

Chapter Trans 212

STANDARDS FOR THE INSPECTION OF BRIDGES IN WISCONSIN

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Trans 212.01 Purpose. The purpose of this chapter is to interpret and implement s. 84.17 (3), Stats., and to provide standards for the continuing inspection of bridges in this state.

History: Cr. Register, February, 1982, No. 314, eff. 3-1-82.

Trans 212.02 Definitions. (1) “AASHTO manual” means the *Manual for Condition Evaluation of Bridges, 1994 as revised by Interim Specifications, Bridges 1995-1998*, published by the American association of state highway and transportation officials, 444 North Capitol Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001.

Note: This manual is on file at the offices of the Division of Transportation Infrastructure Development, Wisconsin Department of Transportation, the Secretary of State, and the Legislative Reference Bureau.

(2) “Bridge” means a structure, including supports, erected over a depression or an obstruction, such as water, a highway, or a railway, having a track or passageway for carrying traffic or other moving loads, and having an opening measured along the center of the roadway of more than 20 feet between the undercoping of abutments or spring lines of arches, or extreme ends of the openings for multiple boxes. It may include multiple pipes where the clear distance between openings is less than half of the smaller contiguous opening.

(3) “Bridge inspector’s training manual” means the *Bridge Inspector’s Training Manual 90*, 1991, published by the federal highway administration and available from the superintendent of documents, U.S. government printing office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

Note: This manual is on file at the offices of the Division of Transportation Infrastructure Development, Wisconsin Department of Transportation, the Secretary of State, and the Legislative Reference Bureau.

(4) “Department” means the Wisconsin department of transportation.

(5) “Inspection” means the examination of a bridge, the evaluation of the physical condition observed, and the report of the observations and evaluations on a bridge inspection report form adopted by the department.

Note: The bridge inspection report forms referred to in this subsection are: (1) “Field Bridge Inspection Report,” #E-M-30, and (2) “Supplemental Information to Field Bridge Inspection,” #E-M-36. Copies of these report forms may be obtained from the department.

(6) “Inventory” means the gathering and reporting of all information required on the bridge inventory form adopted by the department.

(7) “Posting” means the placement of regulatory signs at a bridge indicating the safe load-carrying capacity of the bridge.

(8) “Rating” means determining the safe load-carrying capacity of a bridge.

History: Cr. Register, February, 1982, No. 314, eff. 3-1-82; am. (1) and (8), Register, July, 1992, No. 439, eff. 8-1-92; correction in (3) to (6) and (8) made under s. 13.93 (2m) (b) 1., Stats., Register, July, 1992, No. 439; am. (1) and (3), Register, July 1999, No. 523, eff. 8-1-99.

Trans 212.03 Application of chapter. The bridge inspection and inventory standards in this chapter apply to all highway bridges which either lie within or cross the borders of the state of Wisconsin. Bridges carrying only railroad traffic and bridges used only by pedestrians, bicycles, and recreational vehicles are excluded from the application of this chapter.

History: Cr. Register, February, 1982, No. 314, eff. 3-1-82.

Trans 212.04 Responsibility for inspection. The responsibility for the continuing inspection program shall be as follows:

(1) The department shall inspect highway bridges on the state trunk highway system and all other bridges for which the department has been assigned maintenance responsibility.

(2) Each local authority or other authority having jurisdiction over a non-department maintained bridge shall inspect the highway bridges on highways under its jurisdiction.

(3) When the department determines that a local authority or other authority having jurisdiction over a non-departmental maintained bridge has failed to inspect any highway bridge as required, the department shall inform the county highway commissioner of the county in which the bridge is located of the inspection failure and shall direct the county to inspect or cause the bridge to be inspected. Upon receipt of the department’s notice and direction, the county shall perform the bridge inspection or cause it to be performed.

History: Cr. Register, February, 1982, No. 314, eff. 3-1-82; emerg. cr. (3), eff. 8-20-85; cr. (3), Register, April, 1986, No. 364, eff. 5-1-86.

Trans 212.05 Qualification of personnel. Individuals involved in the inspection of bridges as required by this chapter shall meet the minimum requirements set forth in the AASHTO manual.

History: Cr. Register, February, 1982, No. 314, eff. 3-1-82.

Trans 212.06 Frequency of inspections. (1) State-owned or state-maintained bridges shall be inspected at regular intervals not to exceed 2 years.

(2) Locally owned bridges shall be inspected at regular intervals not to exceed 2 years.

(3) The maximum inspection interval specified in subs. (1) and (2) may be increased from 2 years to no more than 4 years for certain types or groups of bridges where past inspection reports, favorable experience and analysis by the department justifies an increased inspection interval. Written concurrence of the federal highway administrator shall be obtained by the department before the inspection interval is increased.

(4) Interim inspections at intervals other than those specified in subs. (1) and (2) shall be conducted as found necessary by the maintaining authority on bridges that are posted, bridges sub-

jected to excessive run-off that may cause scour, and bridges that have known deficiencies. The maintaining authority shall keep a record of interim inspections available for review by the department and federal authorities. If the maintaining authority has failed to perform the inspection, the county highway commissioner in the county in which the bridge is located shall perform the interim inspections as directed by the department and keep a record of the interim inspections available for review by the department and federal authorities. Upon receipt of the department's notice and direction, the county shall perform the interim inspections or cause them to be performed.

History: Cr. Register, February, 1982, No. 314, eff. 3-1-82; emerg. am. (3), eff. 8-20-85; am. (3), Register, April, 1986, No. 364, eff. 5-1-86; am. (1), renum. (3) to be (4), cr. (3), Register, July, 1999, No. 523, eff. 8-1-99.

