Maine Department of Transportation
Bridge Load Posting Guide

Purpose: The purpose of this Guide is to document MaineDOT’s best practices for the load posting of public bridges that cannot safely carry the State’s legal loads and/or routinely permitted overloads. MaineDOT has the sole responsibility and authority to post or close state maintained bridges, and may close any bridge that carries a public way in Maine if necessary to protect public safety.

Bridges are inspected in accordance with the National Bridge Inspection Standards and are load rated in accordance with the latest AASHTO Manual for Bridge Evaluation (MBE) and the MaineDOT Load Rating Guide. All bridge ratings and re-ratings shall be accomplished utilizing the Load & Resistance Factor Rating (LRFR) methodology unless otherwise directed by the Bridge Posting Committee (Committee).

It is important to understand the relationship between Load Ratings and Bridge Posting decisions. Load Rating is a technical engineering function performed in accordance with applicable AASHTO codes, the MaineDOT Load Rating Guide, and supplemental direction from the Committee. “Bridge posting involves a consideration of safety, economy, and the public interest” (NHI LRFR Rating Course, 1.8-3), and is therefore a policy decision based on load ratings, public impact, and most importantly sound engineering judgment.

Load Ratings: In general, load ratings will be performed on a bridge when one of five events has occurred: 1) the bridge is new or and has not been previously rated utilizing the LRFR methodology, 2) the bridge has been altered, 3) the bridge has incurred damage that affects the capacity, 4) a component of the structure has deteriorated such that the previous load rating is no longer valid or 5) a request has been made to permit a non-routine overload vehicle to use the bridge.

1) New bridges are load rated in order to comply with the Code of Federal Regulations requirements and provide analytical verification that a bridge will provide safe service to all legal loads allowed on Maine’s highway system. It is MaineDOT’s intent that all bridges within the inventory will be rated utilizing the LRFR methodology, unless the LRFR methodology is not applicable to that structure type.

2) If a bridge element has been repaired, rehabilitated, reconstructed or altered in a manner that significantly affects its load capacity, a load rating must be performed. This load rating could be triggered by such items as a deck overlay, the addition of a heavier railing or utility attachment, a new deck, a new superstructure, beam repairs, new beams, widening, significant superstructure repair or any other rehabilitation that would affect the ability of the structure to carry load. The Engineer must be aware of any changes in dead loads that result from the work performed on the bridge, including temporary construction loads.

3) Significant damage such as from a crash in which a vehicle struck a beam or substructure unit shall be included in modeling the structure for the new load rating.
4) A new load rating will be initiated after a field inspection indicates that an element had deteriorated to a level not represented in the previous load rating. This would include items such as beam flange or web section loss, deck deterioration on direct span concrete bridges, substructure unit section loss or being out of plumb or alignment.

5) A permit application may be submitted for an overload vehicle to travel over a particular bridge or series of bridges along a proposed route. If a bridge has not been analyzed previously for a similar overload vehicle, this task must be completed before an answer to the permit application can be returned. All load ratings shall be performed based on the results of a recent inspection of the bridge and where possible the design and/or as-built plans for the structure shall be reviewed.

All ratings/re-ratings, including engineering computations, plans and other supporting documentation for new bridges, existing bridges that have not been rated, or existing bridges that have been altered are submitted to the Committee for review and possible action.

For screening and Federal reporting purposes, the Inventory and Operating level rating shall first be performed on all bridges with the AASHTO HL-93 loading applied. If the Inventory Rating Factor is 1.0 or greater, the bridge will not require further analysis as it can safely carry all legal loads on a repeated basis. If the Inventory Rating Factor is less than 1.0, Maine’s eight (8) legal truck weights and axle configurations shall be evaluated for their effects on the structure.

It should be noted that the AASHTO LRFR methodology is still being periodically revised and calibrated, and may yield conservative results for some bridges. If the applicable Strength Limit State Rating Factor calculated for legal loads is 0.90 or greater, the Posting Committee may allow a bridge to continue unrestricted if it has been carrying legal loads with no visible signs of structural distress. Any bridge requiring a posting less than three (3) tons will be closed to all vehicular and non-vehicular traffic.

