

The January 25, 2010 Nebraska Bridge Inspection Program Manual includes procedures and policies used in the past, but there are also new policies and procedures. WE encourage you to take the time to read the entire Manual. Today we are pointing you to the top ten items you should review.

1. The Manual is organized in Chapters covering the basic operations of Bridge Inspection Program required by the National Bridge Inspection Standards; each was designed to stand alone, for example Chapter 3 Coding and Chapter 4 Inspection can be taken to the field without the need for the whole Manual. You should, however, read the ***Responsibilities Section from each Chapter***. This will give you the “Reader’s Digest version” of who is doing what to make sure all Nebraska Bridge Owners are compliant with the NBIS. Much of this is not new, but is documented in each chapter for everyone’s benefit.
2. ***The Introduction*** – This not only describes the purpose and recent history of the Manual, it also explains what you, as a program participant, can expect on documents that are basic tools of the Bridge Inspection Program. All documents will be on our websites, including the Manual, reference documents, Supplemental Guidance between Manual revisions, forms, and memos from the Bridge Division Office. There is also a form for providing suggestions and comments and we encourage your input.
3. ***Section 1.6 Quality Control and Assurance, General*** – There can be much confusion between these two very important activities.
 - Basically, you need to remember that Quality Control is the responsibility of the party who is creating a report or doing an inspection and is required on 100% of the reports or data generated. You can think of this in terms of a construction project – the contractor is expected to deliver the specified quality on 100% of whatever they build.
 - Quality Assurance is the activity to make sure the QC is getting done. Continuing the construction project analogy, this is the same activity that the State or you complete in checking that the contractor had delivered the quality required, such as compaction tests.
4. ***Section 1.6.3.4 Operation, Bridge Inspection Program Operations Matrix and the Program reports and Data generated Matrix*** – These two tables are a super-condensation the NBIS requirements and the expected data and reports to be generated by the program participants.
5. ***Section 2.6 Summary of Mandatory Components of Bridge Records*** – The AASHTO Manual for Conditional Evaluation of Bridges (superseded on January 25, 2010 by the Manual for Condition Evaluation of Bridges) had also always outlined expectations for records that Bridge Owner’s should keep as part of their bridge records. This table tells NE Owners what they must have in their files as a minimum. We will be completing QA checks on all Bridge Owners in the state as part of our commitment to compliance with the NBIS. We found in the QA review done in 2008 that generally Owners are keeping good records, but you definitely should have your staff review each of your bridge records to make sure they have all these components.
6. ***Sections 3.12 to 3.19 on the Nebraska Inventory Items*** – There have been some revisions to old items and some new items have been added. If there are new items added between Manual revisions, these will be posted on the Bridge Division Website as Supplemental Manual Guidance.
7. ***Section 4.6 Inspection Frequencies*** – One area that NE has been cited by the FHWA as being non-compliant is timely inspections. All routine inspections are to be done within a 24-month interval of the prior routine inspection. NDOR is requiring that bridges with certain risk factors have a special inspection between the biennial routine inspections as these are given in this section.

8. **Section 4.16 Repair and Maintenance Reporting** – NDOR uses their own forms to identify needed repairs and maintenance. If your county has a system in place, such as a work order system for repairs or maintenance, that's great! Make sure you get copies of these in each bridge record. If you don't have your own system, we encourage you to adopt the use of these forms, so that you can keep good records on each of our bridges.
9. **Section 5.6 Bridge Load Posting** – Probably the most serious finding from the QA review done in 2008 was bridges that should have been closed or load posted but were not. All NE bridge Owners must do everything they can to protect the public's safety. There is no excuse for a tardy action when your load rating engineer, who must be a NE PE, has delivered notice that a bridge should be closed or posted.
10. **Chapter 6.7 Bridge Scour Plan of Action** – As you know, the FHWA takes scour monitoring very seriously, and rightfully so since this is the most likely cause of failure for the vast majority of bridges on the public roadway system. If you have bridges with Plans of Action, you must also maintain a log of action required and maintenance activities that are specified in the POA.

Please don't forget to give us your feedback on the Manual.