

FHWA's 2016 23 Metric Review of IDOT's procedures for Metric 21, Critical Findings, found that some critical findings were not addressed immediately. This subscription service announcement is being sent to remind all bridge inspection personnel that properly identifying a Potential Critical Finding is of the utmost importance in ensuring the safety of the traveling public.

The *2015 Structural Services Manual* clarifies the procedures to be taken with reporting a Potential Critical Finding in Section 3.3.12.

Any of the following is considered a Potential Critical Finding:

- Lowering the condition rating for Deck, Superstructure, Substructure or Culvert (ISIS Items 58, 59, 60 and 62 respectively) to a "2" (critical condition) or less; or
- Lowering the condition rating for Channel & Channel Protection Condition (ISIS Item 61) to a "2" (Critical condition) or less; or
- Lowering the code for Scour Critical Evaluation (ISIS Item 113) to a "2" or less. See Section 3.7 of the *Structural Services Manual* for assessing Scour Critical Evaluation; or
- Lowering the Fracture Critical condition rating (ISIS Item 93A1) to a "2" (Critical condition) or less; or
- Any other situation that the inspector considers to be a threat to the safety of the traveling public.

When a Potential Critical Finding is identified, the safety of the traveling public must be the initial focus. The Team Leader must take all necessary steps to ensure the structure is secured. If the Team Leader determines that the identified defect may seriously reduce a structure's load carrying capacity, the Team Leader should isolate the defect from traffic by closing lanes. If the defect is extensive enough that lane closures may be inadequate, the structure should immediately be closed to traffic. The decision to limit traffic or close a structure must be based on an inspector's experience and the conditions present. A conservative decision to limit traffic or close the structure must be made until further analysis can be performed.

Once the structure has been secured, the Team Leader shall notify the Agency Program Manager. The Agency Program Manager shall immediately email photographs and a description of the critical element for local agency

bridges to the [Local Bridge Unit](#); or for state structures the [Bridge Management Unit](#). The final decision of whether a Potential Critical Finding will be declared a *Critical Finding* will be determined by the Bureau of Bridges and Structures. The Agency Program Manager will be directed to complete the [Critical Finding Form CF-1](#). The Bureau of Bridges and Structures will then notify FHWA of the Critical Finding.

Reporting a Potential Critical Finding cannot be delayed. The normal inspection report submittal process shall not be used! All inspection personnel are vital to protecting the traveling public.