**Bridge Posting Committee:** If the maximum load effects under Maine law or AASHTO standard design loads exceed the calculated load carrying capacity of a bridge, restrictive load posting must be considered. The Committee is responsible for providing recommendations to the Chief Engineer for the load posting or closing of state maintained bridges, except for emergency and operational situations.

The Bridge Posting Committee is appointed by the Chief Engineer, and is currently comprised of the following members:

- Bridge Maintenance Engineer (Chair)
- Bridge Program Manager (Vice Chair)
- Bridge Management Engineer (Secretary)
- Assistant Bridge Maintenance Engineer
- Assistant Bridge Program Manager
- State Traffic Engineer or Designee
- Structural Engineer – Bridge Maintenance or Bridge Program (Stenographer)
The Committee shall evaluate bridges for posting or closing using engineering data and judgment. The level of analysis, testing, field verification and inspection, and recommendations for structural retrofit to eliminate or increase weight restrictions would be commensurate with the economic impact resulting from the posting or closure. Recommendations for appropriate action will be made to the Chief Engineer.

Factors and data to be considered include:
- Recent & Historical Inspection Reports
- Presence of fracture critical members
- Structural redundancy and alternate load paths
- Presence of fatigue prone details
- Volume of heavy truck traffic
- Type and nature of truck traffic
- Condition of the main structural components
- Structure type and materials
- Previous structural performance
- Highway Corridor Priority
- Detour length
- Economic impacts

Signing: Signing will comply with the latest Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. In general, posting will be with pictorial signs depicting the legal truck configurations with the maximum gross vehicle weight in tons for each configuration. If the gross vehicle weight limit is 25 tons or less, then signing will simply consist of “Weight Limit X Tons”. Postings for “One Truck at a Time” or a spacing requirement will be signed as such.

**Posting Procedure for State Maintained Bridges**

For non-emergent postings, the following process is used.

1) Load Ratings and other pertinent data is forwarded to a member of the Bridge Posting Committee. The bridge will be placed on the agenda for the next regularly scheduled Committee meeting.

2) The Committee will review all existing data for candidates that may be potentially posted below their existing level. The Committee will then evaluate the need for any additional information that will lead to a justifiable recommendation. Additional information may include advanced material testing, load tests, advanced analysis methods, detailed traffic studies, existing bridge use, and/or economic impact studies. The results of the discussions will be documented by the Stenographer on the Load Rating Page of the InspectTech® database as shown in Appendix E.

3) The Committee will request an informal Public Impact Analysis and planning level estimate(s) of strengthening options with their anticipated load limits and estimated service life. This step is not required if the likely restriction is “One Truck at a Time” or a spacing requirement.
4) The Committee reviews the results of any refined analysis or testing, the informal Public Impact Analysis, and strengthening options and drafts a posting recommendation.

5) Based on the information provided in Steps 2 and 3 above, the Committee may then request a formal Public Impact Analysis, to include contacting the municipality and businesses that use the bridge. This step may also include a public meeting. The detailed process for developing the formal Public Impact Analysis is attached as Appendix A. The Chief Engineer must approve the request for a formal Impact Analysis before public contact is initiated.

6) The Committee submits posting and closing recommendations, justifications and logic for such recommendations, and potential impacts to the Chief Engineer for approval. The posting recommendation document is sealed by the Bridge Maintenance Engineer or the Assistant Bridge Maintenance Engineer in his absence.

7) If the Chief Engineer approves the posting, it is forwarded to the State Traffic Engineer for implementation and Executive Staff is notified of the pending action. The approved document is then filed in TEDOC following the profile shown in Appendix F.

8) The State Traffic Engineer will immediately notify the municipal officials and county commissions via certified mail and also make personal contact if this has not already been done. The State Traffic Engineer then prepares an alternate route plan, prepare appropriate signing, and prepare the item for the Commissioner’s Record. The State Traffic Engineer implements the authorized posting within one week after municipal and county notifications, unless the Committee advises that more urgency is needed.

