

## The History of the AASHTO Accreditation Program

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Posted: April 2010

The AASHTO Accreditation Program (AAP) was established in 1988 to provide a mechanism for formally recognizing the competency of testing laboratories to perform specific tests on construction materials. Some of you who know the history of the industry may be surprised that the AAP is so young because the AASHTO re:source and CCRL ([Cement and Concrete Reference Laboratory](#)) have been around much longer. In fact, the AASHTO re:source was founded in 1965 and the CCRL was established in 1929, as the Cement Reference Laboratory (CRL). The AASHTO re:source and CCRL are collectively known as the Construction Materials Reference Laboratories (CMRL).

Before the establishment of the AAP, the CMRL organizations only included on-site assessments and proficiency sample programs. A formal recognition process was not in place, and the CMRL staff did not ensure that findings noted during the assessments were adequately resolved, or that laboratories were receiving consistently satisfactory ratings on proficiency sample reports. The review and subsequent recognition activities were being handled by the individual state Departments of Transportation (DOT's), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), or other agencies that required participation in CMRL programs, such as the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).

Imagine the costly administrative burden that all of those agencies had to bear, and the challenges faced in ensuring consistency among these agencies. To reduce this burden, it only made sense to create a central recognition program- one staffed by those that are well-versed in the technical requirements of the CMRL programs, and had open lines of communication with state and federal agencies, as well as private industry. Thus, the central recognition program, known as the AAP, was born in 1988.

In its infancy, accreditation through the AAP was only made available to the state and federal highway laboratories. As these agencies began to feel more comfortable with the administration of the AAP, these requirements were extended to private laboratories that were working on state or federally funded projects. Today, the AAP accredits over 1,800 construction materials testing laboratories. It is expected that this number will increase as more specifying agencies require laboratories working on their projects to obtain AASHTO Accreditation.

*Editor's Note: This article was update in June 2016 to accurately reflect the growth of this program.*