

Plan of Action Question and Answers  
(Administrative Issues)

- 1) Q: *Can Caltrans do this work for local agencies?*  
A: No, there is a limited amount of work Caltrans can do for a local agency because Caltrans does not have the authority to make the decisions required for local agency POAs.
  
- 2) Q: *We can't possibly do a scour countermeasure by the deadline. What can we do?*  
A: The deadline is not for the actual countermeasure to be completed, the deadline is for the plan of action (POA).
  
- 3) Q: *Can local agencies do this work with their own staff?*  
A: Yes, some local agencies may be able to quickly complete the task on their own depending on the number of bridges, complexity, and expertise available. Others may choose to hire a consultant to assist them with their options. Local agencies are the owners, and as such, they are the ones with the authority to make decisions about their bridges even if others are assisting them on a technical level.
  
- 4) Q: *Is the work to complete POAs federally reimbursable?*  
A: Yes, this is a National Bridge Inspection Standard requirement; therefore the work is eligible for Highway Bridge Program funds. If an agency decides to go forward with a federal aid project, the regular federal aid process will be followed, however, since these are plans of action and not the action itself, the PE phase will be authorized to complete the plan only, not to develop a project for construction.
  
- 5) Q: *Most agencies have very few scour critical bridges, so they feel it is not worth the effort to administer a federal aid project, what can they do?*  
A: Smaller agencies, or those with few bridges may form agreements with larger agencies such as counties; to either do the work for them, or administer consultant contracts. An agency with a very small number of bridges may also want to complete the POA with its own staff. Caltrans may be able to provide limited assistance to those agencies.
  
- 6) Q: *What do we do if our POA indicates we will do scour countermeasures or replace our bridge but we haven't already started a project?*  
A: You may use other locally available funds for your project or you may apply for federal bridge funds intended for engineered scour countermeasure projects. Applications and guidelines are available on the Local Assistance website: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LocalPrograms/>.
  
- 7) Q: *Is a Highway Bridge Program (HBP) application required to get federal funds for our POAs?*  
A: No, in place of this you may send a cover letter requesting funds specifically for your POA along with your Request for Authorization to Proceed with federally reimbursable work to your District Local Assistance Engineer (DLAE). Detail of the scope of proposed work should be attached to the letter.

- 8) Q: *My bridge is scour critical but it doesn't show up on the eligible bridge list (EBL). Why is this?*  
A: A bridge *may* be determined to be scour critical based on a calculated value for scour *potential*; however the items causing the bridge to appear on the EBL are evaluated based on the *known* condition at the time of the inspection.
- 9) Q: *Can we get federal HBP funds for a scour countermeasure on a scour critical bridge that is not on the EBL?*  
A: Chapter 6 of the Local Assistance Program Guidelines allows for funding off-EBL scour projects. If you have a scour critical bridge your agency is encouraged to apply for bridge funds.

Plan of Action Question and Answers  
(Technical Issues)

- 1) Q: *What if we don't have a recent Bridge Inspection Report (BIR)?*  
A: Caltrans sends these reports to all agencies. These reports should be maintained within the agency. If you do not have a copy, you may contact your District Local Assistance Engineer (DLAE) or your Area Bridge Maintenance Engineer (ABME).
  
- 2) Q: *What if we disagree with the scour rating?*  
A: Complete the POA indicating you feel the scour rating is not correct and explain your disagreement on the Plan of Action (POA) form. Provide your reasoning under the Scour Evaluation Summary section and attach any backup information to the form.
  
- 3) Q: *There are as-built plans available and yet the bridge is considered to be a U bridge. How can the bridge still be considered a U bridge?*  
A: Even though as-builts are available, there may be information missing that enable Caltrans to complete the scour evaluation. For example, without a Log of Test Borings, Caltrans would not be able to complete the Geotechnical portion of the evaluation.
  
- 4) Q: *What if we feel there is adequate information available to change the 113 code from a U to something else?*  
A: Complete the POA indicating you feel there is enough information to change the 113 code. Provide your reasoning under the Scour Evaluation Summary section and attach any backup information to the form.
  
