An Introduction To Asphalt Concrete Pavement Street And Highway Engineering



Asphalt concrete pavement is a crucial component of modern street and highway engineering. It provides a durable and smooth surface for vehicles and pedestrians while effectively managing traffic flow. In this article, we will delve into the intricacies of asphalt concrete pavement, its construction process, and the fundamental principles behind street and highway engineering.

What is Asphalt Concrete Pavement?

Asphalt concrete pavement, also known as blacktop, is a versatile and costeffective material used in the construction of roadways. It is composed of asphalt, a sticky black substance, mixed with aggregate materials such as crushed stone, gravel, or sand. This mixture is laid down in layers on a prepared subgrade to form a sturdy and durable pavement.



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by J. Paul Guyer(Kindle Edition)

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The Construction Process

Asphalt concrete pavement construction involves several key steps. Firstly, the existing pavement or soil is prepared by removing any debris and grading the surface to achieve a smooth subgrade. This process ensures proper drainage and prevents water from seeping into the pavement, which can lead to cracks and potholes.

Once the subgrade is ready, a layer of crushed stone or gravel, known as the base course, is compacted and leveled. This layer provides additional stability to the pavement and promotes proper water drainage. It acts as a solid foundation for the subsequent layers.

The next step involves the application of a binder or tack coat. This sticky substance is sprayed on top of the base course to promote bonding between the

layers of asphalt. It allows the asphalt layer to adhere to the underlying base more effectively, ensuring a durable and long-lasting pavement.

Finally, the asphalt mixture, comprising of asphalt cement and aggregates, is laid down in layers using specialized equipment. Each layer is carefully compacted to achieve the desired thickness and density. Once the asphalt has cooled and hardened, it forms a smooth and resilient pavement surface ready for vehicular traffic.

The Principles of Street and Highway Engineering

Street and highway engineering is a specialized field that focuses on designing and constructing roadways to ensure safe and efficient transportation. It encompasses various disciplines such as traffic engineering, geometric design, pavement engineering, and transportation planning. The key principles of street and highway engineering include:

- Safety: Ensuring the safety of users by designing roadways with proper signage, markings, and traffic control devices.
- Efficiency: Designing roadways to minimize congestion, delays, and travel times.
- Sustainability: Incorporating environmentally friendly practices such as using recycled materials and implementing stormwater management systems.
- Mobility: Designing roadways to accommodate various modes of transportation, including pedestrians, bicycles, and public transit.
- Maintenance: Developing strategies for regular maintenance and repair to ensure the longevity of the pavement.

Asphalt concrete pavement is a critical component of street and highway engineering, providing a smooth and durable surface for transportation.

Understanding the construction process and the key principles behind street and highway engineering is crucial for designing safe and efficient roadways. By incorporating innovative techniques and sustainable practices, engineers can ensure the longevity and reliability of asphalt concrete pavements, contributing to a better transportation experience for all.



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