        |
| <b>4 Mechanistic Design .....</b>   | <b>4-1</b>  |
| <b>4.1 Introduction .....</b>   | <b>4-1</b>  |
| <b>4.2 Summary of Mechanistic Design .....</b>  | <b>4-1</b>  |
| <b>4.3 Design Principles .....</b>  | <b>4-1</b>  |
| 4.3.1 Calculating Stresses and Strains .....  | 4-2         |
| 4.3.2 Relating Structural Response to Performance (Estimating the Number of Load Repetitions to Failure).....               | 4-7         |
| 4.3.3 Predicting Structural Failure by Summing up Damage Increments .....   | 4-9         |
| 4.3.4 A Simple Application of Miner's Law .....   | 4-10        |
| <b>4.4 Stepping Through the Design Process—An Example .....</b>   | <b>4-10</b> |
| 4.4.1 Overlaying an Existing Asphalt Concrete Layer .....   | 4-14        |
| <b>4.5 Mechanistic Design Using the AKFPD Computer Program .....</b>  | <b>4-14</b> |
| 4.5.1 Generalized Steps Through the Program for Designing a New Pavement Structure.....                                     | 4-14        |
| 4.5.2 Example 1—Getting Started and Performing a Simple Design .....  | 4-15        |
| <b>4.6 Design Strategy .....</b>  | <b>4-25</b> |
| <b>4.7 Example 2—An Overlay Design .....</b>  | <b>4-25</b> |
| <b>4.8 Saving, Recalling, and Modifying Files .....</b>   | <b>4-30</b> |
| <b>4.9 Advanced Users .....</b>   | <b>4-33</b> |
| <b>5 Design Input—Materials Properties for Mechanistic Design.....</b>  | <b>5-1</b>  |
| <b>5.1 Characterizing Materials within the Pavement Structure as Input for the AKFPD.</b>                                   | <b>5-1</b>  |
| <b>5.2 Materials Properties—Recommended Presumptive Values for New Construction and Reconstruction Designs .....</b>        | <b>5-1</b>  |
| 5.2.1 Resilient Modulus ( $M_R$ ) Values .....  | 5-1         |
| 5.2.2 Resilient Modulus Values for Stabilized Base Course Materials.....  | 5-2         |
| 5.2.3 Poisson's Ratio Values .....  | 5-3         |
| <b>5.3 Materials Properties—Laboratory Testing to determine Values for New Construction and Reconstruction Designs.....</b> | <b>5-3</b>  |
| 5.3.1 Resilient Modulus Values .....  | 5-3         |
| 5.3.2 Poisson's Ratio Values .....  | 5-3         |
| <b>5.4 Materials Properties—Values determined from Field Tests for Overlay Designs ..</b>                                   | <b>5-4</b>  |
| 5.4.1 Backcalculation Program .....   | 5-4         |

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| 5.4.2 Deflection Testing .....   | 5-4        |
| 5.4.3 Selecting Test Locations .....   | 5-4        |
| 5.4.4 When to Test .....   | 5-4        |
| 5.4.5 Testing Procedure.....   | 5-4        |
| 5.4.6 Safety Equipment and Precautions .....   | 5-5        |
| <b>6     Design Input—Equivalent Single Axle Loads .....</b>                               | <b>6-1</b> |
| <b>6.1   Introduction .....</b>  | <b>6-1</b> |
| <b>6.2   Calculate the Load Factor for Each Vehicle Category.....</b>                      | <b>6-2</b> |
| <b>6.3   Calculate Design ESALs .....</b>  | <b>6-3</b> |
| 6.3.1 Outline of Computation Steps.....  | 6-3        |
| 6.3.2 An Example (Calculate Design ESALs Forward in Time) .....                            | 6-5        |
| <b>6.4   Historical ESALs .....</b>  | <b>6-6</b> |
| 6.4.1 An Example (ESAL Calculation Extended Backwards and Based on Previous Example) ..... | 6-6        |
| <b>7     Surface Course and Pavement Layers Selection Guide .....</b>                      | <b>7-1</b> |
| <b>7.1   General Considerations .....</b>  | <b>7-1</b> |
| <b>7.2   Unstable Embankments.....</b>   | <b>7-1</b> |
| <b>7.3   Available Surfacing Types .....</b>   | <b>7-1</b> |
| <b>7.4   Stabilized Layers .....</b>   | <b>7-3</b> |
| 7.4.1 Stabilized Base .....  | 7-3        |
| 7.4.2 Asphalt-Treated Base .....   | 7-3        |
| 7.4.3 Alaska Renewable Pavement .....  | 7-4        |
| <b>8     Life-Cycle Cost Analysis.....</b>   | <b>8-1</b> |
| <b>8.1   Introduction .....</b>  | <b>8-1</b> |
| <b>8.2   Recommended Steps in the Analysis Process .....</b>                               | <b>8-1</b> |
| 8.2.1 Establish alternative design strategies .....  | 8-1        |
| 8.2.2 Determine performance periods and activity timing .....                              | 8-2        |
| 8.2.3 Estimate agency and user costs .....   | 8-2        |
| 8.2.4 Develop cash flow diagrams.....  | 8-4        |
| 8.2.5 Compute net present value of costs for each alternative.....                         | 8-5        |
| 8.2.6 Perform a sensitivity analysis .....   | 8-6        |
| 8.2.7 Analyze results and reevaluate strategies.....                                       | 8-7        |
| <b>8.3   Sample Hypothetical Analysis .....</b>  | <b>8-7</b> |

|                            |      |
|----------------------------|------|
| 8.4 LCCA Using AKFPD ..... | 8-12 |
| 8.5 Word of Caution .....  | 8-21 |
| 9 Glossary .....           | 9-1  |
| 10 References .....        | 10-1 |

