

68-404. Powers and duties of secretary of transportation. The secretary of transportation shall have the following powers, duties, authority and jurisdiction:

(a) General supervision over the administration of all road and bridge laws and over the construction and maintenance of all roads, bridges and culverts throughout the state, except that such supervision by the secretary shall not extend to township roads, except that any township road for which federal aid is granted shall be under the supervision of the secretary;

(b) to compile information concerning the road, bridge and culvert materials of the state and furnish such information to boards of county commissioners, township highway commissioners, county engineers and other highway officials; the secretary shall answer all inquiries of such officials concerning highway construction and maintenance and shall advise them of the reasonable prices for materials and construction work;

(c) devise and adopt standard plans and specifications for road, bridge and culvert construction and maintenance suited to the needs of the different counties of the state and furnish them to county engineers;

(d) make a biennial report for the use of the legislature and may issue bulletins and pamphlets, which shall be printed as public documents;

(e) carry on such other highway educational work, and may cooperate with the state and national organizations for the support and advancement of highway construction;

(f) may make investigations of the highway conditions in any county, assist boards of county commissioners and the attorney general in the prosecution or defense of patent suits relative to road and bridge construction when so requested, and the secretary shall report any violations of the law to the attorney general who shall take such steps as are necessary regarding such violations;

(g) to enter upon any property to make surveys, examinations, investigations, and tests, and to acquire other necessary and relevant data in contemplation of (1) establishing the location of a road, street or highway; (2) acquiring land, property, and road building materials; or (3) performing other operations incident to highway construction, reconstruction or maintenance. Prior to entering upon any such property the secretary shall first request permission of the landowner to do so. Where consent to do the things authorized in this subsection (g) is not given to the secretary by the owner or occupant of the land involved, the secretary may proceed as authorized after giving 10 days written notice to landowner or occupant of the secretary's intention to conduct such surveys, examinations, investigations and tests. Entry upon any property, pursuant to this subsection, shall not be considered to be a legal trespass and no damages shall be recoverable on that account alone. In case of any actual or demonstrable damages to the premises, the secretary shall pay the owner of the premises the amount of the damages. Upon failure of the landowner and such secretary to agree upon the amount of damages the landowner may file an action against the secretary in the district court of the county in which the land is situated to recover such damages;

(h) to make tests, do research, to inspect and test all materials, supplies, equipment, and machinery used for state highway purposes or highway projects involving federal funds, and to develop methods and procedures for this purpose. Tests of such materials, supplies or equipment may be made available, upon payment of actual costs therefor, to any federal agency or political subdivision of the state;

(i) to maintain and develop testing laboratories to carry out the requirements of this act;

(j) to perform such other acts and duties and exercise such authority as will give the provisions of this act and other laws relating to the secretary or department of transportation full force and effect;

(k) to adopt rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of this act and any other laws relating to the secretary or department of transportation;

(l) to adopt rules and regulations relating to debarment and suspension of contractors for cause; and

(m) to prepare a report and make a presentation to the legislature as required by K.S.A. 75-3516 and amendments thereto.

History: L. 1917, ch. 264, § 6; R.S. 1923, 68-404; L. 1961, ch. 301, § 1; L. 1975, ch. 427, § 82; L. 1982, ch. 279, § 1; L. 2001, ch. 153, § 2; July 1.