

MICHIGAN STRUCTURE INSPECTION MANUAL

BRIDGE INSPECTION

CHAPTER 3

INSPECTION FREQUENCY

3.01 Purpose

The National Bridge Inspection Standards (NBIS) establishes maximum bridge inspection frequencies for each type of bridge safety inspection. Routine and fracture critical member inspections must occur at regular intervals that do not exceed 24 months, while underwater inspections are required to be performed every 60 months. The regulations also require each state to establish criteria for reduced inspection frequencies through the consideration of factors such as age, traffic characteristics, and condition state. This section describes the requirements and procedures to ensure proper inspection frequency and timeliness in accordance with NBIS requirements and MDOT policy.

3.02 Inspection Frequency – Reporting Field Data

Bridge inspections must be performed according to their designated frequency to ensure public safety, protect infrastructure investment, and maintain FHWA compliance. Failure to perform the inspections may lead to the restriction of federal funds, and unknown condition states within the inventory. Due to the importance of adhering to the regulations MDOT is instituting stricter guidelines for bridge safety inspection reporting. The NBIS requires the inspection report to be entered within 90 days from the date of an inspection for state owned bridges, and 180 days for all others. **Effective October 1, 2014 all bridge safety inspections performed shall be entered into MiB^{RIDGE} within 30 days of the inspection.** This policy change has been approved by FHWA to strengthen the performance of Michigan's Bridge Inspection Program by allowing timeliness verifications to be conducted 60 days earlier than current regulations require, and will increase compliance during National Bridge Inspection Program reviews.

3.03 Inspection Frequency – Inspection Team Leader Responsibilities

The file review shall be conducted once a bridge is assigned to an inspection team leader in order to address equipment, traffic control, or personnel needs. This action will aid in the prevention of delays during the inspection process. It is important to note that equipment and/or procedures for bridge inspections may impact mobility, and therefore may be restricted to certain time frames. The inspection team leader performing the inspection must inspect the bridges assigned on or before the month they are due, and enter the inspection report into MiB^{RIDGE} within 30 days of the field inspection.

In the event that a particular component cannot be inspected due to environmental limitations or an unforeseen occurrence the inspection team leader should still begin the bridge inspection and rate the components that may safely be inspected. The inspection report must be updated once the consequence requiring a partial inspection is resolved. The team leader must contact the bridge owner if an inspection cannot be completed by the required due date. **Effective October 1, 2014 the team leader must document the reason why an inspection was not completed in the month it was due. This will be documented in the General Notes field on the inspection report in MiB^{RIDGE}.**

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The inspection team leader will increase the inspection frequency according to engineering judgment and the guidelines established through the MDOT [Guidelines for Bridge Inspection Frequencies](#). The inspection team leader should increase the inspection frequency for structural deterioration to verify the stability of the deficient element and to ensure there are no significant changes in the condition of primary elements between inspections.

3.04 Inspection Frequency – Bridge Owner Responsibilities

Inspections should be assigned to an inspection team leader at least 30 days prior to the inspection due date. This action will allow inspection staff adequate time to arrange for necessary items to complete the inspection. Inspection progress should be monitored by the bridge owner on a bi-weekly basis to ensure no past due inspections will be reported. If an inspection cannot be completed as scheduled the bridge owner should notify Bridge Field Services by emailing MDOT-BridgeInspection@michigan.gov with the cause of the delay. This information will be needed to justify any inspection timeliness issues to FHWA during annual NBIS compliance reviews.

3.05 Verification of Inspection Timeliness and Non-Compliance Process

Bridge Field Services will continue to perform monthly monitoring of inspection timeliness which requires advertisement of unassigned inspections, contacting each agency with inspections greater than one month past due, and providing a list of the agencies in non-compliance with NBIS to the Development Services Division Local Agency Programs Section. The Local Agency Programs Section will follow internal processes for preparing and submitting formal notification that federal and state transportation funds will be withheld from the nonresponsive agency. A summary of the activities for the revised process that becomes effective for all types of inspections performed after October 1, 2014 is as follows:

1. Bridge Field Services will generate a list of agencies with unassigned inspections one month prior than the month they are due and advertise it to vendors registered with MiBRIDGE.
2. Bridge Field Services will contact the agencies with inspections that are one month past due and provide notification that non-compliance proceedings will occur during the subsequent month if corrective action is not taken.
3. Bridge Field Services will provide the names of agencies with inspections that are two months past due and supporting documentation to the Development Services Division Local Agency Programs Section.
4. The Local Agency Programs Section will perform any necessary internal procedures of notifying Division Management prior to drafting the Non-Compliance Letter(s).

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5. The Local Agency Program Section will provide an electronic copy of the letter(s) to Bridge Field Services and mail a hardcopy to each agency that is not complying with the NBIS requirements.
6. Bridge Field Services will email a copy of the Non-Compliance letter to the agency and restrict funding immediately using the MAP Financial Obligation System (MFOS).
7. Upon confirmation that the past due inspection(s) have been completed and entered into MiBRIDGE funding will be established by Bridge Field Services using the MFOS system.
8. Bridge Field Services will notify the local agency and Local Agency Programs Section that funding has been reinstated.

3.06 Inspection Frequency – Bridge Inspection Program Manager Responsibilities

The development and enhancement of effective strategies to improve bridge inspection reporting is the responsibility of the bridge program manager. A system of automatic notifications for past due, and inspections due within 90 days, has been incorporated under the direction of the bridge inspection program manager. The bridge inspection program manager also performs a manual review of the entire bridge inventory and contacts each bridge owner once inspections are more than 90 days past due. This process will be modified following the implementation of the 30 day inspection reporting requirement.

Statewide consultant bridge safety inspection contracts for MDOT owned bridges are also organized by the bridge inspection program manager. These contracts allow for supplemental inspection assistance to prevent past due routine, in-depth, or underwater bridge inspections from occurring. The bridge inspection program manager is also responsible for organizing quality assurance reviews to verify frequency guidelines, participating in National Bridge Inspection Program Metric evaluations that monitor annual adherence to the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 23, and preparing plans of corrective action to address the deficiencies identified.