



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**

ENGINEERING AND CONSTRUCTION BULLETIN

No. 2020-12

Issuing Office: CECW-EC

Issued: 20 Oct 20

Expires: 20 Oct 22

30 Jul 25, Rev 1

30 Jul 27

SUBJECT: Corps of Engineers Reviewer Certification and Access Program (CERCAP)

CATEGORY: Directive and Policy.

1. References:

- a. Engineer Regulation (ER) 1165-2-217, Civil Works Review Policy, 2 September 2024

2. **Purpose.** This Engineering and Construction Bulletin (ECB) provides the policy and guidance for utilizing the Corps of Engineers Reviewer Certification and Access Program (CERCAP) for nominating, endorsing, reviewing, and certifying personnel as qualified for performing Agency Technical Reviews (ATR) within an Area of Expertise (AoE). This ECB also contains guidance on selection of appropriate reviewer level for projects and products that require an ATR.

3. **Applicability.** This ECB applies to U.S. Army Corps of Engineer (USACE) Engineering and Construction (E&C) personnel working within the Civil Works Program.

4. **Background.** The requirement for utilizing CERCAP was initiated in 2013 via OPORD 2013-35 to address issues identified by the Engineer Inspector General. The E&C Community of Practice (CoP) utilizes CERCAP as the process for the nomination, review, and certification of ATR reviewers. To serve as an E&C reviewer on an ATR Team, USACE personnel must be listed in CERCAP, which can be accessed at <https://cwbi-int.sec.usace.army.mil/int/f?p=121:1:13027889138310>

5. Policy

- a. Civil Works ATRs must be performed by CERCAP approved personnel, including the ATR Lead. Additionally, any project that is proposing or would allow blasting for rock production or excavation or geophysical investigations must be reviewed by CERCAP-certified ATR personnel with expertise in blasting or geophysics, respectively, either Level I or II, depending on complexity of the project. CERCAP approved personnel can also be used to provide support for all mission areas, based on availability

- b. Only those persons listed in CERCAP as certified may be selected by Review Management Organizations (RMOs) to perform ATRs. Certification is specific to CoP-determined Areas of Expertise (AoE) and degree of nominee experience. RMOs will ensure

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reviewers are only assigned features of projects or products that are associated with the AoEs for which the reviewer is certified.

c. The CERCAP application provides two levels of certification: Level 1 for projects of low to medium risk, or standard or routine designs (approved at MSC level); and Level 2 for projects considered high risk, high complexity, or having a unique design (approved at HQ level). Additional details and definitions are provided in the attached tables.

d. CERCAP is a tool to support implementation of Civil Works review policy provided by ER 1165-2-217, which also includes specifics on vertical team integration and development of a review plan.

e. Recertification will be required every two years in order to maintain a current list of ATR reviewers.

6. **Guidance.** The attached tables describe the intended process and include guidelines that shall be followed to provide consistency to ATR reviewer selection, endorsement, and certification.

7. **Exceptions.** Exceptions to the requirements in this ECB (e.g the use of Architect-Engineer ATR reviewers) must be justified in the Review Plan, endorsed by the RMO, and approved by the MSC.

8. **Update.** New requirements will be included in appropriate policy document updates.

9. **Point of Contact.** HQUSACE point of contact for this ECB is Dr. Georgette Hlepas, CECW-EC, georgette.hlepas@usace.army.mil

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Table 1 - CERCAP Level Overview

