



# Illinois Department of Transportation

2300 South Dirksen Parkway / Springfield, Illinois / 62764

January 7, 2021

## **CIRCULAR LETTER 2021-02**

### **IDOT POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR REVOCATION AND RE-INSTatement OF IL NBIS PM and TL CERTIFICATION**

COUNTY ENGINEERS / SUPERINTENDENTS OF HIGHWAYS  
MUNICIPAL ENGINEERS / DIRECTORS OF PUBLIC WORKS / MAYORS  
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS – DIRECTORS  
TOWNSHIP HIGHWAY COMMISSIONERS  
CONSULTING ENGINEERS

This Circular Letter is to provide information to Local Public Agencies about the policy and procedure the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) developed to revoke and/or reinstate Illinois National Bridge Inspection Standards (NBIS) Program Manager (PM) and Team Leader (TL) Certification.

#### **Issue: Delinquent Inspections of Illinois Bridges**

##### **History/Purpose**

In 2011, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) implemented a data-driven, risk-based approach to oversight of the National Bridge Inspection Program (NBIP) and monitoring State compliance with the NBIS.

Under this approach, the FHWA assesses 23 compliance metrics, each having direct reference to the NBIS. Metrics 6-11 assess Inspection Delinquencies of Routine Low Risk; Routine High Risk; Underwater Low Risk; Underwater High Risk; Fracture Critical Member; and Reduced Intervals/Damage/In-Depth/Special. The FHWA measures a State's compliance for each metric and assigns it to one of three performance categories: Compliant, Substantially Compliant, and Non-Compliant.

The FHWA has determined IDOT to be Substantially Compliant or Non-Compliant for: NBIP Metrics 6 and 7 in 2011 and 2013-2020 and NBIP Metric 10 in 2011; 2013-2015; and 2017-2019.

- In order to receive a Substantially Compliant determination for NBIP Metric 6:
  - $\geq 90\%$  of the inspections were performed within the interval plus 30 days and
  - 100% of the inspections were performed within the interval plus 120 days

- In order to receive a Non-Compliant determination for NBIP Metric 6:
  - < 90% of the inspections were performed within the interval plus 30 days and/or
  - < 100% of the inspections were performed within the interval plus 120 days
- In order to receive a Substantially Compliant determination for NBIP Metrics 7 and 10:
  - ≥ 95% of the inspections were performed within the interval plus 30 days and
  - 100% of the inspections were performed within the interval plus 120 days
- In order to receive a Non-Compliance determination for NBIP Metrics 7 and 10:
  - < 95% of the inspections were performed within the interval plus 30 days and/or
  - < 100% of the inspections were performed within the interval plus 120 days

Delinquencies with documented notice to the Statewide NBIS Program Manager for Illinois and approval from the FHWA are considered legitimate and do not negatively affect the assessment.

After the FHWA determined IDOT was Substantially Compliant for NBIP Metric 7 and Non-Compliant for NBIP Metrics 6 and 10 in 2019, the FHWA-approved Improvement Plan and Plans of Corrective Action developed by the IDOT Bureau of Bridges and Structures (BB&S) included an Action Item to develop official policy and procedure for the Bridge Management & Inspection (BM&I) Unit to:

- 1) Revoke IL NBIS PM or TL Certification due to conduct and/or actions deemed detrimental to the Illinois Bridge Inspection Program;
- 2) Notification of the actions taken by the BM&I Unit to the affected party and applicable governing body (e.g., County Board, City Board, consulting firm executive staff, etc.); and
- 3) Re-instatement of revoked IL NBIS PM or TL Certification, which is dependent on the conduct and/or action(s) leading to revocation.

### **Policy and Procedure for Revocation and Re-instatement of IL NBIS PM and TL Certification**

Per the NBIS, IDOT is responsible for all bridges > 20.0 feet on all public roads in Illinois regardless of the entity having maintenance responsibility of the bridge. The Statewide NBIS PM for Illinois is responsible for bridge inspection policies/procedures and to ensure the quality of the NBIP in Illinois. The NBIS permits the Statewide NBIS PM for Illinois to delegate any of the NBIS responsibilities to a Certified IL NBIS PM. The delegation of NBIS responsibilities does not relieve IDOT or the Statewide NBIS PM for Illinois of their previously stated responsibilities. The Statewide NBIS PM for Illinois has the authority to revoke any IL NBIS PM or TL Certification.

The qualifications for Certification as an IL NBIS PM and TL are stated in the *IDOT Structural Services Manual* Sections 3.9.2.3 and 3.9.2.4, respectively.

