



Memorandum

Subject: **ACTION:** National Bridge Inspection Standards
Final Rule

Date: May 9, 2022
In Reply Refer To: HIBS-40

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

JOSEPH LAWRENCE
HARTMANN

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LAWRENCE HARTMANN
Date: 2022.05.09 12:37:18
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To: Division Administrators
Federal Lands Highway Division Directors

The final rule for the revised National Bridge Inspection Standards (NBIS) regulation (23 CFR 650, Subpart C) was published in the Federal Register¹ on May 6, 2022. Most aspects of the rule become effective on June 6, 2022. The final rule addresses the following requirements of the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) (Pub. L. 112-141, 126 Stat 405):

1. Extending the applicability of the NBIS to tribally owned bridges;
2. Updating the methodology, training, and qualifications for inspection personnel;
3. Updating bridge inspection intervals, considering a risk-based approach;
4. Establishing a registry of nationally certified bridge inspectors;
5. Ensuring uniformity with the National Tunnel Inspection Standards enacted in 2015;
6. Establishing procedures for reporting and monitoring of critical findings;
7. Conducting annual reviews for compliance with the NBIS; and,
8. Collection and inventory of element level inspection data for bridges on the National Highway System (NHS).

The above listed items 6, 7, and 8 did not require rulemaking and have been implemented previously.

For your information and use in assisting State transportation departments, Federal agencies, and Tribal governments with implementation efforts, we will post the following resources on our website at <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bridge/inspection/>:

- A copy of the final rule as published in the Federal Register
- A side-by-side comparison between the previous regulation and the final rule
- A timeline for NBIS implementation
- FHWA's Specifications for the National Bridge Inventory (SNBI), 2022, incorporated by reference in the final rule. The SNBI replaces the FHWA Recording and Coding Guide for the Structure Inventory and Appraisal of the Nation's Bridges, 1995
- Questions and Answers (Q&A) on the NBIS and the SNBI

¹ Final Rule on "National Bridge Inspection Standards": Docket No. FHWA-2017-0047, RIN 2125-AF55, Federal Register - Vol. 87, No. 88, Pg. 27396-27437- May 6, 2022

Additionally, we are developing guidance related to the following areas, and will post it to the website as it becomes available:

- Review and approval of alternate bridge inspection training
- Review and approval of procedures to determine system and internal redundancy of nonredundant steel tension members
- Risk-based inspection intervals

Your staff is encouraged to use these resource documents in their discussions with those involved in the bridge inspection program.

Questions related to the NBIS and SNBI may be submitted to the following email address: NBIS_SNBI_Questions@dot.gov. Responses will be provided to the requesters and, as appropriate, posted in the Q&A section of our website. We intend to periodically update the Q&A section as new questions arise.

The requirements of the final rule will not be used to make compliance determinations for the upcoming Performance Year 2023 NBIS review. We are currently updating the National Bridge Inspection Program Metrics and Compliance Review Manual in accordance with the rule, and will make that available as soon as possible. We understand that some aspects of the rulemaking may take some time to implement, and we will consider that as we make these updates.

cc:

Directors of Field Services
Director of Technical Services
HIBS
Peter Stephanos, HISM
Brian Fouch, HICP