

# Policy on Certification of Bridge Inspectors in Alabama

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## Change History

- September 8, 2006 Updated “Policy on Certification of Bridge Inspectors in Alabama”. Changed experience credit for four-year degree from two years to three years to agree with NBIS. Added one year experience credit for associate’s degree to agree with NBIS. Clarified procedure under “Returning to ‘Active’ Status from ‘Suspended’ Status” to incorporate the Bridge Inspection Refresher Courses.
- January 26, 2018 Updated “Policy on Certification of Bridge Inspectors in Alabama”. Added requirement of CBI applicants to successfully complete an ALDOT BrM / Element Inspection Training Course. Added the option for professional engineers to successfully complete NHI Course 130056 “Safety Inspection of In-Service Bridges for Professional Engineers” to satisfy the requirement for successfully completing the national bridge inspection school sponsored by the National Highway Institute (NHI). Updated terms and definitions.

## 1. Definitions

The following terms are commonly used in this document.

BrM	AASHTOWare Bridge Management. Software used by Alabama to manage a centralized database of all bridges in the State meeting the criteria of the National Bridge Inspection Standards (NBIS).
Agency	As used in this document, a public organization such as a state, county, or municipality that owns at least one structure that meets the definition of a bridge as specified by the NBIS.
Owner	An agency, company, private organization, or individual who owns at least one structure that meets the definition of a bridge as specified by the NBIS.

Certified Bridge Inspector (CBI)	A person who has met the requirements outlined by this document and is formally recognized by ALDOT as qualified to act as an inspection team leader.
CBI Number	A unique number assigned by ALDOT to a person who has either met or is in the process of meeting the requirements for certification as a bridge inspector. Numbers are assigned in chronological sequence. CBI Numbers by themselves do not indicate whether a person is certified. See CBI Status.
Team Leader	The person in charge of a bridge inspection team. This person must be certified as a bridge inspector in accordance with the requirements described in this document.
CBI Status	A companion item to the CBI Number. The CBI Status indicators are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A Active Status. Indicates a person that has satisfied both the initial and continuing education requirements of a CBI.</li> <li>P Pending Status. Indicates a person who is working towards certification.</li> <li>S Suspended Status. Indicates a person who once satisfied the requirements for a CBI but has fallen to noncompliance. A common reason to be Suspended is by failing to satisfy continuing education requirements.</li> <li>I Inactive Status. Indicates a person who is no longer inspecting bridges.</li> <li>D Deleted Status. Indicates a record in the CBI database that is to be permanently removed. Examples of records that would be deleted are ones that were entered by mistake (i.e., duplicate entries) and records for inspectors who are now deceased.</li> </ul>
NBI	National Bridge Inventory. A listing of all structures and associated information in the United States that meet the definition of a bridge and are located on public roads. Each state and several Federal Agencies supply an annual update of their bridge information to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in accordance with the requirements of the "Recording and Coding Guide for the Structure Inventory and Appraisal of the Nation's Bridges".
NBIS	National Bridge Inspection Standards. Federal requirements for the inspection of bridges as found in the Code of Federal Regulations, 23 Highways – Part 650, Subpart C.

## 2. Overview

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has identified the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) as the agency responsible for managing the Bridge Inspection Program within the State of Alabama for all bridge owners. When issues of compliance arise, it is ALDOT that must demonstrate to FHWA that the bridge inspection program satisfies the requirements of the National Bridge Inspection System.

Alabama has previously, with one small exception, exclusively used the provisions in 23 CFR 650.307 when certifying bridge inspectors. The two exceptions were that certification was not officially issued until the applicant had attended an ALDOT Bridge Inspection Refresher Course and an ALDOT BrM / Element Inspection Training Course.