Trans 212.07 Frequency of inventory. An inventory shall be maintained for each bridge. Changes in inventory data or postings shall be reported to the appropriate department official or officials when the bridges are inspected and significant changes occur. The inventory of a new bridge shall be obtained upon completion of its construction and the information shall be submitted to the department at that time for use in maintaining the statewide bridge file.

History: Cr. Register, February, 1982, No. 314, eff. 3-1-82; am. Register, July, 1999, No. 523, eff. 8-1-99.

Trans 212.08 Inspection. The items to be inspected on each bridge include, but are not limited to, the items specified on the bridge inspection report form. The bridge inspector's training manual shall be used as a guide to additional items to be inspected and to the detail required in special cases.

History: Cr. Register, February, 1982, No. 314, eff. 3-1-82; am. Register, July, 1999, No. 523, eff. 8-1-99.

Trans 212.09 Ratings. Each bridge required to be inspected under this chapter shall be rated to determine its safe load-carrying capacity. Significant changes in the condition of a bridge shall be reported to the department as soon as possible. When the significant change affects the rating of the bridge, the bridge shall be rerated by the maintenance authority within 7 calendar days of the inspection. When the inspection or rerating results in a recommendation for posting, change in posting, or closure of the bridge, the department shall be notified within 7 calendar days of the inspection or rerating. Ratings shall be determined in accordance with the AASHTO manual.

History: Cr. Register, February, 1982, No. 314, eff. 3-1-82; am. Register, July, 1992, No. 439, eff. 8-1-92.

Trans 212.10 Posting. When it is determined by the department that the maximum load under state law exceeds the load permitted on a bridge as described in the AASHTO manual, the bridge shall be posted for weight limits or closed. The department shall post or close bridges on the state trunk highway system and all other bridges for which the department is the maintaining authority. Each local authority shall post or close the bridges on highways under its jurisdiction. When a local authority fails to post or close a bridge as required, the department shall inform the county highway commissioner of the county in which the bridge is located and direct the county to post or close the bridge or cause the bridge to be posted or closed. Upon receipt of the department's notice and direction, the county shall post or close the bridge or cause it to be posted or closed. After the erection of signs or barriers associated with the posting or closing of the bridge by the county, the local maintaining authority of the bridge is responsible for the maintenance of the signs or barriers.

History: Cr. Register, February, 1982, No. 314, eff. 3-1-82; emerg. am. eff. 8-20-85; am. Register, April, 1986, No. 364, eff. 5-1-86; am. Register, July, 1999, No. 523, eff. 8-1-99.

Trans 212.11 Reporting. The reporting of bridge inspections shall be as follows:

(1) Bridges for which the department has inspection responsibility shall be reported for maintenance purposes for the year in which they were inspected. The department personnel responsible for these bridge inspections shall submit the inspection reports for updating the statewide bridge file to the appropriate department official or officials by January 15 of the appropriate year.

(2) Each authority having jurisdiction over a bridge for which the department has no inspection responsibility shall report the results of all its bridge inspections to the county highway commissioner of the county in which the authority is located by January 1 of each odd year.

(3) (a) Each county highway commissioner shall report the results of all non-state maintained bridge inspections in the commissioner's county to the appropriate department official or officials.

(b) Except as provided in par. (c), paper reports for all local bridges that are not a department responsibility shall be submitted to the department by January 15 of each odd year.

(c) In lieu of par. (b), electronic reports in a form acceptable to the department may be submitted to the department by February 1 of each odd year.

(4) The department shall inform the county highway commissioners of revisions to the file data generated by the reports for bridges in their county as soon as practicable after the department's receipt of the reports generating the file data revisions.

(5) After February 1 of each odd year, the department shall compile a list of any local governments which have not submitted the reports required by subs. (2) and (3) and shall submit this list to the senate and the assembly committees concerned with transportation issues.

History: Cr. Register, February, 1982, No. 314, eff. 3-1-82; am. (1), Register, July, 1992, No. 439, eff. 8-1-92; am. (1) and (3), Register, July, 1999, No. 523, eff. 8-1-99; CR 22-048: am. (3) (a) Register July 2023 No. 811, eff. 8-1-23.

Trans 212.12 County status under department direction. When a county highway commissioner of a county containing a bridge that has failed to be inspected, posted, or closed receives notice and direction from the department to perform the inspection, perform the interim inspection, keep records, post or close the bridge, the county is the agent of the local authority that has failed to fulfill its responsibilities. No liability is assumed by the county in carrying out the department's direction. Any liability associated with the county's action in following the department's direction is imputed to the local authority with maintenance responsibility for the bridge.

History: Emerg. cr. eff. 8-20-85; cr. Register, April, 1986, No. 364, eff. 5-1-86.

Trans 212.13 Compliance and county costs. Counties acting upon notice and direction from the department to perform the inspection, perform the interim inspection, keep records, post or close bridges on local roads that are not under county jurisdiction shall be reimbursed for the costs by the local authority with maintenance responsibility for the bridge. If the county is not reimbursed by the maintaining authority, the county shall be eligible for reimbursement of costs from the maintaining authority's local transportation aids payment under s. 86.30, Stats. The reimbursement payment shall be made by the department directly to the county. Maintaining authorities that fail to reimburse counties for costs shall not be eligible for any local bridge program funds. Failure of a county to comply with notice and direction from the department to perform the inspection, perform the interim inspection, keep records, post or close bridges

shall result in the suspension of all federal highway aids and all state bridge aids to the county.

History: Emerg. cr. eff. 8-20-85; cr. [Register, April, 1986, No. 364](#), eff. 5-1-86.