**From:** Shemaka, Ann <FHWA>
**To:** "Alexander C. Heckman";
**Subject:** RE: Bridge Inventory Data
**Date:** Tuesday, January 29, 2008 8:19:09 AM

---

Ann Shemaka
Federal Highway Administration
1200 New Jersey Ave SE
HIBT-30, E75-127
Washington, DC 20590
202-366-1575 (voice)
-----Original Message-----
From: Alexander C. Heckman [mailto:aheckman@capital.edu]
Sent: Monday, January 28, 2008 12:35 PM
To: Shemaka, Ann <FHWA>
Cc: aheckman@columbus.rr.com
Subject: RE: Bridge Inventory Data

Ann

Thank you for the timely response. I am happy to provide the questions I am able to formulate in advance (I was thinking that some questions or issues might arise through dialogue).

Please feel free to respond in whatever manner is most convenient for you. I greatly appreciate your time.

The questions are:

1. Are states required to inspect all their bridges every year? If not, how often are they required to inspect each bridge? If not inspecting all bridges every year, how do states determine which bridges to inspect each year (is it uniform or are there several common different inspection protocols)?

The National Bridge Inspection Standards can be found at: http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/legsregs/directives/cfr23toc.htm
You are looking for 23 CFR 650C. This is the law that drives the program.

2. Do states seem to consistently apply the National Bridge inspection standards? Are there particular areas where there are most commonly significant inconsistencies? Are there particular classifications that

are most comparable or most consistently reported (e.g., is functionally obsolete a more subjective classification than structurally deficient, so that the latter classification is more consistent across states)?

The inspection standards insure consistency among the states. Training, qualifications, etc are standardized to insure the inspectors are trained the same to rate the bridges the same. Func Obs bridges are calculated in accordance with the tables in the coding guide.

3. Are all states generally consistent in meeting the inspection, reporting, and other important requirements for the National Bridge Inventory? What are the significant differences that could impact the comparability of the data?

States meet the requirements of the NBIS. There is division office oversight to insure inspection compliance and compliance with other aspects of the law.

4. What activities, if any, does USDOT engage in to verify or ensure states are doing the required inspections and have applied the standards properly?

Annual division office reviews as well as ongoing oversight throughout the year.

5. Is there any other information that would be helpful or important for me to know to understand how comparable the bridge inventory classification data and inspection protocols are in each state? Particularly what are key differences that I should be aware of? (If there is anything I should have asked about that I did not, please let me know.)

The only thing I can think of is States do perform their inspections sometimes using contractors and sometimes their own people and sometimes it is delegated to the owner (county, city etc). The inspection standards apply to all of the people doing these inspections as far as qualifications and training. We do not necessarily have info on which state does contract work vs using their own.

Thank you for your time and assistance.

Alex Heckman

Alexander C. Heckman, M.P.A.
Department of Political Science
Capital University
1 College and Main
Columbus OH, 43209

Phone: 614.327.5619
Fax: 614.236.6948

-----Original Message-----
From: Ann.Shemaka@dot.gov [mailto:Ann.Shemaka@dot.gov]
Sent: Monday, January 28, 2008 7:43 AM
To: aheckman@columbus.rr.com
Subject: RE: Bridge Inventory Data

Can you pose your questions in an e-mail?

I did get your phone messages, however, things are very busy

Ann Shemaka
Federal Highway Administration
1200 New Jersey Ave SE
HIBT-30, E75-127
Washington, DC 20590
202-366-1575 (voice)
-----Original Message-----
From: Alex Heckman [mailto:aheckman@columbus.rr.com]
Sent: Saturday, January 26, 2008 7:58 PM
To: Shemaka, Ann <FHWA>
Subject: Bridge Inventory Data

Hello Ms. Shemaka

This email is a follow-up to a phone message I left for you last week.

I am a graduate student using some of the bridge inventory data in my dissertation and I wanted to ask you a few questions about the quality and
comparability of the state bridge data.

Would you please call me at 614.327.5619 to discuss the data.

Thank you for your time and assistance.

Alex Heckman