Table 2 - CERCAP Requirements by Level

Table 3 - CERCAP Endorsement and Approval Guidelines

Figure 1 - CERCAP Workflow

Table 1 – CERCAP Level Overview

Reviewer Requirement	CERCAP Certification Approval Level	Project Criteria	Definition	Review Plan Guidance
Level 1	<p>MSC</p> <p>MSCs will establish regional standards for endorsement and certification of Level 1 ATR Reviewers within their MSC, utilizing CERCAP.</p>	Low to Medium Risk, Standard or Routine Design	Routine design and other products requiring an ATR for which there is a sustained history of satisfactory quality and performance, and environmental conditions are typical of the region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The District Chief of Engineering determines that the project, feature, or component, is of Medium to Low Risk and/or Medium to Low Complexity. RMO selects the ATR Lead with input from the MSC CoP Lead. RMO with input from the Lead Engineer and ATR Lead determines the ATR Reviewer requirements for each Level 1 project feature. (Note: Review Plans are reviewed and approved at the MSC and should be consulted during the ATR team selection process.)
Level 2	<p>HQ</p> <p>HQ CoP Leads will determine technical experience and qualification requirements for Level 2 Reviewers and establish a process for review, endorsement and certification of Level 2 ATR Reviewers within their CoP discipline(s) utilizing CERCAP.</p>	High Risk High Complexity or Unique Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A multi-functional, multi-component project that requires many complex and interactive design considerations. Projects that could be impacted by non-typical environmental conditions that have the potential to impose extreme loadings on existing or proposed infrastructure. A unique design or material component is being proposed that is untested for the application or has a limited performance history. Failure of the project, feature, or component, would result in a significant threat to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public safety or significant life safety potential, especially for vulnerable populations. Large economic damages. Environmental impacts related to threatened or endangered species. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The District Chief of Engineering determines that the project, feature, or component is of High Risk and/or High Complexity and which disciplines (or project features) require a Level 2 certified reviewer. RMO selects the ATR Lead. RMO with input from the Lead Engineer, ATR Lead and MSC CoP Lead determines the ATR Reviewer requirements for each Level 2 project feature. (Note: Review Plans are reviewed and approved at the MSC and should be consulted during the ATR team selection process.)

In general, projects in which the MSC is the RMO will likely be Level 1. These projects do not have life safety risk and do not require a SAR. Typical projects Include but are not limited to design and/or repair of pavements, riprap revetments, site grading, storm water management, dredging, disposal of dredge and earth fill materials in low hazard CDFs, typical beach renourishment, replacement in-kind of operational components including structures, gates, and machinery, in locations where there are lower consequences, and no unusual future conditions exist. It is envisioned that a majority of each ATR Team will be comprised of Level 1 Reviewers. Level 2 Reviewers will be added to the team as needed to review the more complex project features.

In general, projects in which the RMC, INDC or other PCXs are the RMO will likely be Level 2. These projects have life safety risk or significant economic consequences (large navigation projects) and typically require a SAR. Typical projects include but are not limited to design and/or modification of high and significant hazard dams; highly complex structures, foundations or retaining structures; high economic or environmental consequence features; significant life safety features; extreme loading determinations, used for design of significant and/or high-risk projects.

Table 2 – CERCAP Requirements by Level

Reviewer Requirement	Questions for Nominee to Answer	Evaluation Guidance
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many years of experience do you have associated with this AoE? Name three projects/products you worked on associated with this AoE in the past 10 years and describe what your role was, specific to the AoE (engineer, lead engineer, technical manager) including the role and description of actual work performed. CoP/AoE specific question (if required) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should have at least 5 years of experience associated with the specific AoE, with at least half in a pure technical capacity. Should have identified three projects/products worked on in the last 10 years that include the associated AoE, including the role and description of actual work performed. Should be considered a competent journeyman, typically GS-12 and above, for the specific AoE. Should at least be as qualified as someone assigned to do a Level 1 type project.
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many years of experience do you have as lead engineer or scientist performing unique, highly complex and/or high-risk work associated with this AoE? Describe three examples of your design or evaluation work associated with this AoE you consider to be unique, highly complex and/or high risk, including the role performed and description of actual work performed. In the last 5 years, approximately how many technical reviews (DQC or ATR) have you performed associated with this AoE? CoP/AoE specific question (if required) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires Level 1 certification and endorsement by MSC E&C Chief or Delegate to be considered. Intended for true subject matter experts (SME/RTS type people), typically GS-13 and above, or highly qualified GS-12. Should have a professional certification (unless very special circumstance). Should have at least 10 years total experience. Should have at least 5 years of experience associated with the specific AoE, in a pure technical capacity. Should have described three examples of design or evaluation work associated with the AoE that would be considered Level 2, including role and description of actual work performed. Should have performed at least 2 technical reviews in the last five years associated with this AoE.

Table 3 - CERCAP Endorsement and Approval Guidelines

	Nomination Endorsement	Review	Approval
Level 1	District E&C Chief or Delegate	At least one CoP Lead, SME or RTS from Region Action: Confirm/endorse experience that was provided in the Resume and Questionnaire is appropriate for Level 1	The MSC E&C Chief will determine the approving official and additional acceptance criteria for Level 1 Approval.
Level 2	MSC approval for Level 1 and endorsement for Level 2	At least two regional CoP Leads, SME or RTS selected by the HQ CoP Lead Action: Confirm/endorse experience that was provided in the Resume and Questionnaire is appropriate for Level 2	The HQ CoP Lead will be the Level 2 approving official for their respective disciplines and will determine additional requirements as necessary for Level 2 candidates.

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Subject Engineering Oversight of Blasting Operations for Rock Excavation and Rock Production

Figure 1 – CERCAP Workflow

