

 Office of Structures Guidelines and Procedures Memorandum	INSPECTION
	Number: OOS-GPM-SI-104
	Date: 08-06-2026
Hands-On Inspection (HOI) and Modified Hands-On Inspection (MHOI)	Approval: 

A hands-on inspection (HOI) shall be performed on all structures during routine inspections except for those approved for a Modified Hands-on Inspection (MHOI). A HOI is defined as an inspection within arm's length on the element. The inspection uses visual techniques that may be supplemented by nondestructive testing. This is consistent with an NBIS In-depth inspection. Since Maryland performs HOI, no in-depth inspections are required.

To satisfy the HOI requirement, it will often be necessary to make use of special inspection equipment such as an underbridge inspection vehicle (snooper truck), bucket truck, scaffolding or rigging. Free climbing may also be necessary on some unique structures, but this will only be performed by inspection personnel trained for this activity.

When a HOI of any portion of an element cannot be completed for any reason on a bridge that is not approved for a MHOI, the inspector shall report this in the inspection report and provide a description of the inaccessible area. For SHA structures, an FYI report shall be submitted to the Senior Project Team Leader, SIRE, in accordance with an FYI (See OOS-GPM-SI-118)

A MHOI is performed on those bridges that have difficult access issues, have a low risk of having a significant defect, and has been approved for a MHOI by the Division Chief, SIRE- Structures Inspection or the LA Program Manager. A MHOI is a HOI performed to the best of the ability of the inspector using the available access equipment provided. Only those areas listed in the SIA for MHOI shall not have a HOI. If the inspector suspects a significant defect exists within a MHOI area, he will contact the Senior Project Team Leader or LA Program Manager for assistance in obtaining additional access equipment. All suspected defects not fully hands on inspected must be inspected to the satisfaction of the inspector. When a MHOI inspection is performed on any portion of an element, the inspector shall report this in the inspection report and provide a description of the inaccessible area.

The following types of bridges are those that may be approved for MHOI by the Division Chief, SIRE- Structures Inspection or the LA Program Manager if there are not significant defects that warrant a HOI:

- Bridges with spans over electrified railroads. Only those spans over the electrified rail may have a MHOI. All other areas shall have a HOI. A HOI shall be performed on those areas approved for MHOI every 6 years.
- Bridges over roadways with more than 4 lanes underneath. Typically double right and left lane closures are to be used to access as much of the bridge as possible without severely impacting traffic.

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- Bridges over water where the overall superstructure width does not enable the underbridge inspection vehicle to reach all interior elements.
- Bridges where the Inspection Division Chief, SIRE – Structures Inspection or LA Program Manager has approved a MHOI due to particular access or MOT issues.

A Modified Hands on inspection is not allowed on fracture critical elements of structures. Refer to Fracture Critical Member Inspection, OOS-GPM-SI-107.