

Question Report

Coast Guard Bridge Program Information Session 28 Sep 2022

#	Question	Answer
1	Will you guys be defining what qualifies as a bridge? IE - when do structures like boardwalks etc become/qualify as bridges?	Any structure over navigable waterways constitutes a bridge.
2	What is considered a vessel that would travel on navigable waterways?	Motorized and non-motorized boats. If you have a specific vessel in mind, please ask here or ask your local district bridge office.
3	Is there a definition of "substantial" in the definition of "substantial interstate or foreign	No. It is determined on a case by case basis.
4	Is commerce considered the movement of goods, etc along that waterbody or could it also be defined as someone having a business along the waterway, eg., a company that does local	Commerce typically includes the movement of goods or people.
5	Shelly, milepoint is actually river mile in District	Thank you for the clarification.
6	River Mile: https://waterdata.usgs.gov/wa/nwis/current?type=rivermi	Thank you
7	How do you define navigable waterway	Live answered. Navigable waters are defined by 33CFR part 2.36
8	What is a navigable waterway?	Navigable waters are defined by 33CFR part 2.36
9	what is an example of a non navigable waterway?	Live answered. No maritime commerce past, present, or prospective.
10	Could Coast guard create a Map for each either district so we can know which waters are navigable waters without a need to contacting	Live answered. For waterway navigability determinations, contact the local district bridge office.
11	is there a list of navigable waterways in the US	Live answered. No. For waterway navigability determinations, contact the local district bridge office.
12	Is there a list or map available showing all navigable waterways?	No. For waterway navigability determinations, contact the local district bridge office.
13	is there any way to have a short navigable waterway (1000 ft) "relisted" as non-navigable??	Reach out to the cognizant district bridge office to coordinate
14	Could a portion of water be navigable while others are not navigable?	Yes, waterways are typically navigable to a certain milepoint. Contact your local district bridge office for assistance with the navigability of the waterway in question.
15	I already submitted this question but maybe I missed it being answered live. Is there a list or map available showing all navigable waterways?	No, there is not a map or database available. Please check waterway navigability with the local District Bridge Office.
16	Does the USCG have a map or database where we can find whether it's jurisdictional?	No, please check waterway navigability with the local district bridge office

17	Please provide the CFR number that provides navigable water definition	33 CFR 2.36
18	Is NAVIGABILITY DETERMINATIONS FOR THE THIRTEENTH DISTRICT a good resource to identify navigability?	Please confirm with the D13 district bridge office
19	What are the limits of Coast Guard Jurisdiction? example - the Corps takes jurisdiction of impacts below the Ordinary High Water mark.	See 33 CFR 2.36 for our jurisdiction.
20	Please go over and better define navigability. Asking the local office for every bridge we work on could flood them with unnecessary emails	Better to ask the district bridge office about each project. Just having the definition of navigability does not help you with whether the waterway is navigable at the milepoint where your project is and whether a permit is required.
21	Can you clarify what the Bridge Permit Questionnaire is intended to inform	The questionnaire is the application. The application provides the information the Coast Guard needs to issue the permit.
22	What are common mistakes on applications?	Today we walk through what should be provided for applications. If you have further questions once these sessions have concluded, please ask.
23	Did you address a project initiation request?	It was briefly mentioned in the first presentation.
24	For bridges that have significant portions of Bridge over land and a portion of the same Bridge over the navigable waterway, if the project is a design build can on-land elements, such as piles and retaining walls, be constructed	We typically permit from abutment to abutment so the permit needs to be issued before construction can begin, even on land.
25	Does every bridge permit require public notice?	Live answered. Yes, typically.
26	Reiterate what phase in the project that the public notice is issued? What is the timeline and is there a public comment period?	The public notice is released when sufficient information is available to do so. The standard public comment period is 30 days.
27	can you discuss the 2 MOUs to coordinate/improve bridge planning & permitting. ONE is for FHWA only and other is for all USDOT agencies.... what are the	Live answered. We will not be getting into the detail of the MOA/MOU today.
28	The MOAs are still in effect, correct? Since they are posted and have not been recinded.	They are still in effect.
29	Is an updated version of USCG COMDTPUB P16590 Rev. 05.29.1988 (Bridges over Navigable Waters of the United States- Atlantic Coast)	No, there has not been an update.
30	What is Advanced approval from the Coast Guard?	See 33 CFR 115.70. This will explain what waterways qualify as advance approval.
31	Will you be discussing "advance approval waterways"?	We don't plan to go into the topic in this session. If you would like, please reach out for more detailed information.

