

NATIONAL BRIDGE INSPECTION STANDARDS (NBIS) UPDATE - CROSS BORDER BRIDGES

Greg Henion, P.E., State Structure and Bridge Engineer

December 4, 2024

National Bridge Inspection Standards (NBIS)

- **The National Bridge Inspection Standards (NBIS) were established in 1971 and established national standards for the safety inspections of highway bridges on public roads throughout the United States**
 - **Periodic and thorough inspections**
 - **Collection of bridge condition data**
- **The standards have been updated several times since, most recently in 2022 (23 CFR 650, Subpart C).**

National Bridge Inspection Standards (NBIS)

Changes to the standards include:

- **Incorporation of FHWA Specifications for the National Bridge Inventory (SNBI), 2022**
- **Updated bridge safety inspector qualifications and certifications**
- **New requirement for joint written agreements delineating inspection and data reporting responsibilities for bridges crossing interstate boundaries (cross border bridges)**
- **Various revisions to inspection definitions, organization responsibilities and procedure requirements**

Specifications for the National Bridge Inventory (SNBI)

- **Changes to the data schema**
 - **Changes to required data fields (both additions and deletions)**
 - **Changes to data format and data set relationships**
 - **Data mapping efforts are underway**
- **Key dates**
 - **January '26: deadline to begin collecting and reporting inspection data in new format**
 - **March '28: deadline to have all data conform with new SNBI requirements**
 - **Protocols for hybrid datasets have been established to manage data through the transition period**

Transition Status (Border Bridge Agreements)

23 CFR § 650.307 Bridge inspection organization responsibilities.

- (a) Each State transportation department must perform, or cause to be performed, the proper inspection and evaluation of all highway bridges that are fully or partially located within the State's boundaries, except for bridges that are owned by Federal agencies or Tribal governments.**

- (d) Where a bridge crosses a border between a State transportation department, Federal agency, or Tribal government jurisdiction, all entities must determine through a joint written agreement the responsibilities of each entity for that bridge under this subpart, including the designated lead State for reporting NBI data**

Transition Status (Border Bridge Agreements)

- **Maryland (seven bridges)**
 - Draft agreement prepared by Maryland, reviewed by OAG and returned with minor comments
 - Maryland has inspection responsibility for all border bridges
 - Maryland will be the designated lead state for NBI reporting
- **District of Columbia (nine bridges)**
 - Draft agreement prepared by D.C., reviewed by OAG and returned with minor comments
 - D.C. has inspection responsibility for all border bridges
 - D.C. will be the designated lead for NBI reporting

Transition Status (Border Bridge Agreements)

- **Tennessee (two bridges)**
 - **Bridges reside in City of Bristol**
 - **Will require an inspection agreement between City of Bristol and Tennessee**
 - **Will require a data sharing and reporting agreement between VDOT and Tennessee**
 - **In discussions regarding two stand alone agreements vs. a three-party agreement**
 - **Lead entity for NBI reporting still TBD**
- **West Virginia (one bridge)**
 - **Written agreement for inspection in place (VDOT responsibility)**
 - **VDOT will be designated lead state for NBI reporting**
 - **VDOT preparing draft agreement for data reporting**

Next Steps

- **Section 33.2-214 of the *Code of Virginia* provides the CTB with the power and duty to enter into all contracts with other states necessary for the proper coordination of the location, construction, maintenance, improvement, and operation of transportation systems, including the systems of state highways with the highways of such other states**
- **In January, the CTB will be requested to delegate to the Commissioner of Highways, the authority to enter into agreements with other states in order to satisfy the federal regulatory requirements of CFR 23 § 650.307(d) relating to cross border bridges**
- **VDOT will finalize written agreements with neighboring states for execution by the Commissioner, if authorized**