



# INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

## Design Memo No. 25-07

February 13, 2025

TO: All Design Personnel and Consultants

FROM: /s/Elizabeth P. Mouser  
Elizabeth P. Mouser  
Standards & Policy Director

SUBJECT: Topsoil Management/Plant Growth Layer

REVISES: *Indiana Design Manual*/Sections 17-4.10, 17-4.10(01) 17-4.10(02),  
17-4.10(03), and 17-4.10(09) [New]

EFFECTIVE: Lettings on or after September 1, 2025

The Standards Committee approved recurring special provision (RSP) 629-R-791, Topsoil Management, at the [January 2025 meeting](#), item 1. Effective as noted, this provision will supersede RSP 629-R-630, Plant Growth Layer. The new provision aims to address some of the difficulties meeting the plant growth layer soil target values and support meeting the regrowth requirements for a Construction Stormwater General Permit (CSGP) Notice of Termination (NOT).

RSP 629-R-791, Topsoil Management, modifies the soil stripping requirement toward salvaging suitable material for vegetation growth. It includes two pay items: Topsoil Amendment Budget and Topsoil Processing and Distribution. The provision will appear on the May RSP menu.

This memo includes:

- Design guidance for [when to use](#) RSP 629-R-791, Topsoil Management
- [Pay item](#) information
- [Topsoil summary](#) requirements
- Restrictions on [fertilizer and topsoil](#) pay items when using the Topsoil Management provision
- Where to find guidance in the [Indiana Design Manual](#)

### When to Use

In general, RSP 629-R-791, Topsoil Management, should be included in contracts that have a CSGP and revegetation requirements, i.e., permanent seeding or sodding.

- For a project nearing the 1 acre of disturbed soil threshold for a CSGP, including the provision and associated pay items is recommended.
- For a project that requires a CSGP but does not have permanent vegetation requirements, e.g., a pavement patching project with little to no revegetation requirements, the provision is not required.

## Pay Items

- **Obsolete.** The following pay item will be made obsolete effective September 1, 2025.

Pay Item	Description	Unit	Notes
629-12029	Plant Growth Layer	SYS	Until the sunset date, use RSP 629-R-630 and this pay item for contracts that include a CSGP permit and permanent seeding/sodding. A topsoil summary must be part of the Geotechnical Report.

- **New.** Effective September 1, 2025, the following pay items should be included in conjunction with RSP 629-R-791, Topsoil Management.

Pay Item	Description	Unit
629-000150	Topsoil Amendment Budget	DOL
629-000149	Topsoil Processing and Distribution	SYS

**Topsoil Amendment Budget.** This pay item is used for the cost of the soil amendments to achieve the desired soil properties. It should be quantified using the total area of revegetation (permanent seeding and sodding). For estimating purposes, \$2.00/SYS can be used to determine the budget dollar amount. Enter the dollar amount as the quantity and the unit price as \$1. Below is an example of how the entry will appear in the CIB schedule of pay items.

LINE NO	ITEM DESCRIPTION	APPROX. QUANTITY AND UNITS	UNIT PRICE DOLLARS   CTS	BID AMOUNT DOLLARS   CTS
0023	621-000150 TOPSOIL AMENDMENT BUDGET	10000.000 DOL	1.00000	10000.00

**Topsoil Processing and Distribution.** This pay item is used for the cost to test, store, and handle the onsite topsoil. This item is separate from the amendment budget and is a competitively bid item. It should be quantified by using the total area of revegetation (permanent seeding and sodding). For estimating purposes, a unit price of \$2.22 per SYS may be used until a bid history is established.

### **Topsoil Summary**

Existing topsoil information is critical to the use of the Topsoil Management provision. Where the provision is included in the contract, the designer must ensure that a topsoil summary is included with the Final Tracings package – either as part of the geotechnical report or as a separate topsoil summary report.

- A topsoil summary will generally be provided as part of a geotechnical investigation. If the project has a geotechnical waiver, soil testing must be explicitly requested.
- If the project is near the 1 acre of soil disturbance threshold for a CSGP, requesting soil testing is recommended as the threshold may be exceeded as the design progresses.

### **Fertilizer and Topsoil Restrictions**

For projects that include the Topsoil Management provision:

- Fertilizer pay item should not be included in the estimate. Effective with September 2025 lettings, the 621-06545 Fertilizer pay item description will be revised to Fertilizer for Permanent Seeding. A supplemental description is no longer required.
- Topsoil pay item should not be included in the estimate.

### ***Indiana Design Manual Revisions***

The referenced sections of IDM [Chapter 17](#) have been revised to reflect the changes to fertilizer requirements. Section 17-4.10(09) Topsoil Management has been added.

### **Questions**

For questions related to this design memo, please contact the Construction Management Division, Tom Harris, at [tharris@indot.in.gov](mailto:tharris@indot.in.gov).