

Chris Taggart

From: Smith, Mary <msmith@mt.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, March 15, 2022 2:25 PM
To: John Horat
Cc: Greg Chilcott; Jeff Burrows; Dan Huls; Ravalli County Commissioners Office; Moyer, Leanne
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Upcoming Bridge Load Posting Modifications

Good afternoon,

I wanted to touch base to let you know about posting modification information that's headed your way, and explain a bit about why you'll be seeing it.

As we've been implementing new bridge load postings, we've heard feedback that the SHV posting levels were confusing and didn't reflect common vehicle operations in MT. In response to this feedback and to address possible operational loopholes, we revisited our posting procedures and made some updates that should help to better align with real-world applications, address the issues, and still meet our state and federal guidelines.

We've also developed state-specific guidelines for methods to improve ratings on rural, low traffic bridges where standard analysis may not accurately represent the operational use of a structure. Examples include consideration of multi-lane bridges (by definition) that are truly operating as single-lane, modified vehicle placement based on site-specific indicators, and reduced live load effects based on low ADTT. While these methods can help to improve ratings – and sometimes mitigate postings entirely – that's not always the case (we're also seeing postings that result from condition or bridge geometry issues, and many older bridges were just not designed/built for modern loads).

The good news is that with these updated guidelines and procedures, we're able to improve or remove some of the load postings that have been implemented. We've gone through and identified the bridges that require modified posting levels, and we've also updated analysis for posted bridges where there was an assumed likelihood that the new guidelines could improve ratings. Posting updates have been completed for all state-owned bridges, and now we're ready to move onto county-owned bridges.

Updates will be implemented in phases, starting with posting removals. Sign modifications (via sticky overlays or new signs, to be provided by MDT) will follow. If you're receiving this email, there are bridges in your County that fall into one of these categories. Please keep an eye out for more information to come, and if you have any questions feel free to give me a call at (406) 444-7641.

Thanks,



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