**Municipally Maintained Bridges**

For municipally maintained bridges, the Committee shall follow the same technical direction similar to State owned bridges. The Assistant Bridge Maintenance Engineer will contact the municipality of the pending recommendation and send a follow-up certified letter. The letter will inform the municipality of the posting/closure recommendation and that it must be completed within a certain timeframe, generally 30 days, or MaineDOT will take action to preserve public safety. The letter will also state that MaineDOT will provide the signs and guidance for the initial posting and that the municipalities are responsible for sign maintenance. If the municipalities fail to maintain the signs the Regions will restore the signs at the municipality’s expense. A copy of the letter will be sent to the Region Manager, Region Engineer, Superintendent of Operations and the Region Traffic Engineer.

At or around the date contained within the letter, the Region will contact the municipality for an update. If the Municipality has acted, the Regions will verify and notify the Assistant Bridge Maintenance Engineer. If the municipality has not acted, they will be informed by the Region that MaineDOT will undertake the restriction at the municipality’s expense and will be billed. The Regions will take posting/closure action as soon as practical and notify the Assistant Bridge
Maintenance Engineer when complete. The Regions will invoice the municipality for costs incurred.

**Emergency Situations**

Where an emergency situation warrants immediate action to preserve public safety, a Regional Bridge Transportation Operations Manager, a MaineDOT Bridge Inspector, or any Professional Engineer of the Department is authorized to take immediate action to restrict traffic from either a state maintained or municipally maintained bridge. In an urgent situation where it is imprudent to wait a week before posting implementation, the municipality, county and the Chief Engineer of MaineDOT will be notified immediately by the responsible manager or engineer who initiated the action. By statute, a municipality may close a state maintained bridge in cases of emergency.

Postings of an emergency nature do not require any initial documentation. These will typically be due to advanced, accelerated deterioration or a partial failure that is newly discovered. The recommended posting load will likely be a qualitative limit based on engineering judgment.

**Operational Situations**

Where an operational situation due to a maintenance or construction activity on a state maintained bridge warrants restriction of traffic, the Bridge Maintenance Engineer or Bridge Program Manager are authorized to take the necessary traffic restriction actions.

**Options for Load Rating Refinements**

Resource constraints for bridges are not just limited to funding for maintenance, rehabilitation and replacement. The engineering resources needed to refine every load rating for every bridge that might require load posting would be enormous, so a system of triage is utilized to apply engineering (and its related costs) to those bridges where traffic restriction would be most detrimental to the travelers, businesses, school buses, public safety vehicles, and commercial truck traffic. At the Committee’s direction, load ratings shall be refined based on one or more of the following options.

- **Refined Analysis:** Initial LRFR Ratings based on conventional analysis may yield ratings below 1.0, but the AASHTO MBE allows a refined analysis to revise the initial ratings. Refined analysis options are selected by the Committee on a per bridge basis, and may include accounting for:
  1) Unintended composite action at 75% for Live Load after checking bond strength,
  2) Full plastic moment capacity for steel members with sufficient lateral restraint,
  3) Deck reinforcing steel in negative moment areas of continuous steel bridges,
  4) Rivet capacity based on testing results,
  5) Load test results for similar structures,
  6) Analysis with SlabRate for concrete slabs,
7) Using a Condition Factor of 1.0 for CIP concrete slabs with no rust staining and for bridges without appreciable section loss or anticipated rapid deterioration,
8) Accounting for bent up longitudinal bars at the ends of T-beam bridges,
9) Advanced structural modeling such as 3D finite element analysis – including concrete slabs with minimal reinforcement,
10) Ignoring local section loss when evaluating lateral torsional buckling,
11) Using judgment to evaluate negative moments at the upper corners of concrete rigid frames,
12) Use of modified compression theory for shear strengths in concrete,
13) Accounting for curb and barrier as edge beams, and
14) Use of Park/Stallings equations (moment gradient modifier for continuously braced non-uniform beams).