## 3. Certification of Bridge Inspectors in Alabama

In order to become certified as a bridge inspector in Alabama, a person must:

1. Have five years of qualifying experience, defined as:
  - a) Up to four years experience in:
    - i. Structural Maintenance
    - ii. Structural Inspection (Towers, Oil Platforms)
    - iii. Bridge Construction
    - iv. Bridge Maintenance
    - v. Bridge Design / Rating
  - b) Applicants who possess a four-year degree in Civil Engineering or Civil Engineering Technology and have passed the FE Exam can satisfy three of those four years of qualifying experience described in 1(a) above.
  - c) Applicants who possess an associate's degree in Civil Engineering or Civil Engineering Technology can satisfy one of these four years of qualifying experience described in 1(a) above.
  - d) A minimum of one year of actual bridge inspection. Here, one year is taken to mean a single cycle of inspection that occurs in a twelve-month period.
2. Successfully complete the comprehensive bridge inspection class, NHI Course 130055, "Safety Inspection of In-Service Bridges" sponsored by the National Highway Institute.
  - a) Applicants who possess a professional engineering license, may complete either NHI course 130055 "Safety Inspection of In-Service Bridges" or NHI course 130056 "Safety Inspection of In-Service Bridges for Professional Engineers" to satisfy the requirement described in 2 above. NHI Course 130055 is a ten-day training class while NHI Course 130056 only consists of five training days.

3. Attend an ALDOT Bridge Inspection Refresher Course. Courses are held each fall. A schedule of courses is available online from the ALDOT website.
4. Attend an ALDOT BrM / Element Inspection Training Course. This course is typically offered once a year, each spring. The dates for this course are available online from the ALDOT website.
5. Submit an application using the latest version of the NBIS Experience Certification Questionnaire, a copy of which can be downloaded from the ALDOT website.

#### **4. Continuing Education Requirements for Certified Bridge Inspectors**

ALDOT Bridge Inspection Refresher Courses are offered several times each fall at various locations within the state. Each course is approximately two days in length and includes both classroom oriented presentations and bridge inspection exercises. There is no registration fee for attending these classes.

Each bridge inspector working in the State of Alabama is requested to attend one of these courses each year. ALDOT Area Bridge Inspectors are required to attend each year. Each county engineer's office is required by Local Transportation Bureau to send at least one representative each year.

To maintain their certification in an "Active" status, each certified bridge inspector must attend an ALDOT Bridge Inspection Refresher Course at least once every two years. This requirement for individual continuing education is independent of any requirements for organizational participation.

The schedule and locations of the ALDOT Bridge Inspection Refresher Courses can be found on the ALDOT website ([www.dot.state.al.us](http://www.dot.state.al.us)) by clicking on Maintenance Bureau, Management & Training, and finally Other Maintenance Bureau Training.

#### **5. Tracking of Certified Bridge Inspectors in Alabama**

A database of Certified Bridge Inspectors is maintained within BrM. Typical items such as employer, address, phone number, and email address are recorded. Attendance and successful completion of the NHI comprehensive bridge inspection class is also recorded. Attendance history at the ALDOT Bridge Inspection Refresher Courses (2-day schools) and BrM / Element Inspection Training is also recorded for each person listed in the database. Lastly, the database records those persons who have met the training and experience requirements to become a certified bridge inspector and indicates their certification status.

At each ALDOT Bridge Inspection Refresher Course attendees have the opportunity to review their information and make any necessary updates or corrections. Periodically, requests for updates will be sent by email as well.

## **6. Enforcement of Certification Requirements**

Every inspector in the state has an individual BrM account which allows them to view, add, change, and delete bridge records within their inventory. These BrM accounts are linked directly to each inspector's CBI number and certification status.

When a new inspection is entered into BrM the CBI who performed the inspection must be selected from a drop-down menu within the "New Inspection" task. This attaches their name and CBI number to the inspection record being entered. If an inspector is in "Suspended" status, their name will not be available for selection in the drop-down menu and their BrM account will be disabled, which will prohibit them from viewing, adding, changing, or deleting bridge records.

## **7. Returning to "Active" Status from "Suspended" Status**

Inspectors that allow their certification to lapse will have their status changed from "Active" to "Suspended". In order to return to "Active" status, they will be required to attend and successfully complete an ALDOT Bridge Inspection Refresher Course, typically held in the fall at four locations. The inspector must demonstrate satisfactory performance on the Desktop Exercise and must attend the entire refresher course or they will remain on "Suspended" status.

## 8. Contacts

Please contact the following persons with any questions or comments regarding this document. Submit comments or questions in writing or by email.

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