

Guidelines for Conducting RAC Surveys

The AASHTO-RAC listserv can be utilized to solicit information from other state DOT representatives regarding practices, policies, specifications, etc. Once completed, the surveys and survey results *should* be posted in the RAC Survey Results database at <https://research.transportation.org/rac-survey-results>. In addition, surveys of AASHTO committees other than RAC may be posted on the R&I/RAC website if the information would be of interest to the RAC community.

Below are some general guidelines to assist you in putting together an effective survey and distributing it to other DOT representatives.

1. Keep it short and sweet--Stay focused with the questions you ask and you will be more likely to get responses back (< 12 questions is recommended). Be sure to include the following elements in your email:

- Survey topic, intended audience, and due date in Subject line of email.
- List of survey questions or attached PDF of survey instrument.
- Contact information for the person and organization conducting the survey.
- Make it very clear in the initial email if you **DO NOT** plan to make the survey results publicly available on the R&I/RAC website.

2. Be transparent--Make the relevant functional area within the DOT very clear so the Research Director can forward the survey to the appropriate person (for example, chief engineer, materials division).

3. Provide the context--Give background information such as the reason for the survey or any pertinent details about how you plan to use the survey results so that RAC members can determine who in their agency would be best qualified to answer the survey questions.

4. Give a deadline--Include a due date for responses (at least 2 weeks from the date of the request is recommended). Follow-up reminders may also be necessary.

5. Be flexible--Particularly with web-based survey instruments, don't force an answer to every question. Some RAC members prefer to read through the complete survey to determine the right person to answer; if they can't skip questions, they may decide not to respond to the survey.

One way to get around this difficulty is to create a PDF of the survey if it is longer than one page and attach it to the email request. That way you can still require answers when necessary, but individuals can read through the whole survey before answering.

6. Avoid duplication--Check the website for previously conducted surveys with the same topic. Similar surveys don't preclude sending out a new survey, but can inform the development of the new survey.

7. Share the results--It is helpful to at least provide a summary of state DOT responses, even if you cannot provide detailed response information in tabulated format. Please forward survey results to the Webmaster (mytrb@nas.edu) for posting on the R&I/RAC website.

NOTE: If you **do not** wish to have the results posted on the website, you may distribute them directly to RAC members via the listserv or through an email contact.