The Committee may direct that Load Ratings account for other refinements applicable to a specific bridge, based on on-going research and pending AASHTO MBE revisions. When requested, the Engineer performing the load rating shall account for selected refined analysis options and revise the load ratings, but the Committee is responsible for how they may affect a posting decision.

In addition to the above, the Committee may utilize one or more of the following options as part of their recommendation.

- Materials Testing: Actual steel coupon tests, rebar tests, or concrete compressive tests may be performed and if the actual strengths are above those assumed in the load rating, the LRFR Rating may be adjusted. As a rule, at least 4 samples must be tested.

- Load Testing: A bridge may be diagnostic or proof load tested in accordance with the MBE and the rating revised based on the results. MaineDOT has been load testing a number of bridges of similar materials and span length with the intention of extrapolating the results for similar bridges without having to load test everyone.

- Increased Inspection: The Committee may recommend an increased inspection frequency to increase its comfort level with a bridge.

- Lane Restriction: For bridges with low ratings under two-way traffic, the Committee may recommend converting the bridge to one lane up the middle using barrier or other channelization. Exterior stringers with excessive deterioration or those with less strength as part of the original design would be possible choices.

- Increased Enforcement: Structural monitoring, WIM, camera, and VMS technologies may be used to ensure compliance with legal weights or posting limits.
• Low Impact Postings: Maine has typically used a single GVVW tonnage to limit bridge loads, but there are other alternatives. Depending on the structure type and span, a single tonnage limit may restrict some truck configurations that are actually acceptable. One Truck at a Time, a Spacing Requirement, or the MUTCD Compliant Multi-Truck Posting Sign are all possible solutions that could minimize public impact while controlling bridge stress.
Appendix A
Posting Task List

The Bridge Posting Committee meets to discuss bridge issues that come up due to load rating calculations or bridge inspection findings. The Committee determines whether the bridge is to be posted or whether more information is needed to decide whether or not to post a bridge. Below is a chart showing the individual tasks associated with a posting/closure. Not all tasks will occur on every posting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality:</th>
<th>Bridge #:</th>
<th>Road Name:</th>
<th>Expectations of State Traffic Engineer/Region Manager or Designee</th>
<th>Completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>State Traffic Engineer and Region Manager will assign the tasks for the work below.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Perform phase 1 traffic evaluation – 5 hour counts, differentiating vehicle types.</td>
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<td>Phase 2. Meet with municipal staff – manager/selectmen, engineer/public works director/road commissioner and local public safety – should discuss why bridge is being closed; the AADT on the bridge; the percentage of trucks; what the posting might mean for other roadways in terms of volumes; and when the bridge might be replaced (if it is going to be replaced). Please include the following:</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>1) Determine routes vehicles would use (state or state aid highway, and also using local roads).</td>
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<td>2) Discuss potential impacts to town roads.</td>
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<td>3) Get a list of impacted businesses and make contact with them telling them of the potential for posting.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4) Create flyer showing posting and potential alternate routes.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5) Determine signing array, dig safe and order signs.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6) Determine who has enforcement duties and discuss the posting/closure and the need for some targeted enforcement over the first few weeks and sporadically beyond that.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Contact Maine Motor Transport to inform industry of posting. (Region Traffic Engineer or designee)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Develop press release. (Region Traffic Engineer)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Decide if Changeable Message Signs are needed. (Region Traffic Engineer)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Await notice to post bridge. (all)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bridge posted with orange flags on signs. (Region Traffic Engineer or designee)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Send out press release and get flyers to local businesses and town office. (State Traffic Engineer or Region Traffic Engineer)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Contact the Assistant Bridge Maintenance Engineer to update InspectTech® for posting. (Region Traffic Engineer)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
- When you are given notice that a bridge is to be posted "One Truck at a Time", as a courtesy, you also need to make contact with the municipality to ensure they know what and why the posting is happening.
Appendix B