32	Will you be discussing exemptions to the bridge permitting process? Or the bridge project questionnaire?	We will not be going into detail during this session. If you would be interested in discussing further or coordinating a presentation, please reach out. We will be walking through the application shortly.
33	What is a standard review time for applications or is that district by district?	Live answered. The Coast Guard will issue a permit decision within 90 days of receiving a complete application.
34	What is the estimate on overall timeline from start of coordination to obtaining an approved permit?	We work to provide a permit decision within 90 days from when the application is deemed complete. It is deemed complete when all required documentation is confirmed or provided. The complexity of the project will drive how long it takes to compile the application.
35	So, we submit the application to start the process knowing its incomplete. Then, we slowly build to a complete application with the USCG and they will issue a decision in about 90 days from all the info being submitted?	Yes, when all required information is provided, we will provide a permit decision within 90 days.
36	Assuming a perfect scenario where all information is submitted correctly on the first try, how long is the overall permitting process start to finish? Just trying to get an idea for budgeting timeframes.	That depends on the complexity and size of the bridge project. Once the permit application is deemed complete, the Coast Guard will issue a permit decision within 90 days.
37	If a bridge will be demolished and not replaced, is a bridge permit required?	live answered. Likely not. Check with your local district bridge office.
38	are permits required for bridge class culverts?	Live answered. It depends. Check with your local district bridge office.
39	do you need separate permits for a bridge replacement that requires a temp work	The temp bridge and the replacement can be addressed in the same permit.
40	If the movable bridge is no longer operational (open/close) for boating traffic. Does it still need permitting process?	Likely it does. Please confirm with your district bridge office.
41	can you talk a little about not needing a permit if a permit was received for another bridge in the	Each bridge requires a separate permitting process.
42	are these permits required for overhead utilities over a navigable waterway or tunnelling beneath a navigable waterway?	Overhead utilities independent of a bridge and tunnels are handled by the Corps of Engineers.
43	are these permits required for overhead utilities over a navigable waterway or tunnelling beneath a navigable waterway?	The Coast Guard does not issue permits for tunnels under waterways. The Coast Guard does not permit electrical or other such utility cables crossing waterways. Check with the US Army Corps of Engineers. The Coast Guard permits pipeline bridges.
44	Are aerial utilities ever considered "part of the bridge" i.e. when the cables power a lift span?	They may be, especially if they affect the navigational clearances of the bridge.

