

FAST Act Bridge Inspection Report Requests

The Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) (Pub. L. 114-94) (Dec. 4, 2015), Section 11405, "Bridge Inspection Reports," provides a means for a State or a political subdivision of a State to obtain a public version of a bridge inspection report generated by a railroad for a bridge located within their respective jurisdiction. While the FAST Act specifies that requests for such reports are to be filed with the Secretary of Transportation, the responsibility for fulfilling these requests is delegated to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). See 49 CFR 1.89. The text of Section 11405 of the FAST Act is provided in attachment 1.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Who can make a request for a bridge inspection report under Section 11405 of the FAST Act?

A. Section 11405 of the FAST Act permits a State or a political subdivision of a State to file a request for a public version of a bridge inspection report for a bridge located in that State or political subdivision's jurisdiction. Thus, any duly elected or appointed official of a State or political subdivision of a State, acting in his or her official capacity, may file a request. This includes officials of a State, city, county, town, municipality or other political subdivision of a State.

Q. What information do I need to provide in my request?

A. Go to FRA's website (www.fra.dot.gov) and click on the Bridge Inspection Report link and fill out the "Bridge Inspection Report Public Version Request Form" (FRA F 6180.167) in its entirety (a link to the form is provided at the end of these questions). Please provide the following information:

- Your name and title;
- Official address;
- E-mail address;
- Telephone number;
- Identification of the individual bridge(s) for which you are requesting a public version of a bridge inspection report(s). Bridge identification information could include a street name, a nearby intersecting street, a waterway or a recognizable land feature where appropriate;
- Name of the railroad that owns and/or operates over the requested bridge(s) (if known); and
- An indication that the request is being made in your official capacity as a representative of a State or a political subdivision of a State. The bridge(s) for which the inspection report(s) is sought must be within the jurisdiction of the political subdivision of the State you represent.

Q. How do I file my request?

A. You can file a request by going to FRA’s website (www.fra.dot.gov) and clicking on the Bridge Inspection Report link. There you will find the “*Bridge Inspection Report Public Version Request Form*” (FRA F 6180.167). Please complete this pdf fillable form by providing all of the information listed in the question above and click on the “submit” box when completed. This will automatically create an e-mail that will send the completed form directly to FRA. A link to the form has also been provided at the end of these questions below.

If you are unable to submit the form to FRA directly, please fill out the “*Bridge Inspection Report Public Version Request Form*” (FRA F 6180.167) and attached it in an e-mail to FRABridgeInspectionReportRequest@dot.gov. Requests will only be accepted through this e-mail address with the proper form completely filled out and attached.

Q. How will FRA handle a request?

A. FRA will evaluate the request and, if found to be compliant with law, FRA will promptly request that the railroad responsible for the bridge provide a public version of the most recent inspection report(s) to FRA. Once FRA has received the report(s), FRA will review the report(s) to ensure that at least the minimum information required by law has been provided. Once determined to be satisfactory, the report(s) will be sent to the requester electronically by reply to the request unless the requester provides an alternate e-mail address to send the report to.

Q. What information must a railroad include in the public version of the bridge inspection report provided to FRA?

A. The FAST Act requires the following information to be included in a public version of a bridge inspection report:

1. The date of the last inspection;
2. Length of bridge;
3. Location of bridge;
4. Type of bridge (superstructure);
5. Type of structure (substructure);
6. Features crossed by the bridge;
7. Railroad contact information; and
8. A general statement on the condition of the bridge.

Q. How much time does a railroad have to provide the public version of a bridge inspection report to FRA?

A. FRA interprets the statute to require a railroad to provide a requested report containing at least the minimum specified information within a reasonable amount of time. FRA believes that a reasonable time for a railroad to provide a requested report is within 30 days of receipt of FRA’s request.

Q. How long will it take FRA to produce a public version of a bridge inspection report to a requester?

A. FRA will handle these requests as expeditiously as possible and generally expects to respond to most requests by providing the requester with a public version of a bridge inspection report within 45 days of receipt of the request.

(Link to Form will be located here)

Attachment 1

FAST Act - SECTION 11405 - BRIDGE INSPECTION REPORTS.

Section 417(d) of the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008 (49 U.S.C. 20103 note) is amended— (1) by striking “The Secretary” and inserting the following: “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary”; and (2) by adding at the end the following: “(2) AVAILABILITY OF BRIDGE CONDITION.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—A State or political subdivision of a State may file a request with the Secretary for a public version of a bridge inspection report generated under subsection (b)(5) for a bridge located in such State or political subdivision’s jurisdiction.

“(B) PUBLIC VERSION OF REPORT.—If the Secretary determines that the request is reasonable, the Secretary shall require a railroad to submit a public version of the most recent bridge inspection report, such as a summary form, for a bridge subject to a request under subparagraph (A). The public version of a bridge inspection report shall include the date of last inspection, length of bridge, location of bridge, type of bridge, type of structure, feature crossed by bridge, and railroad contact information, along with a general statement on the condition of the bridge.

“(C) PROVISION OF REPORT.—The Secretary shall provide to a State or political subdivision of a State a public version of a bridge inspection report submitted under subparagraph (B).

“(D) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary, upon the reasonable request of State or political subdivision of a State, shall provide technical assistance to such State or political subdivision of a State to facilitate the understanding of a bridge inspection report.”