

Memo Report (revised August 22, 2007)

The memo report common in engineering practice is generally used to communicate important information from one part or person in an organization to one or more parts or persons inside an organization or a closely allied counterpart outside the originating organization involved in some project. The intended audience is frequently another engineer, technician or other interested person involved in the project. Since any documentation related to a project may be used in litigation, you must be very careful to accurately report the pertinent facts, especially regarding the use of standard and non-standard procedures.

The scope of information usually addresses a specific aspect of the project. Since this type of communication is likely to be read by people with a common base of technical expertise in a similar discipline, the author can write the memo without spending much time or space to elaborate on things the reader and writer both understand. Brevity and concise writing are very important attributes of this type of communication. Memos should be limited to one or two pages plus attachments.

The key information to comment on includes

- what standard tests were referenced, the purpose of each experiment and how results may be used
- any procedural deviations from the referenced standards
- possible errors encountered
- assessment of the final results (e.g., were any quantities outside an expected range?)

The memo report typically includes:

- project name (for our lab report purposes, use the experiment name) ;
- purpose of the inquiry, analysis or test and how it relates to the overall project;
- the names of the key personnel involved in the work;
- standard references used (specific ASTM, AASHTO, or other standards used);
- key differences between referenced standard(s) procedures and the way the analysis, test, etc. was conducted;
- explain how the data were analyzed and how the results are shown in the attachments (plots, tables, illustrations, etc.);
- summarize the key findings, including numeric values that describe the final results of a quantitative test, for all of the work described above in one paragraph;
- list the applicable standards used in the work covered by the memo in a list using *The Chicago Manual of Style* format (<http://pubs.asce.org/authors/book/generalresources/> for examples)
- attachments relevant to the work done (see http://www.ce.siue.edu/Writing%20Requirements/Report_Attachments.pdf)