Typical Signs Used for Bridge Postings

Typical sign package for a bridge posting. Actual posting signs at bridges to be 3 feet by 4 feet, warning signs minimum of 3 x 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Posting Type</th>
<th>Posting signs used when there is a specific truck type that is generating the posting</th>
<th>Posting Sign used when there is a one truck at a time posting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>Signs are 3 ft x 4 ft</td>
<td>Signs are 3 ft x 4 ft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sign</td>
<td>POSTED BRIDGE 25 TON 4 AXLE VEHICLES</td>
<td>ONE TRUCK AT A TIME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BRIDGE POSTED ON ROUTE 181 25 TONS FOR 4 AXLE VEHICLES 11 MI. AHEAD</td>
<td>WATCH FOR STOPPED TRAFFIC</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C
FHWA Vehicle Classifications

Bridges that move forward to phase 1 will need a 5 hour traffic count breaking down the types of vehicles into 1 of the 14 FHWA categories shown below. Typically, one would set up a chart numbered 1 to 14 and place tick marks next to the vehicle type for each vehicle going across the bridge. Please pay strict attention to whether to large vehicles can cross at the same time and also keep track of pedestrians, bicyclists and other vehicle types not shown on the chart below. Are there certain businesses that use this bridge extensively, wood haulers, fuel trucks, trash haulers, etc is it on a busy school bus route? Not only is there interest in the raw data, but also if any patterns of types of entities using the bridge. The information will be used to help make a determination on the impact of the pending bridge posting/closure. Please be as accurate as possible with your data collection.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 axles, 2 or 3 tires</td>
<td>2 axles, can have 1- or 2-axle trailers</td>
<td>2 axles, 4-tire single units</td>
<td>2 or 3 axles, full length</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Single Unit 2-Axle Trucks</td>
<td>2 axles, 8 tires (plus rear tires), single unit</td>
<td>3 axles, single unit</td>
<td>4 or more axles, single unit</td>
<td>3 or 4 axles, single trailer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Single Unit 3-Axle Trucks</td>
<td>3 axles, single unit</td>
<td>4 or more axles, single unit</td>
<td>4 or more axles, single unit</td>
<td>3 or 4 axles, single trailer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Single Unit 4 or More Axle Trucks</td>
<td>4 or more axles, single unit</td>
<td>4 or more axles, single unit</td>
<td>4 or more axles, single unit</td>
<td>4 or more axles, single unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Single Trailer 3- or 4-Axle Trucks</td>
<td>3 or 4 axles, single trailer</td>
<td>6 or more axles, single trailer</td>
<td>6 or more axles, single trailer</td>
<td>6 or more axles, single trailer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Single Trailer 5-Axle Trucks</td>
<td>5 axles, single trailer</td>
<td>6 or more axles, single trailer</td>
<td>6 or more axles, single trailer</td>
<td>6 or more axles, single trailer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Single Trailer 6 or More Axle Trucks</td>
<td>6 or more axles, single trailer</td>
<td>6 or more axles, single trailer</td>
<td>6 or more axles, single trailer</td>
<td>6 or more axles, single trailer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Multi-Trailer 5 or Less-Axle Trucks</td>
<td>5 or less axles, multiple trailers</td>
<td>6 axles, multiple trailers</td>
<td>6 axles, multiple trailers</td>
<td>6 axles, multiple trailers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Multi-Trailer 6-Axle Trucks</td>
<td>6 axles, multiple trailers</td>
<td>6 axles, multiple trailers</td>
<td>6 axles, multiple trailers</td>
<td>6 axles, multiple trailers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Multi-Trailer 7 or More-Axle Trucks</td>
<td>7 or more axles, multiple trailers</td>
<td>7 or more axles, multiple trailers</td>
<td>7 or more axles, multiple trailers</td>
<td>7 or more axles, multiple trailers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The granite slab bridge on Water Street in Hartland is being posted with a maximum weight limit of 3 tons. All vehicles heavier than the posted limit that need to get from one end of Water Street to the other should use nearby North Street or Main Street as an alternative route. At this weight limit, vehicles such as school buses, fire trucks, oil delivery trucks and dump trucks will not be able to use this bridge. Cars and Light Duty pickup trucks will still be able to use this bridge.