45	Do we need to fill out a permit application to find out if a permit is needed for our bridge?	No. Contact your local bridge office and describe the project. That office will let you know if a permit is required following that discussion.
46	What if one project has more than one bridge, should I apply for one USGC permit for all those bridges, or should an USGC permit be obtained	Discuss the project with the local district bridge office. A single permit is possible.
47	Does a causeway with a high bridge over nav channel count as a complete bridge or just over the channel?	Not knowing the specifics, it likely will, but best to reach out to your local district bridge office to confirm. Their contact information will be included at the end of the presentations, and is available on our website.
48	if we are attaching a new structure at a higher clearance than an existing structure (eg. parapet on a bridge higher than the bridge bottom chord) how much detail do we need on the existing bridge?	Typically, if you are adding a parapet to the superstructure, it will not impact the navigation clearances and will not require a permit. Check with your local district bridge office to confirm based on the particular project.
49	Can a bridge owner's contractor consultant and Coast-Guard-representative-to-be still proceed with early coordination with Coast Guard District Office if a "act-on-behalf-of" letter is still in process with the owner; to what extent can that "early" involvement progress before the Coast Guard has a letter in hand authorizing an	If you would like the CG to work with your representative, we need to know as soon as possible in order to avoid delaying the process.
50	What is the USCG process for emergency authorization?	Contact your local CG bridge office. They can explain whether a permit will be required and the process associated with it depending on the project.
51	What would be the process to replace a moveable bridge with a temp fixed bridge if the bridge was closed due to structural reasons. The temp fixed would be for vehicle traffic until a permanent could be designed and constructed. Is there an emergency Permit? Or is it full	Please check with your local district bridge office for specifics related to the project and whether the temporary bridge meets emergency land transportation needs. Temporary bridges typically require a permit.
52	Could the emergency temp bridge permit process be expedited?	Yes, we would with all other agencies to see where permits and authorizations are exempt from further processing.
53	Is USGC Permit renewable?	Not if it expires, but we can issue an extension of time if one is requested prior to expiration.

54	For how long that extension would be?	Really depends on the needs of the applicant. It is very common for extensions of time for 2-3 years to commence or complete construction due to common funding issues. Each project is looked at individually though. Multiple extensions can also be considered when necessary. Note all other permits/approvals for other agencies must also be maintained, and NEPA may need to be reevaluated..
55	How are Design - Build projects handled with respect to developing the Navigation Impact Report?	We will go into greater detail for the NIRs later in this session. If you have specific questions during that time, please do not hesitate to ask.
56	What is taken into consideration in the navigation study when establishing new vertical and horizontal clearances?	This will be answered during this session.
57	How does a potential applicant determine if the waterway has past, present, or potential presence of interstate or foreign commerce.	This will be discussed in the next presentation
58	for tidal waters - what's the upper limit used by USCG? MHHW? OHWM?	It depends on the waterway. Please consult with the local district bridge office.
59	What is the recommended resource to review when determining the vessel characteristics to be included in the NIR?	This will be discussed in the next presentation.
60	when is a navigation study required?	We're about to go over that.
61	Is the navigation evaluation shared with the applicant	A preliminary navigation clearance determination letter is shared with the applicant noting the results of the evaluation.
62	does the PNCD also include determinations for temporary navigation clearances during	Yes, it can.
63	For complex bridge projects (in high navigation areas) with extensive constructions activities/stages and marine equipment involved, do you envision the need to prepare specific studies (like Navigation Safety Risk Assessments - NSRAs) to address potential construction	Ask your local district bridge office. They would be able to tell you based on experience whether additional information is needed to determine impacts to navigation safety during construction.
64	If a waterbody is listed in the appendix of the guide with noted navigational clearance, and your proposed bridge is at or higher than that navigational clearance, is a NIR still needed?	Check with your local district bridge office about the specific project.
65	For NIRs should applicants contact potential users to ask what clearances they would like to have for the next 50 years and why? Jeff Stieb	It is best to be thorough. The applicant should work closely with the local district bridge office to gather data for analysis.

