



U.S. Department  
of Transportation

Federal Highway  
Administration

# Memorandum

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

Date: April 17, 2019

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

In Reply Refer To: HIBS-30

To: Division Administrators  
Federal Lands Highway Division Directors

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 not 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](mailto:John.Thiel@dot.gov) or to Shay Burrows at (202) 366-4675 or e-mail at [Shay.Burrows@dot.gov](mailto:Shay.Burrows@dot.gov).

cc:

Directors of Field Services  
Director of Technical Services  
HIBS-30