

What happened to Maine's 470 functionally obsolete bridges?

FHWA Data from 12.31.15 indicated 34.2% (831) of Maine's bridges were deficient, now the data, a mere two years later, indicates that 13.3% (326) of Maine's bridges are deficient?? How did the percentage of our deficient bridges seemingly decrease? FHWA discontinued F.O. tracking on 12.31.2015.

“What is a “functionally obsolete” bridge? A functionally obsolete bridge is one that was built to standards that are not used today. These bridges are not automatically rated as structurally deficient, nor are they inherently unsafe. Functionally obsolete bridges are those that do not have adequate lane widths, shoulder widths, or vertical clearances to serve current traffic demand, or those that may be occasionally flooded. A functionally obsolete bridge is similar to an older house. A house built in 1950 might be perfectly acceptable to live in, but it does not meet all of today's building codes. Yet, when it comes time to consider upgrading that house or making improvements, the owner must look at ways to bring the structure up to current standards.” [Click here to view VDOT definition.](#)

“Changes to FUNCTIONALLY OBSOLETE (FO): Effective with the 2016 archived data, FHWA is no longer tracking this measure, and will no longer be publishing it on our website...“Functionally obsolete is a legacy classification... fiscal year 2015 was the last year outstanding Highway Bridge Program funds could be obligated on eligible projects, including ones with bridges that were once classified as functionally obsolete... [Click here to view this FHWA statement.](#)

FHWA Data as of this date:	# Bridges	# S.D.	% S.D.	# F.O.	% F.O.	Total # Deficient Bridges	Total % Deficient Bridges
12.31.2017	2458	326	13.3%	-	-	326	13.3%
12.31.2016	2450	352	14.4%	-	-	352	14.4%
12.31.2015	2431	361	14.8%	470	19.3%	831	34.2%

[Definitions of S.D. and F.O. and data used in above table from official FHWA website.](#)

Maine may still have a third of the state's total number of bridges that are sub-par; you can't just forget those 470 F.O. bridges that are conveniently no longer counted...