Actions which may result in the revocation of the individual's(s) Certification include, but are not limited to:

- Falsifying inspection records. Which includes, but is not limited to, hard copy of inspection forms; entries into the Inspection Date Notification Tracking System (IDN); and/or entries into the Bridge Inspection System (BIS).
- IL NBIS TL Application (IDOT Form BBS 2620) submitted for personnel clearly not meeting the requirements of the IDOT Structural Services Manual and the NBIS.
- Interfering with BM&I Unit personnel and/or agents of the Department while coordinating and inspecting a bridge or bridges having excessive delinquencies.
- Habitual delinquencies > 30 days but < 120 days without prior notification to the BM&I Unit or for non-legitimate reasons.
- Habitual delinquencies > 120 days without prior notification to the BM&I Unit or for non-legitimate reasons.
- Lack of cooperation with BM&I Unit personnel; District Bureau of Local Roads & Streets (BLRS) personnel; other IDOT personnel; or agents of the Department.
- Non-responsiveness to BM&I Unit personnel; District BLRS personnel; other IDOT personnel; or agents of the Department. IDOT does not expect immediate response to each inquiry, but many times the BM&I Unit is attempting to resolve safety related deficiencies noted by the Department or the FHWA as part of their Annual NBIP Metrics Assessment. In some cases, the BM&I Unit is forced to repeatedly contact individuals to simply initiate resolution. These deficiencies are higher priority and should be responded to in a timely fashion. Examples of safety related deficiencies include, but are not limited to:
  - Excessive delinquencies without proper notification or documentation submitted to the BM&I Unit;
  - Corrections to signage noted during the Annual IDOT Load Posting & Closure Review;
  - Installation of Allowable Weight Limit signs for new and revised restrictions less than legal loads only; and/or
  - Implementation of temporary or permanent bridge closure when mandated by the Department.
- Poor-quality bridge inspections.
- Failure to perform IL NBIS PM or TL responsibilities and duties as specified in the NBIS and the IDOT Structural Services Manual Section 3.
- Revocation of PM and/or TL status in another state if it is shown the revocation was warranted.

In most cases, prior to a Certification being revoked, the following procedure will be employed:

- **BM&I Unit will contact the individual(s) via email:**
  - Detailing exactly what inappropriate action(s) by the individual(s) has (have) been identified and needs to be addressed.
  - Request an accounting from the individual(s) detailing why the inappropriate action(s) was (were) taken instead of adhering to the NBIS and IDOT Bridge Inspection Policy.
  - Request what remediation steps will be taken by the individual(s) to ensure compliance with the NBIS and IDOT Bridge Inspection Policy going forward.
  - Request when the remediation steps will be implemented.
  - Remind the individual if clarification(s)/interpretation(s) of the NBIS and/or IDOT Bridge Inspection Policy requirements are necessary, to contact the BM&I Unit for assistance.
- **No Action Taken Against IL NBIS PM or TL Certification:**
  - If the individual(s) provides a concise, complete response to the BM&I Unit inquiry. However, the individual(s) will be closely monitored to ensure the remediation steps are implemented.
  - If the individual(s) provides an incomplete and/or insufficient response to the BM&I Unit inquiry, the BM&I Unit will respond back stating as such and requesting additional information.
- **Revoke IL NBIS PM or TL Certification:**
  - If the individual(s) does not respond within ten (10) business days to the BM&I Unit inquiry.
  - If the individual(s) has been notified and provides subsequent responses that continues to be incomplete and/or insufficient such that a resolution is not being achieved.
  - If the individual(s) has failed to implement the remediation steps previously noted and continues with the inappropriate action(s).
- **Notification of Revoked IL NBIS PM or TL Certification:**
  - If the individual's IL NBIS PM or TL Certification has been revoked, the BM&I Unit will notify via email and electronic IDOT Letter detailing the above procedure, to the following parties simultaneously:
    - Individual(s) having IL NBIS PM or TL Certification Revoked;
    - Applicable Governing Body and/or Consultant Firm Executive Staff;  
and
    - Owner of bridge and/or agency with maintenance responsibility of the bridge.

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- Re-instatement Review of Revoked IL NBIS PM or TL Certification:
  - Re-instatement will not be considered for the most egregious inappropriate actions.
  - Review will only be undertaken at the request of the individual(s) with the revoked IL NBIS PM or TL Certification.
  - Must include the individual's acknowledgement of inappropriate action(s) identified by the BM&I Unit.
  - Must include remediation steps that will (have) be (been) taken by the individual(s) to ensure compliance with the NBIS and IDOT Bridge Inspection Policy going forward.
  - Consideration for review is at the discretion of the Statewide NBIS PM for Illinois and the FHWA Illinois Division Bridge Engineer, and is based on the individual's inappropriate action(s) and/or other circumstances.

Please direct any questions regarding this policy to Mr. William Beisner, Bridge Management and Inspection Unit Chief, at [DOT.BBS.BridgeMgmt@illinois.gov](mailto:DOT.BBS.BridgeMgmt@illinois.gov).

Sincerely,



George A. Tapas, P.E., S.E.  
Engineer of Local Roads and Streets



D. Carl Puzey, P.E., S.E.  
Engineer of Bridges and Structures

RJP/

cc: Dan Brydl, FHWA - Illinois Division  
Brian Otten, Illinois Association of County Engineers  
Brad Cole, Illinois Municipal League  
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