66	For NIRs should applicants contact potential users to ask what clearances they would like to have for the next 50 years and why? Jeff Stieb	Future use is best supported by specific plans and/or funding for proposed users.
67	Can USCG be asked to reconsider the PNCD determination?	Depends on the situation (date of the PNCD, whether there is a substantial difference in the data used to develop the PNCD, etc).
68	How does the NIR - PNCD process apply to a project that already has an EIS and Rod (scoping is complete) and is engaged in a Supplemental EIS process	Contact your local district bridge office to determine the need for a new NIR - PNCD. Typically depends on the amount of time between the EIS and that of the Supplemental and the scope of the project (whether it has changed).
69	We have a potential full bridge replacement of a coastal structure. The existing bridge has navigation lights. Do these vertical clearances change? At what point do we ask about the required clearances and if our proposed bridge needs to be raised? Is this all done through the	Clearances may change depending future changes to the waterway. Please contact the local district bridge office to discuss the project. The navigation impact report is completed early in the process, ideally to inform NEPA alternatives.
70	How does USCG define unreasonable for navigation impacts?	It's a case by case determination.
71	What us the measure for "reasonable"?	Determined on a case by case basis depending on the project and the waterway usage.
72	When you say "part of the application" in the flow chart, does that mean that we need to submit the permit application during NEPA and not once we have a preferred alternative and design details? Or is it application for NE/PNCD, different than the permit application?	The NIR is part of the CG bridge permit application. It is required at the beginning of the process.
73	the requirement of prospective upstream projects, does it include residential with water access?. Developers will request the maximum clearence. This for a movable to fixed.	All data will be reviewed and considered. Recreational and commercial.
74	If a replacement bridge maintains the same vertical and horizonatal clearance of the existing bridge, what would necessitate larger	Change in navigation on the waterway since when the original bridge was built.
75	Change in the marine vessels using the waterway?	That would be one factor that might require a higher clearance.
76	Is a temporary work trestle for use by the contractor to build the new bridge classified as a temporary bridge foe purposes of this	Not normally if it doesn't cross the waterway. This will also be addressed a bit in the plan sheet presentation.
77	if PNCD is older than 3yrs, what level of full reval is required? a full NIR or some other streamline means to prove that navigation	Contact your local district bridge office familiar with the project. They will be able to tell you what needs to be updated.
78	What are "suitable" plan sheets? What level of design; Concept, 30%, 60%, etc.?	Live answered. Depends on the case. Please contact the local district bridge office.

79	Is there a defined distance the low chord of a bridge must be above the 100 year flood elevation or if the low chord is above the 100 year flood elevation this specific criteria is met?	The Coast Guard does not specify this dimension. Check with the organizations that oversee bridge engineering specifications such as AASHTO and AREMA
80	Do you accept electronic signatures for S&S plans/documents?	Yes, generally we do. Please confirm with the district bridge office.
81	did i read correctly that all sheets are to be signed and stamped by a PE.?	Yes
82	Suitable plan sheets echos back to a question that was asked earlier, but I don't think it was answered.	A session on plan sheet requirements is coming up later in this session. Please ask specific questions if the session does not answer your question.
83	Can you give examples of when (what situations) USCG would take the lead agency role on a FHWA project?	If the project is a FHWA project, it is federally funded and the USCG would not be lead. We would be a cooperating agency.
84	Does the USCG always do their own NEPA even if other agencies are the federal lead? How is the USCG interpreting and applying the One Federal Decision guidance to streamline NEPA and avoid redundant documentation?	The lead agency will prepare the NEPA document and the Coast Guard will adopt the bridge-related portions and ensure the lead agency's document meets our needs for adoption.
85	If these environmental items (ex: CZC, Wild and Scenic Rivers) are already adressed in the NEPA document can that document be referenced or do the individual coordination letters/determinations need to be added here in	Yes, the NEPA document or appendices may be referenced if it includes the detail required.
86	If we send a complete copy of our NEPA document, with all the consultation documents for ESA, 106, etc., do we also need to send an additional copy of the consultation documents for a complete application? Much of the requested information will be addressed in our	One copy is suitable. In the application, note the the section and page in the NEPA doc for each environmental requirement.
87	Actually Section 404 is required whenever there is a discharge of dredged or fill material into a water of the US not just wetlands.	Good point. Most bridge projects require 404 permits.
88	If either FHWA/USCG are lead Federal Agency for a bridge project, the Corps wouldn't be able to affirm/issue a 404 Permit until a review of either agencies NEPA documentation is complete. When are the FINAL NEPA documents issued in order for the Corps to review/verify NEPA requirements have been met and issue/affirm the permit. I've heard conflicting	The applicant prepares the NEPA documentation for the application and submits it to the CG for our review and adoption, if applicable. We work with the Corps early in the process to set timelines so that every agency involved is aware of various permit milestones and environmental reviews.
89	When does Section 408 apply?	If a proposed bridge project will cross a federal navigation channel, then 408 comes into play.

