



**Dave Heineman**  
Governor

**STATE OF NEBRASKA**

**DEPARTMENT OF ROADS**  
John L. Craig, Director

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March 3, 2008

Dear Bridge Owner:

This letter covers two very important subjects relating to bridges you may own that are fracture critical, or bridges of any design that have accumulated gravel on their decks. Both of these subjects are critical to the load carrying capacity of the bridges and the safety of the motoring public.

I have enclosed the recent Technical Advisory from the Federal Highway Administration regarding the gusset plates that form joints on steel truss bridges. This Technical advisory was issued as a result of the failure of the I-35W Bridge in Minnesota. I have also included Nebraska's Gusset Plate Advisory Plan of Action. This plan of action outlines what the Bridge Office is doing, and requiring of others, to comply with the advisory.

In regard to item 2-b of the plan of action, I have enclosed a list of bridges in your jurisdiction that have accumulated excessive amounts of gravel on their decks.

If you have bridges with corrugated steel decks, these bridges were designed to have gravel on the deck. Any depth of gravel beyond what the bridge was designed for must be removed or the Bridge Office may order the bridge closed until the excess gravel is removed. The action must take place as soon as possible after receiving this letter.

If you have any bridges with up to three inches of gravel on the deck, the bridge deck must be cleared of gravel or the Bridge Office may order the bridge closed until the excess gravel is removed.

In some cases, where the bridge has an extreme amount of gravel (over 3 inches), the bridge must be closed and the gravel removed before reopening the bridge.

Please notify the bridge office by June 15, 2008, of the actions you take for each bridge on these Lists and provide updated information on the gravel removed or remaining on the bridge deck.

If a bridge is a truss and is subjected to added dead loads that cannot be removed, then the gusset plates must be measured for a new load rating and the information submitted to the bridge office by June 15, 2008. If the load can and is removed, then the gusset plates do not have to be measured.

Appropriate forms to report the gusset details are also included in this package. Feel free to copy the sheets as needed.

Contact Steve Andersen at 402-479-4705 if you have any questions. Submit your information to the Bridge Office in care of Steve Andersen.

Sincerely,

Sam Fallaha P.E.  
Assistant Bridge Engineer  
402-479-4389

cc: Lyman Freeman, State Bridge Engineer  
Monty Fredrickson, Deputy Director Engineering  
Jeff Schroeder, Asst. Attorney General  
Greg Kolle, FHWA

enclosures

- Technical Advisory
- Gusset Plate Plan of Action
- Examples of Gusset Plate Forms
- Blank Gusset Plate Forms
- Lists of Bridges with Gravel on the Decks