

**ASPHALT INSTITUTE
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Distribution: All Users of Asphalt Products

Asphalt cement, or asphalt binder, specifications have changed with the national implementation of the technology developed as part of the Strategic Highway Research Program (SHRP). The new technology, part of the Superpave asphalt mix design system, incorporates a different grading system for asphalt binders than previously used. Consequently, beginning in 1997 most asphalt binder will no longer be supplied using the traditional AC, AR, or Penetration grading systems.

The new grading system has been incorporated into a provisional specification, AASHTO MP1, Standard Specification for Performance Graded Asphalt Binder. This grading system more appropriately relates the grade of the asphalt binder to the pavement temperature and traffic loading for the construction project than the previous grading systems. For example, an asphalt binder may be classified as a PG 64-22 grade. The PG refers to "performance grade". The 64 refers to the probable high pavement temperature, 64°C (147°F), expected for the life of the construction project. The -22 refers to the probable low pavement temperature, -22°C (-8°F), expected for the life of the construction project.

Many state highway agencies and asphalt binder producers have adopted this specification and new grading system for 1997. The local state highway agency, asphalt supplier, or nearest Asphalt Institute office can assist in determining the appropriate PG asphalt binder for the climate and traffic conditions in your location. In many cases, the PG asphalt binder will be comparable as was required using the AC, AR, or Penetration grading systems.

Contact the executive offices of the Asphalt Institute (859-288-4960) for the local Asphalt Institute office. The Asphalt Institute also publishes a manual, SP-1 Performance Graded Asphalt Binder Specification and Testing, that describes the new asphalt binder tests and grading system. SP-1 can be obtained by contacting the Asphalt Institute.

More information can be obtained from the local state highway agency as well as these sources:

Federal Highway Administration, Office of Technology Applications (202-366-0121)

Regional Superpave Centers: Northeast: Penn State University, 814-863-1903 Southeast: Auburn University, 334-844-6240 South Central: University of Texas at Austin, 512-475-7912 North Central: Purdue University, 317-463-2317 West: University of Nevada at Reno, 702-784-6873