

**MICHIGAN STRUCTURE INSPECTION MANUAL
BRIDGE INSPECTION**

CHAPTER 3

INSPECTION INTERVAL

3.01 Purpose

The National Bridge Inspection Standards (NBIS) establish maximum bridge inspection intervals for each type of bridge safety inspection. The regulations also require each state to establish criteria for increased inspection intervals through the consideration of factors such as age, traffic characteristics, and condition state. This section describes the requirements and procedures to ensure proper inspection intervals and timeliness in accordance with the NBIS requirements and MDOT policy.

3.02 Inspection Intervals

The NBIS allows an acceptable interval tolerance after the month in which the inspection was due. However, in order to maintain inspection timeliness compliance MDOT will not allow for interval tolerances to be utilized. Routine and fracture critical member inspections must occur at regular intervals that do not exceed 24 months. Underwater inspections must occur at regular intervals that do not exceed 60 months.

Certain bridges require reduced inspection intervals. Routine inspections must be conducted at intervals that do not exceed 12 months when one or more of the deck, superstructure, substructure, culvert or observed scour condition ratings is in serious or worse condition. Fracture critical inspections must be conducted at intervals that do not exceed 12 months when non-redundant members are in poor or worse condition. Underwater inspections must be conducted at intervals that do not exceed 24 months when the underwater portions of the bridge, channel, channel protection, or observed scour condition ratings are serious or worse. In lieu of performing a comprehensive routine or underwater inspection, a special inspection may be utilized to monitor the components in serious or worse condition.

The NBIS allows for certain bridges to be inspected at extended intervals with written FHWA approval. Any bridge owner that wishes to seek approval for extended intervals must contact the Bridge Inspection Program Manager to initiate the process.

3.03 Inspection Intervals – Team Leader Responsibilities

A file review shall be conducted once a bridge is assigned to a 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 team leader must inspect the bridges assigned to them on or before the month they are due and enter the inspection reports into MiB^{RIDGE} within 30 days of the field inspections.

The team leader should document the inspection begin date and completion date. In order to maintain compliance with the NBIS, the inspection completion date must be within the specified inspection interval.

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When 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 team leader must document the reason why an inspection was not completed in the month it was due. The inspection report must be updated once the consequence requiring a partial inspection is resolved. **The team leader must contact the [MDOT Bridge Inspection Program Manager](#) if an inspection cannot be completed by the required due date so that FHWA can be notified.**

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

3.04 Inspection Intervals – Bridge Owner Responsibilities

Inspections should be assigned to a 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 the [MDOT Bridge Inspection Program Manager](#) 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 Inspection Intervals – Reporting Field Data

Bridge inspections must be performed according to their designated interval to ensure public safety, protect infrastructure investment, and maintain FHWA compliance. Failure to perform the inspections may lead to the restriction of federal funds. The NBIS requires the inspection report to be entered within 90 days from the date of an inspection for state, local, and privately owned bridges. MDOT requires all bridge safety inspections to be entered into MiB^{RIDGE} within 30 days of the inspection date. This policy was 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.

3.06 Verification of Inspection Timeliness and Non-Compliance Process

The Bureau of Bridges and Structures will continue to perform monthly monitoring of inspection timeliness which includes an unassigned inspection notification, contacting each agency with inspections greater than one month past due, and providing a list of the agencies in non-compliance with the 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 inspection timeliness and non-compliance process for all NBI routine, fracture critical, special and underwater inspections is provided in Table 3.06.01.

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3.07 Inspection Intervals – 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. The bridge inspection program manager also performs a manual review of the entire bridge inventory and contacts each bridge owner once inspections are greater than one month past due.

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Table 3.06.01 Inspection Timeliness and Non-Compliance Process

Period Relative to NBI Inspection Due Date	Central Office Activities to Mitigate Late Bridge Inspections	TSC Manager Activities to Prevent Withholding of Funding from Local Agencies	Consequence of Late Inspection
3 Months Prior	Automated email notification provided to Bridge Owners registered with MiBRIDGE for all bridge inspections that are due within 90 days in their jurisdiction.	No action is necessary.	None
1 Month Prior	Table of unassigned bridge inspections manually drafted and emailed to all Consultants registered in MiBRIDGE. FHWA, Bureau of Bridges and Structures Director, and TSC Managers with agencies in the their jurisdiction included on correspondence.	No action is absolutely necessary; however, contacting the local agency to ensure their management is aware of the upcoming inspection(s) is beneficial. Notify the Bureau of Bridges and Structures if a position related to bridge management responsibilities at the agency has been vacated or if a new employee has been hired.	None
Greater than 1 Month Past Due	Bureau of Bridges and Structures will contact the agencies with inspections that are greater than one month past due and provide notification that reports must be entered in MiBRIDGE by the beginning of the following calendar month. Bureau of Bridges and Structures Director, TSC Manager, and most recent bridge inspector included on correspondence.	Communicate directly with proper local agency staff to ensure they are aware that the agency is currently in non-compliance, and that action must be taken to avoid funding restrictions.	Warning
Greater than 2 Months Past Due	Bureau of Bridges and Structures will email a letter to the Bridge Owner stating that the local agency is in non-compliance with the National Bridge Inspection Standards. The Development Services Division Local Agency Programs Section will follow internal processes to notify Bureau Management. The determination to restrict funding will be made at the Bureau Management level according to present action being undertaken by the agency.	Communicate that transportation related funds are going to be withheld, and new projects may not be obligated. Work with the agency to ensure action is taken. Provide regular status updates to Bureau of Bridges and Structures and the Development Services Division Local Agency Programs Section regarding progress to complete the work.	Non-Compliance