



**Dave Heineman**  
Governor

**STATE OF NEBRASKA**

**DEPARTMENT OF ROADS**

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February 20, 2014

Dear Nebraska Bridge Owner:

RE: Bridge Inspection Program  
Memo No. 140131 – General

The Quality Assurance (QA) Evaluation of the Bridge Inspection Program (BIP) has been completed for data entered into PONTIS during the 2012 calendar year. Several operations related to the BIP received a QA evaluation during 2013. These included:

- Qualifications of Personnel
- Inspection Frequency
- Inspection Procedures
- Bridge Load Rating
- Bridge Posting or Closure
- Owner Records
- Scour Assessments

The Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) appreciate your cooperation in meeting the requirements of the National Bridge Inspection Standards (NBIS). The BIP has received a QA Evaluation each year since 2009. Similar to recent years, the result of this year's review showed that while the overall quality of the BIP remains high, there are some areas in need of improvement. Those areas most in need of improvement are listed below.

- **Bridge Owners must maintain and regularly update Plans of Action (POA) Monitoring Logs.** The NDOR provides a standard form to use as a POA monitoring log, form DR385E. The form is included as part of the package of scour critical bridges each owner received from the NDOR. It is also included as an attachment to this memo for your use. Updating the form should be done after each event as described in each structure's POA. As a best practice, a master list of structures requiring a POA monitoring log should be kept in one location in your office for easy access. When an event occurs that meets the trigger set forth in the POA, each structure identified as scour critical should be visited to verify the structure is safe for continued public use. Also, please keep in mind it is the responsibility of each owner to complete a POA for each structure identified by the NDOR as scour critical.
- **Each bridge file should contain the latest inspection information for the structure.** These items include Structure Inventory and Appraisal (SI&A) sheets, maintenance logs, inspection notes, as well as POA and Critical Finding Reports, if applicable. Each bridge file should be a complete record of the bridge and should be stored either electronically or physically with the Bridge Owner. The bridge files should be kept in one location that is accessible by owner staff as needed. The NDOR's ftp site should NOT be considered the primary storage location for bridge information. The ftp site should only be considered a back-up storage location for select records should the official files become lost, damaged,

or otherwise unusable. Several attachments are included with this memo to assist in printing out current information. These include instructions on how to print out SI&A sheets from PONTIS as well as how to print the latest Load Rating Summary Sheet (LRSS) and other information for bridge files from the NDOR ftp site. Please review this documentation and if necessary print out the latest information for each bridge file.

- **Inspectors should verify that each structure is posted at or below the load limits on the LRSS at each inspection.** If the inspector finds structures with load postings greater than what is shown on the LRSS, the Owner shall immediately be notified and the correct posting signs placed at the bridge. If correct posting signs aren't placed in a timely manner, a Critical Finding Report should be issued for the structure.
- **Inspectors must code all applicable items for each structure.** All inspectors are regularly coding National Bridge Inventory (NBI) items. However, all inspectors are not always coding several Nebraska 300 Level items. Coding of Nebraska 300 Level items is used by NDOR to evaluate other important NBI items, such as Item 113, Scour Critical Bridges.
- **Inspectors should review the BIP manual on how to code NDOR Item 311, Bearings.** Nebraska Item 311 should only be coded if bearings are present at the bridge. Steel shims are not considered bearings and should not be coded as such in PONTIS. The BIP Manual has detailed guidance and photos for this item; a copy of which is included with this memo. Please review this information.
- **Owners should ensure that bridges with Item 41 coded as "K – Closed to Traffic" are in fact closed.** Several structures coded "K" during the QA evaluation were found to be open and used by the public. Many times temporary barricades had been placed at the bridge but had been moved to the side. Owners or Inspectors should regularly visit structures that are closed to verify they are not being used. As a best practice, Owners should use a more permanent barricade or road closure that is not easily moved to the side.

The BIP Manual will soon be revised and available on the NDOR website for download by program participants. The manual revisions will include minor content changes to address errors as well as add additional guidance on coding some items. In 2012 the manual was reformatted so users only need to replace pages that have changed from the previous version. A summary of changes will be included in the manual for easy reference.

As part of the QA Evaluation, individual Participant Reports are also being sent to all program participants. These reports are being sent to all Team Leaders that completed inspections in 2012 and those Bridge Owners that were visited by the QA team for an owner records review. Participant Reports, whether they are for Team Leaders or Bridge Owners, are intended to help improve the BIP and are confidential. Individual Participant Reports should NOT be filed in the Bridge Owner's files.

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This memorandum is being sent to all local Bridge Owners and is intended to provide an update on the Nebraska BIP. Electronic copies of this and previous BIP memos, as well as other BIP information, can be found on the NDOR Bridge Division website at [www.transportation.nebraska.gov/design/bridge](http://www.transportation.nebraska.gov/design/bridge).

Sincerely,

Mark Traynowicz, PE  
State Bridge Engineer

Enclosures: Attachment 1 – Form DR385E POA Monitoring Log  
Attachment 2 – How to print SI&A forms from PONTIS  
Attachment 3 – How to print bridge record items from the ftp site  
Attachment 4 – Coding Item 311