90	(comment not Q, re: 408 Q above) 408 has more triggers than federal nav channels. impacts from bridge construction/ops to levees, dams, flood control projects/basins, revetments and other corps projects can trigger 408, and the corps often includes O&M easements in the 408 boundary (can differ by corps district).	Thank you for the clarification.
91	Are the CZM plans the same as obtaining the OCRM permit?	We are looking for a statement that the project is consistent with the enforceable policies of a state's federally approved coastal management project in accordance with Section 307 of the Coastal Zone Management Act.
92	For NWP#15, Coast Guard approved Bridges, reading over the permit it states , ..provided the construction of the bridge structure has been authorized by the U.S. Coast Guard under Section 9 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 or other applicable laws". Working on a past USCG Bridge I was told by USCG they can't issue a permit until the Corps affirms/issues a permit. But as stated above, we can't affirm NWP#15	We work with the Corps to ensure the project will likely receive the NWP 15 and we will typically either issue our permit and the Corps will issue their NWP on the same day. If we have reasonable assurance that the Corps will issue a NWP 15 for a project, we will move forward with our permit.
93	Does the USCG issue "draft permits"? And if not, can you talk a bit about how that would impact EPA's proposed new rules for Section 401 Water Quality Certifications that would require a draft permit be submitted with the application for a	We are working with EPA on this requirement. We do not issue draft permits. We have a sample permit but it wouldn't be for a specific project.
94	I would note, sufficient design details for some States (like Washington) are not available at NEPA decision to obtain the 401 Water Quality Certification and CZMA. Expecting all project proponents to be able to obtain a Bridge Permit shortly after NEPA signature is infeasible. Our Department of Ecology requires final-design, not	Thank you for the clarification. Then the Coast Guard bridge permit decision will likely be rendered after the WQC and CZMA are complete.
95	Is the timetable a feature in the permitting dashboard or will USCG provide it to the applicant?	The local district bridge office can coordinate that timetable with you and other cooperating agencies.
96	If a state DOT has a NEPA assignment, would that project be on the timeline?	We recommend coordinating the milestones and timeline with the local district bridge office.
97	Would a kmz file with appropriate data shown work as a location/vicinity map?	We ask for plan sheets in pdf form.
98	Someone mentioned .kmz's. Most CG Workstations don't have standalone Google Earth, AutoDesk, etc. - please send us Lat/Longs and/or, if you use .kmz's - a screenshot from	Thank you for clarifying.

99	Additionally, when sending an application - almost all of the items covered in the environmental section have an associated GIS-based mapper, e.g. essential fish habitats, wild and scenic rivers, etc. It never hurts to send a screenshot from that mapper indicating the date	Agree, thank you.
100	Caltrans has a movable bridge that hasn't opened since the 1970's. It still has a requirement to be opened within a six month notice from the USCG. We've been attempting to get this bridge designated as permanently closed. Is there a person within USCG HQ to	You'll want to first reach out to our D11 office.
101	How do you contact the District Bridge Office, phone, email?	Live answered. https://www.dco.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/Assistant-Commandant-for-Prevention-Policy-CG-5P/Marine-Transportation-Systems-CG-5PW/Office-of-Bridge-Programs/District-Bridge-Contacts/
102	What is the best way to reach out to the local district office for the initial project coordination? Phone call, email. Where can you find that	See the contact information in the Bridge Program website. Office of Bridge Programs (uscg.mil)
103	Did I miss the part where it was explained how to determine who our "local" USCG coordinator is?	There was a map provided in the opening presentations that showed the Coast Guard Districts, but the contacts can easily be found on the Bridge Program website. I believe they will also be shown at the end. https://www.dco.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/Assistant-Commandant-for-Prevention-Policy-CG-5P/Marine-Transportation-Systems-CG-5PW/Office-of-Bridge-Programs/District-Bridge-Contacts/
104	Is there a hot line to call if I see that the navigational lights on a bridge are out?	The Coast Guard doesn't have a single hotline. I recommend contacting the local district bridge office or doing an internet search for your local Coast Guard Sector. Here are district bridge office contact info: https://www.dco.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/Assistant-Commandant-for-Prevention-Policy-CG-5P/Marine-Transportation-Systems-CG-5PW/Office-of-Bridge-Programs/District-Bridge-Contacts/
105	For the question on reporting lights out and other issues. You can find your nearest Coast Guard Sector here: https://www.uscg.mil/responsive/ and here:	Thank you for the info