- 5) Q: *What if we feel there is additional information available to warrant a change to the 113 code from scour critical to something else?*  
A: Complete the POA indicating you feel there is enough information to change the 113 code. Provide your reasoning under the Scour Evaluation Summary section and attach any backup information to the form.
  
- 6) Q: *What information is required in the Scour Evaluation section of the POA?*  
A: The Scour Evaluation Summary section of the Plan of Action should summarize why the bridge is either considered scour critical or unknown. You may reference a Caltrans hydraulic BIR. Hydraulic BIRs should exist for all scour critical bridges however, a hydraulic BIR may or may not exist for all unknown bridges. Even though a hydraulic BIR may not exist for an unknown bridge, Caltrans may have hydraulic information documented and you can contact Charles Ineichen of Caltrans Office of Structural Design and Analysis at: [charles\\_ineichen@dot.ca.gov](mailto:charles_ineichen@dot.ca.gov) You may also document whatever knowledge you have available or are aware of as to why the bridge is either scour critical or unknown.
  
- 7) Q: *What information is required in the Scour History section of the POA?*  
A: The Scour History section of the POA should summarize any past scour history at the bridge site. This information may be provided and found on past bridge

inspection reports. Local agencies should also provide any information they may have in their archives.

- 8) Q: *If we have already made structural or channel improvements, can we request a re-evaluation?*  
A: Yes, the locals can contact the ABME or the DLAE and complete the POA defining and indicating work completed and ask for a re-evaluation. Any backup information should be attached to the form. The ABME will determine what follow up is necessary.
- 9) Q: *If the bridge is closed to traffic with no prospect of reopening, do we still need a Plan of Action?*  
A: Yes, fill it out as completely as applicable.
- 10) Q: *Do we need to contract out the PAO's with qualified engineering firms?*  
A: No, not if you have staff qualified to do the POA in house.
- 11) Q: *Do we need an independent scour review in order to complete the PAO?*  
A: No, not if you have sufficient expertise, information and resources to do it and agree with the Caltrans evaluation.
- 12) Q: *What if the scour review is very old?*  
A: Some of the information may be useful, but it should be reviewed to determine if it is still applicable to present conditions.
- 13) Q: *Is the POA being submitted to Caltrans for approval?*  
A: Caltrans will not approve the POA. However, the POA will be screened for completeness and archived in our Bridge Record System. A status report of the POA's will be submitted to the Federal Government at their request.
- 14) Q: *Why do we need a structural assessment of the structure?*  
A: The total potential scour may create a stability problem for the structure.
- 15) Q: *How do we get more information regarding a Caltrans structural assessment?*  
A: If Caltrans has done a structural assessment, it may be noted in the scour BIR. Contact Charles Ineichen for the information.
- 16) Q: *Why do we need a Geotechnical assessment?*  
A: To determine if the foundation capacity is adequate given the total potential scour and to investigate the channel soil and possibly determine how susceptible to scour the foundation material is.
- 17) Q: *How do we get more information regarding the Caltrans geotechnical assessment?*  
A: If Caltrans has done a geotechnical assessment, it may be noted in the scour BIR. Contact Charles Ineichen for this information.
- 18) Q: *What instruments are available for monitoring?*

A: Reference the POA Links in this website for more information.

19) Q: *How do we know what discharge makes the bridge vulnerable to scour?*

A: Consult a qualified engineer to make that assessment if necessary.

20) Q: *Is monitoring the bridge mandatory?*

A: No, it is an option.

21) Q: *Will all U bridges and scour critical bridges have a hydraulic BIR?*

A: A bridge that is scour critical should have a hydraulic BIR on record indicating the scour code revision.

A bridge that is a U bridge may not have a hydraulic BIR on record.

22) Q: *What is the difference between a routine BIR and a hydraulic BIR?*

A: The routine investigation is a biennial inspection made by an Area Bridge Maintenance Engineer. This inspection is an overall general assessment of the bridge condition. The hydraulic BIR is a specialized investigation also referenced as an “other” investigation. This inspection’s main emphasis is to assess the overall hydraulic condition of the bridge and the bridge site.