

BRIDGE ADVISORY NUMBER: **BA-2019-01**

DATE: May 6, 2019

SUBJECT: **Timeframe for Installing Load Posting Signs at Bridges**

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### **TIMEFRAME FOR INSTALLING LOAD POSTING SIGNS AT BRIDGES**

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) recently released a memo clarifying the requirement that bridge load posting signs, also referred to as weight limit signs, must be erected as soon as possible, but **no later than 30 days after a load rating determines a need for such posting**. Failure to comply with this requirement could cause Federal and State transportation funds to be withheld and new projects may not be able to proceed. As this clarification may require bridge owners to change current practices, the FHWA is implementing this policy **beginning October 1, 2019**. Agencies that require Board or Commission approval prior to placement of weight limit signs should evaluate whether their current processes allow them to meet the 30-day requirement and, if necessary, implement a new process prior to October 1, 2019. Additionally, agencies may need to consider placing temporary signs when weather issues, such as snow piles or frozen ground, prevent erection of permanent signage.

### **LOAD POSTING REQUIREMENTS**

When a load rating determines that a bridge requires posting for weight limits, the following actions must occur within 30 days of the load rating "Checked By" date entered in the Michigan Bridge Management and Inspection System (MiBRIDGE):

1. Erect weight limit signs not more than 50 feet from each end of the bridge, as well as at a suitable distance from each end of the bridge to enable vehicles to take a different route, as per the Michigan Vehicle Code, Section 257.631.
2. Update NBI Item 41 to "P – Posted for Load" in MiBRIDGE once all weight limit signs have been erected. Note that NBI Item 41 must be coded as "B – Posting Recommended" until all weight limit signs are in place.
3. Verify that MDOT Item 141 represents the weight limits signed at the bridge, which must be less than or equal to the weight limits calculated by the load rating analysis.
4. Upload images of weight limit signs at each end of the bridge, as well as any advanced warning weight limit signs, to MiBRIDGE. Refer to [MDOT Bridge Advisory 2018-01](#) (revised 5/6/19) for additional guidance, including instructions for saving images in MiBRIDGE.

When a weight limit sign is found to be missing, damaged, or vandalized during an inspection, the following actions must occur within 30 days of the date the inspection was entered in MiBRIDGE:

1. Update NBI Item 41 to "B – Posting Recommended" in MiBRIDGE. Note that NBI Item 41 will automatically be updated to "B – Posting Recommended" when an inspector selects "No" for "Posting signs in place on both ends of bridge" on the routine inspection report.
2. Erect any weight limit signs found to be missing, damaged, or vandalized.

3. Update NBI Item 41 to “P – Posted for Load” in MiBRIDGE once all weight limit signs have been erected.
4. Verify that MDOT Item 141 represents the weight limits signed at the bridge, which must be less than or equal to the weight limits calculated by the load rating analysis.
5. Upload images of all newly erected weight limit signs to MiBRIDGE. Refer to [MDOT Bridge Advisory 2018-01](#) (revised 5/6/19) for additional guidance, including instructions for saving images in MiBRIDGE.

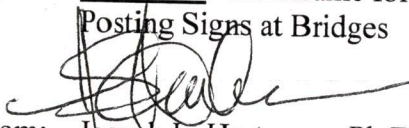


U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
Federal Highway  
Administration

# Memorandum

Subject: **ACTION:** Timeframe for Installing Load  
Posting Signs at Bridges

Date: April 17, 2019

  
From: Joseph L. Hartmann, Ph.D., P.E.  
Director, Office of Bridges and Structures

In Reply Refer To: HIBS-30

To: Division Administrators  
Federal Lands Highway Division Directors

The purpose of this memo is to clarify the expectations of installing load posting signs at bridges. The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) (P.L. 112-141), was signed into law on July 6, 2012. As part of this enactment, Section 1111 amended Section 144 of Title 23 United States Code (U.S.C.) and directed the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to design the National Bridge and Tunnel Inspection Standards to ensure uniformity of the inspections and evaluations between the two programs (23 U.S.C. 144(h)(1)(B)).

The National Bridge Inspection Standards (NBIS) can be found in Title 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 650 Subpart C and the National Tunnel Inspection Standards (NTIS) can be found in Title 23 CFR 650 Subpart E.

The NBIS does not identify timeframes for load posting bridges and the NTIS requires load posting of tunnels to be made as soon as possible but no later than 30 days after a load rating determines a need for such posting (23 CFR 650.513(g)). Load posting informs the travelling public the maximum load that bridges and tunnels can safely carry. Lack of load posting signs is a public safety issue, which some bridge owners consider to be a critical finding requiring immediate follow-up action.

To provide uniformity between the two regulations, the FHWA is clarifying the requirement that bridge load postings are to be made as soon as possible but no later than 30 days after a load rating determines a need for such posting. Since this clarification may require owners to change current practices, the FHWA is implementing this new policy on October 1, 2019. Please share this information with your State, Federal, and tribal partners.

Please direct questions to John Thiel at (202) 366-8795 or e-mail at [John.Thiel@dot.gov](mailto:John.Thiel@dot.gov) or to Shay Burrows at (202) 366-4675 or e-mail at [Shay.Burrows@dot.gov](mailto:Shay.Burrows@dot.gov).

cc:

Directors of Field Services  
Director of Technical Services  
HIBS-30