106	Are solar powered lights considered acceptable to power the navigation lights?	Yes, only if there is appropriate backup power supply to operate the lights accordingly during extended times when solar generation may be limited.
107	what is the difference between a temp. deviation and a construction letter and do you	This will be addressed later in a technical presentation.
108	Is the 180 days limit for the deviation per calendar year or per project?	It is per project. Coordinate with the local district bridge office.
109	Is it correct as stated by Eric that permit is not required for rehabilitation projects?	Depends on the extent of the rehab. Please contact your local district bridge office for a determination of whether a permit is required for the rehab you are doing.
110	when are temporary clearances/closure windows during construction defined?	This will be discussed in the Construction presentation
111	Is a bridge permit required for a bridge safety inspection and access equipment that may be in the waterway?	No, but you should contact your local district bridge office to ensure no impact to navigation (clearance reductions) during these inspections. Construction requirements will be discussed later in this session.
112	If a bridge, that already has a bridge permit over a navigable waterway is being painted or is having maintenance done, is a new permit required? Or would a local notice to mariners be	General maintenance does not require a permit. However, please coordinate with the local district bridge office as the activities will likely impact maritime traffic.
113	What events during construction of a bridge replacement project, that has an approved bridge permit in-hand, would trigger the need to revise permit drawings and resubmit to the CG? If the horizontal and vertical navigation clearances would not be impacted from a construction change, is there a need to revise and resubmit previously approved CG permit drawings?	If the permit is already issued and construction has begun, revised drawings would likely need to be required when there are modifications to the approved navigational clearances (horizontal and/or vertical clearances). Otherwise, no, normally a construction change would not require an amendment to permit. That said, please be sure to reach out to your local district bridge office to confirm the specific for any project.
114	Is there similar guidance such as this presentation for the contractors' "plan of operations" submittal/approvals with examples?	Post permit items will be discussed shortly. They include bridge construction and operational aspects.
115	VDOT mostly show "DEVELOPED SECTION ALONG CENTER LINE" of the bridge. Could that be Elevation View?	We'd have to see an example. Please send one to the contact provided at the end of this session and we can help you.
116	following up to my previous question below is VDOT developed section along center line	
117	Sorry I could not paste the pic	An email address for Hope Gerstler will be provided at the end of this session. Please send to her.

118	We at VDOT through our design consultants have been sending email inquiry to the USCG for our bridge rehabilitation projects though	As you should. You want to confirm that no permit is required and to make sure proper coordination is occurring prior to the rehab.
119	do you use Bluebeam for review or can you?	The Coast Guard Bridge Program does not use Bluebeam at this time.
120	Will Questions and Answers be published with the presentation slides or the recording?	We can make them available. https://www.dco.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/Assistant-Commandant-for-Prevention-Policy-CG-5P/Marine-Transportation-Systems-CG-5PW/Office-of-Bridge-Programs/PROJECTS/
121	One of the speakers mentioned "technical sessions." Is USCG planning additional trainings or are these sessions part of today's 3-hour	The technical sessions will be during this session.
122	please review process to obtain pdh credits with the wrap up	Certificates will be provided in the coming days for those who were online for at least an hour. Be sure to check your spam/junk folder.