## List of Figures

|  |      |
|--|------|
| Figure 1-1 Strain Distribution with Depth.....   | 1-2  |
| Figure 3-1 Progression of Freezing Front and Ice Formation .....   | 3-2  |
| Figure 3-2 Soft Pavement Structure During Thawing .....  | 3-3  |
| Figure 3-3 Attenuation of Vehicle Load with Depth.....   | 3-3  |
| Figure 3-4 Critical and Maximum Fines Versus Depth.....  | 3-4  |
| Figure 3-5 Stress Reduction Factor vs Depth Beneath a Thin Asphalt Concrete (assumes homogeneous elastic material and a standard ESAL loading) ..... | 3-5  |
| Figure 3-6 Pavement Design Chart .....   | 3-6  |
| Figure 4-1 Typical Pavement Structure Showing Elastic Layers.....  | 4-2  |
| Figure 4-2 Analysis Data and Critical Load Analysis Points Used by WESLEA.....   | 4-5  |
| Figure 4-3 Elastic Pavement Layers Illustrating Superposition.....   | 4-6  |
| Figure 4-5 Plan View of Design Loads with Structural Response Search Locations.....  | 4-6  |
| Figure 7-1 Pavement Structures Showing ARP Layers .....  | 7-5  |
| Figure 8-1 Work Zone User Delay Cost Estimates .....   | 8-4  |
| Figure 8-2 Sample Cash Flow Diagram.....   | 8-5  |
| Figure 8-3 Cash Flow Diagram for Alternative #1 .....  | 8-9  |
| Figure 8-4 Cash Flow Diagram for Alternative #2 .....  | 8-10 |
| Figure 8-5 Graphical Comparison of NPV of Alternatives #1 and #2 .....   | 8-11 |

## List of Tables

|  |      |
|--|------|
| Table 3-1 Example Aggregate Layers .....   | 3-7  |
| Table 3-2 Excess Fines Pavement Design Example .....                             | 3-8  |
| Table 4-1 Miner's Law Example .....  | 4-10 |
| Table 4-2 Example Materials Properties.....                                      | 4-11 |
| Table 4-3 Calculated Stresses and Strains.....                                   | 4-12 |
| Table 4-4 Calculated Loads to Failure .....                                      | 4-13 |
| Table 4-5 Calculate Fractions of Pavement Life Expended During Each Season ..... | 4-13 |
| Table 4-6 Using Miner's Law to Sum Damage .....                                  | 4-13 |
| Table 5-1 Pavement Layer Moduli (ksi) .....                                      | 5-2  |
| Table 5-2 Pavement Layer Moduli (with excess fines) (ksi).....                   | 5-2  |
| Table 5-3 Stabilized Base Course Moduli (ksi) .....                              | 5-2  |
| Table 5-4 Poisson's Ratio Values.....  | 5-3  |
| Table 6-1 Summary of DOT&PF Truck Categories and FHWA Truck Classification.....  | 6-2  |
| Table 6-2 ESAL Load Equivalent for Axle Groupings .....                          | 6-3  |
| Table 6-3 Example Traffic Data .....   | 6-5  |
| Table 6-4 Computation of Construction Year ESALs.....                            | 6-6  |
| Table 6-5 Historical Construction Year ESAL Calculations .....                   | 6-7  |
| Table 8-1 Performance Periods and Activity Timing for Sample Project.....        | 8-8  |
| Table 8-2 Estimated Costs for Sample Project.....                                | 8-8  |
| Table 8-3 Cash Flow Table for Sample Project.....                                | 8-9  |
| Table 8-4 Spreadsheet Output from Sample Hypothetical Analysis.....              | 8-10 |
| Table 8-5 Results of Sensitivity Analysis for Sample Project.....                | 8-12 |



# Preface

---

This manual guides the designer through a comprehensive computerized method for the design of Alaskan pavement structures. The Alaska Flexible Pavement Design method version 2 (AKFPD-2), a computer program, replaces the original Alaska Flexible Pavement Design tool previously used by designers. While the process remains essentially unchanged, this manual reflects the changes to the software to operate on Windows 7.0 and above and to include the Life Cycle Cost procedure described in Chapter 8.

The purpose of this manual is to help the pavement designer produce cost effective pavement designs.

## The manual

- Contains general engineering background to help the designer understand basic principles of both the Excess Fines and Mechanistic-Empirical design process and how the AKFPD-2 software works.
- Describes all functional capabilities of the AKFPD-2 software and provides step-by-step design examples.
- Provides specific guidance on input variables and other decision criteria required to run the AKFPD software.
- Describes the new Life Cycle Cost procedures which help the designer select the most cost-effective design.
- Presents some of the broader aspects and policies bearing on the pavement design process.

The Alaska Flexible Pavement Design is the accepted pavement structure design procedure for the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF), as outlined in Chief Engineer's 2020 Directive (<http://www.dot.state.ak.us/stwddes/dcspubs/directives.shtml>). As such, the methods and policies provided in this manual should be followed unless appropriate approvals are obtained as provided in Chapter 2 of this manual.