MaineDOT regrets this inconvenience and encourages motorists to drive safely. Thank you.
### Load Rating Page from InspectTech®

**Posting Status**
- Posted for weight: Yes
- Posted weight in tons: 22
- Posted for one truck at a time: 1
- Posted for 4 axle: 1
- Date posted: 05/30/2018

**Routine Permit Loads**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Configuration</th>
<th>Axles</th>
<th>Weight (Tons)</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Tons</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tractor w/semi trailer</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crane</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No Go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crane with dolly</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No Go</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Posting Committee**

- TEDOC Reference: 1372741
- Posting Committee Review: 
- Ok for legal loads: 
- Deferred for load testing: 

**Comments/Status:**
- LURB: RF = 0.59; RT = 21 tons. Posting Load = 15.8 tons. Precast beams. Recommendation: Post at 22 tons.
- 4/30/14: Ben has sent bad bridge letter to town. Has not heard back.
- 2/10/2015: Ben has talked with the town. No concern. Road is not plowed in the winter. Will start work in spring.
- 4/1/2015: Ben has inspector going out to check if signs are up.
- 5/30/2018: Signs are up as posted.

**Action:**
- 4/5/2017: Verify signs are up.
- 5/30/2018: Can come off list.
Appendix F
TEDOC Profile for Posting Documentation

**Bridge Re-opening Report**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Entry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DocName**</td>
<td>Bridge Posting 2018 (current year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DocType**</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUC**</td>
<td>72600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name(s)</td>
<td>Pingree (bridge name)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vendor ID</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridge/Arp</td>
<td>2688</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Route</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town/City</td>
<td>Parkman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fields with 2 asterisks are required.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Required Fields**

- DocName** Bridge Posting 2018 (current year)
- DocType** 27
- OUC** 72600
- Application**

**Non-Required Fields**

- DocDate Date on Document
- Name(s) Name of bridge
- Vendor Code
- Voucher #
- Bridge/Arp Bridge #
- Permit/Lic #
- Route
- Contract #
- W/Ns
- Reference ID
- Town/Cty Town(s) the bridge is located in

**Annotate Security**

- Remove
- Add

**NOTES:**
Subject: **ACTION**: Timeframe for Installing Load Posting Signs at Bridges

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

To: Division Administrators
Federal Lands Highway Division Directors

Date: April 17, 2019

In Reply Refer To: HIBS-30

The purpose of this memo is to clarify the expectations of installing load posting signs at bridges. The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) (P.L. 112-141), was signed into law on July 6, 2012. As part of this enactment, Section 1111 amended Section 144 of Title 23 United States Code (U.S.C.) and directed the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to design the National Bridge and Tunnel Inspection Standards to ensure uniformity of the inspections and evaluations between the two programs (23 U.S.C. 144(h)(1)(B)).

The National Bridge Inspection Standards (NBIS) can be found in Title 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 650 Subpart C and the National Tunnel Inspection Standards (NTIS) can be found in Title 23 CFR 650 Subpart E.

The NBIS does not identify timeframes for load posting bridges and the NTIS requires load posting of tunnels to be made as soon as possible but no later than 30 days after a load rating determines a need for such posting (23 CFR 650.513(g)). Load posting informs the travelling public the maximum load that bridges and tunnels can safely carry. Lack of load posting signs is a public safety issue, which some bridge owners consider to be a critical finding requiring immediate follow-up action.

To provide uniformity between the two regulations, the FHWA is clarifying the requirement that bridge load postings are to be made as soon as possible but no later than 30 days after a load rating determines a need for such posting. Since this clarification may require owners to change current practices, the FHWA is implementing this new policy on October 1, 2019. Please share this information with your State, Federal, and tribal partners.

Please direct questions to John Thiel at (202) 366-8795 or e-mail at John.Thiel@dot.gov or to Shay Burrows at (202) 366-4675 or e-mail at Shay.Burrows@dot.gov.

cc: Directors of Field Services
Director of Technical Services
HIBS-30