

BRIDGES, MINOR SPANS AND CULVERTS

Town vs. State responsibilities

In Maine, there are about 2200 bridges, almost 800 minor spans, and a large number of culverts on public roads that are the responsibility of either MaineDOT, or each town, city, or county. In 2001, a significant review of the confusing Local Bridge Program was undertaken and the law was changed so that it makes sense and it's easy to understand... and it's fair.

Here are the definitions per 23 MRSA 561- 568:

BRIDGE – a structure that has an opening measured along the center of the roadway of more than 20 feet between the undercropping of abutments or spring lines of arches or the extreme ends of openings for multiple boxes. It also includes multiple pipes when the clear distance between openings is less than 1/2 of the smaller contiguous opening.

MINOR SPAN – a structure that is larger than a culvert but has a span less than 20 feet.

CULVERT – any pipe or other structure that has a span of less than 10 feet or multiple pipes or other structures with a combined opening of less than 80 square feet in area.

LOW USE BRIDGE (LURB) -- a bridge on a townway with an AADT of under 100 motor vehicles.

A complete website is available for municipalities that lists every bridge and minor span in Maine. It can be sorted in several ways and lists the important attributes of each structure and its condition. It can be found at <http://www.maine.gov/mdot-stage/brmgmt/homepage.php> It will be updated soon so that it reflects current data.



Responsibilities Relating to Structures Defined in 23 MRSA c. 9, sub-ch 4-A

	Bridge		Minor Span		Culvert		Low Use Redundant Bridge	
	Capital Imp.	Maint.	Capital Imp.	Maint.	Capital Imp.	Maint.	Capital Imp.	Maint.
State Highway	S	S	S	S	S*	S*	N/A	N/A
State Aid	S	S	S	S	S*	S*	N/A	N/A
Town Way	S	S	M	M	M	M	50%S 50%M	M

M = Municipal Responsibility
 S = State Responsibility (MaineDOT)

* Municipal Responsibility if inside urban compact area