



CO L O R A D O

Department of Transportation

Office of the Chief Engineer

CONSTRUCTION BULLETIN

Division of Transportation Development
Environmental Programs Branch
Landscape Architecture Section

Revision of Sections 101 Definitions and Terms,
201 Clearing and Grubbing,
203 Excavation and Embankment, and
207 Subsoil and Topsoil
2026 Number 3
Date: April 15, 2026

Revision of Sections 101 Definitions and Terms, 201 Clearing and Grubbing, 203 Excavation and Embankment, and 207 Subsoil and Topsoil

The purpose of this Bulletin is to provide guidance to Project Engineers, Inspectors, and Contractors regarding four recently issued Standard Special Provisions (SSPs). In April 2026, the following SSPs were issued by the Standards and Specifications Unit: Revision of Sections 101 Definition and Terms, 201 Clearing and Grubbing, 203 Excavation and Embankment, and Revised SSP 207 Subsoil and Topsoil.

Since these four SSPs are related, they have been grouped together in this Bulletin to briefly explain key revisions and provide guidance regarding their application, including available tools and resources.

Revision of Section 101 added the definition of Approved Water Source per Colorado Water Law. Revision of Section 201 added the allowance for duff to be retained with salvaged onsite topsoil. Revision of Section 203 addressed conflicts with Section 207. Revision of Section 207 replaced the previous SSP 207 dated October 1, 2023, adding clarification and addressing concerns over implementation.

Projects advertised on or after the following dates are required to use these recently issued SSPs, as shown below:

Section 101: April 16, 2026
Section 201: April 16, 2026
Section 203: April 16, 2026
Section 207: April 29, 2026

CONSTRUCTION BULLETIN

Division of Transportation
Environmental Programs Branch
Landscape Architecture Section

Revision of Sections 101 Definitions and Terms,
201 Clearing and Grubbing,
203 Excavation and Embankment, and
207 Subsoil and Topsoil
2026 Number 3
Date: April 15, 2026

Necessary Actions

Prior to beginning construction, the Construction Project Engineer should follow these steps:

1. Check the project specification package for the SSP Revision of Section 207, dated October 1, 2023.
 - a. If not included, no further action is necessary.
 - b. If included, proceed with item 2.
2. Determine the subsoil type.
 - a. If provided, use the project's geotechnical report to identify the subsoil type. If this report is unavailable, conduct a visual inspection of the subsoil.
 - i. If project subsoils are sand, gravel, rocky, or rock, subsoil preparation is unnecessary.
 - ii. If the soil is compactable sandy loam, loam, silt, or clay type, proceed with a 14" depth subsoil preparation per the revised SSP 207.

Key Revisions

Revision of Section 101 Definition and Terms:

- Added Approved Water Source definition

Revision of the 201 Clearing and Grubbing:

- Organized for clarity
- Revised to allow for retention of duff (organic matter including small roots and plant parts, such as stems and grasses) when removing topsoil

Revision of 203 Excavation and Embankment:

- Removed the topsoil compaction depth that conflicted with Section 207 Subsoil and Topsoil
- Added a statement to allow the top lift of embankment to not be compacted where topsoil and seeding will be placed

Revision of SSP 207 Subsoil and Topsoil:

- Title changed from "Topsoil" to "Subsoil and Topsoil"
- Rewritten for clarity and conciseness
- Revised to allow for flexibility of subsoil preparation depth and topsoil salvaging and reapplication depth when determined during design phase and included in the Contract

CONSTRUCTION BULLETIN

Division of Transportation
Environmental Programs Branch
Landscape Architecture Section

Revision of Sections 101 Definitions and Terms,
201 Clearing and Grubbing,
203 Excavation and Embankment, and
207 Subsoil and Topsoil
2026 Number 3
Date: April 15, 2026

- Revised to use the term ‘subsoil’ to differentiate from ‘subgrade’
- Updated the physical properties of Topsoil (Imported)
- Removed directions for calibration and use of equipment
- Removed Topsoil (Engineered) (which will now be a standalone Project Special Provision)

Questions and Resources

New and Revised Guidance, Tools, and Training:

- The pending 2026 Construction Manual will contain new and updated guidance
- The 2027 Field Materials Manual will reflect these SSP changes, see [Manuals](#)
- For the Site Pre-Vegetation Conference Agenda, go to [Construction Conference Agenda Templates](#)
- For the Soil and Vegetation Construction Checklist, go to [CDOT Forms Catalog](#)
- Refer to the [207 Construction Guidance](#) for detailed subsoil and topsoil guidance
- [Training videos](#) are posted for Project Engineers, Staff Environmental, and Inspectors

Please print a copy of this bulletin and keep it with your copy of the Construction Manual. The Construction Bulletins can be found at the following link: [Construction Bulletins](#)

If there are any questions on how to implement these changes on projects, the Project Engineer should contact the Region Project Environmental Manager (RPEM) or Landscape Architect.

CDOT HQ Landscape Architect: Pamela Cornelisse - pamela.cornelisse@state.co.us or 303-757-9542.