

BRIDGE ADVISORY NUMBER: **BA-2014-03**

DATE: September 8, 2014

SUBJECT: MiB<sup>RIDGE</sup>E Inspection Report Submission & Unassigned Inspections

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## **PURPOSE**

The National Bridge Inspection Standards (NBIS) establishes maximum bridge inspection frequencies for each type of bridge safety inspection, and structures with an increased inspection frequency must be inspected within the interval specified. Due to the importance of complying with NBIS inspection frequency regulations MDOT is instituting stricter guidelines for bridge safety inspection reporting and implementing an additional measure to the ones already created in order to prevent late inspections. These changes will work to strengthen the performance of Michigan's bridge inspection program by reducing the number of late inspections and allowing timeliness verifications to be conducted earlier than current policy allows.

## **INSPECTION REPORT SUBMISSION**

The FHWA Metrics for the Oversight of the National Bridge Inspection Program (NBIP) has focused substantial attention to late inspections and the measures that are incorporated to prevent them. This annual evaluation consists of an aggregate of 23 Metrics; inspection frequency for routine, underwater, and fracture critical inspections are included in 5 of them. MDOT has remained in conditional compliance for the majority of the timeliness metrics since the advent of the program through the implementation of a Plan of Corrective Action (PCA). As such, the PY2014 results required additional measures to reduce the number of late inspections.

The PCA approved by FHWA during December 2013 requires all inspection reports to be entered into MiB<sup>RIDGE</sup>E within 30 days of the inspection beginning October 1, 2014. Reducing the duration allowed for inspection reporting from 90 days for state owned bridges, and 180 days for all others, will allow for timeliness verifications to be conducted 60 days earlier than current regulations require. This will lead to a further reduction in the number of inspections that are more than one month late and should work to eliminate inspections that are more than four months late. Failure to enter the inspection report within 30 days of the field work will result in the agency being held in noncompliance and the withholding of federal and state funds.

Reports may be edited by the inspection team leader in order to improve the quality of comments or recommendations that were compiled. These modifications may be completed in MiB<sup>RIDGE</sup> for a period of 90 days for state owned bridges, and 180 days for others, from the date of inspection. If changes are to be made within the timeframes specified the inspection team leader may request the bridge owner to reassign the report if the inspection assignment has expired.

### **UNASSIGNED INSPECTION ADVERTISEMENT**

In 2006 preemptive notifications were created for inspections that were due within 3 months, and in 2010 MDOT began sending automated email notifications to bridge owners for inspections that were 30 days past due. These measures have proven successful at reducing the number of late inspections; however, the state has not reached a full compliance finding during the annual FHWA reviews. MDOT has worked to correct this through manual efforts such as phone calls and/or emails that consume time and resources.

In order to improve efficiency and further reduce the amount of late inspections, MDOT will be reviewing the list of agencies with upcoming inspections that have not been assigned to an inspector. For those agencies that do not have their inspections assigned 30 days before the month due MDOT will post a list of agencies who have unassigned inspections on a monthly basis beginning October 1, 2014. This posting will be made available on the MDOT [Bridge Operations](#) web page during each month and include the agency name and type of inspections to be completed.

In order not to receive additional notifications, bridge owners should assign their inspections to an inspection team leader one month prior than the month they are due. This includes local agencies who perform inspections with internal inspection team leaders or bridge owners that perform the work themselves.

### **DELAYED INSPECTIONS**

In the event that a portion of a structure cannot be inspected due to environmental limitations or an unforeseen occurrence the bridge owner must still request the inspection team leader to begin the inspection and rate the components that may safely be inspected. Documentation of the cause and expected date of return to finish the inspection must be provided in the General Notes field of the BSIR. Once conditions allow the inspection to be completed the report must be updated accordingly to accurately reflect the observed condition of the elements that could not be initially inspected.

If an inspection cannot be completed on-time due to delayed approvals for consultant contracts, emergencies, or any other causes the bridge owner shall submit a notification to [MDOT-BridgeInspection@michigan.gov](mailto:MDOT-BridgeInspection@michigan.gov). The information that is provided should include the reason for the delay, affected bridges, and expected date that the issue will be mitigated. This will enable proper response to FHWA during inquiries that originate from the NBIP metrics review.

For questions regarding this bridge advisory please contact Rich Kathrens, MDOT Bridge Safety Inspection Engineer at (517) 749-4274 or Andrew Bouvy at (517) 242-1164 or by emailing [MDOT-BridgeInspection@michigan.gov](mailto:MDOT-BridgeInspection@michigan.gov) .