Subpart D—Capacity of Bridges

§ 237.71 Determination of bridge load capacities.

(a) Each track owner shall determine the load capacity of each of its railroad bridges. The load capacity need not be the ultimate or maximum load capacity, but must be a safe load capacity.

(b) The load capacity of each bridge shall be documented in the track owner’s bridge management program, together with the method by which the capacity was determined.

(c) The determination of load capacity shall be made by a railroad bridge engineer using appropriate engineering methods and standards that are particularly applicable to railroad bridges.

(d) Bridge load capacity may be determined from existing design and modification records of a bridge, provided that the bridge substantially conforms to its recorded configuration. Otherwise, the load capacity of a bridge shall be determined by measurement and calculation of the properties of its individual components, or other methods as determined by a railroad bridge engineer.

(e) If a track owner has a group of bridges for which the load capacity has not already been determined, the owner shall schedule the evaluation of those bridges according to their relative priority, as established by a railroad bridge engineer. The initial determination of load capacity shall be completed not later than five years following the required date for adoption of the track owner’s bridge management program in conformance with §237.31.

(f) Where a bridge inspection reveals that, in the determination of the railroad bridge engineer, the condition of a bridge or a bridge component might adversely affect the ability of the bridge to carry the traffic being operated, a new capacity shall be determined.

(g) Bridge load capacity may be expressed in terms of numerical values related to a standard system of bridge loads, but shall in any case be stated in terms of weight and length of individual or combined cars and locomotives, for the use of transportation personnel.

Subpart E—Bridge Inspection

§ 237.101 Scheduling of bridge inspections.

(a) Each bridge management program shall include a provision for scheduling an inspection for each bridge in railroad service at least once in each calendar year, with not more than 540 days between any successive inspections.

(b) A bridge shall be inspected more frequently than provided for in the bridge management program when a railroad bridge engineer determines...