



Illinois Department of Transportation

2300 South Dirksen Parkway / Springfield, Illinois / 62764

July 10, 1995

Bridge Inspection Responsibility of Privately Owned Structures #95-05

COUNTY ENGINEERS/SUPERINTENDENT OF HIGHWAYS
MUNICIPAL ENGINEERS/DIRECTORS OF PUBLIC WORKS

We are contacting local agencies to clarify the responsibilities of a local agency for the performance of the safety inspections required by the National Bridge Inspection Standards (NBIS) for privately owned structures carrying public highways. The responsibilities of the local agency for inspections are similar to the local agency's responsibility for posting or closing privately owned bridges as described in Circular Letter #86-27, dated September 29, 1986.

A portion of Circular Letter #86-27 is repeated here as background information.

".....the duty to post and warn the public of hazards rests with the highway authority exclusively, regardless of whether the structure is publicly or privately owned and/or maintained."

"Whether the bridge or elevated structure is publicly or privately owned; if a public highway is carried by the structure, it is subject to inspection and posting if necessary. In addition to State law, the National Bridge Inspection Standards (NBIS) (23 Codified Federal Regulations 650.301 - 650.311) also contain requirements for the inspection and posting of bridges."

When it becomes apparent that the private owner (such as a railroad, drainage district, developers, etc.) of a bridge carrying a public highway will not or cannot perform the safety inspections required by the NBIS, the local agency with jurisdiction of the public highway carried by the structure must perform the NBIS inspection to ensure the safety of the traveling public. The local agency may satisfy this responsibility in one of several ways:

1. Perform the NBIS safety inspection with local agency personnel.
2. Retain the services of a consulting engineer familiar with the performance of NBIS inspections.
3. If the owner of the bridge is performing inspections for their own purposes and is willing to cooperate with the local agency, the local agency may request inspection information from the bridge owner which can then be transferred to the appropriate NBIS inspection forms.

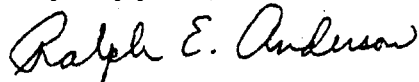
Regardless of who performs the field inspection, the local agency should act as the agency reporting the inspection and inventory information to the Department and should maintain a structure file for the privately owned bridge in the local agency office.

In all cases, the inspections must be performed by personnel meeting the licensing, certification and experience requirements of the NBIS. Training for inspectors is periodically offered by the Department and information on scheduling may be obtained from the Technology Transfer Unit of the Bureau of Local Roads and Streets (phone 217/785-5048).

Inspections should be performed and recorded in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Structure Information and Procedure (SIP) Manual which is provided to local agencies by the Department through the Planning Services Section of the Office of Planning and Programming (phone 217/785-2751). After the inspections are completed and recorded on the appropriate forms, they should be submitted to District Bureau of Local Roads and Streets for recording of the information in the Illinois Structure Information System (ISIS).

By performing the responsibilities described in this letter, local agencies having jurisdiction of roadways carried by privately owned bridges will prevent persons using the roadway from being exposed to the hazards which may develop on an uninspected privately owned structure. Your cooperation in ensuring that the safety inspections are performed in an adequate and timely manner is greatly appreciated.

Very truly yours,



Ralph E. Anderson
Engineer of Bridges and Structures

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