# Office of Structural Engineering (OSE)

# Bridge Inventory and Bridge Management Section

**Guidelines on Structure File Number (SFN)**

**New/Retired/Deleted SFNs in the SMS**

It is with extreme importance that we are careful when requesting any of the above.  There are several other Enterprise level programs that run from SMS data. Accuracy and completion of the bridge data is very critical. FHWA and State Auditors object to SFN deletions and accidental retirements.

When requesting and retiring SFN’s, it is very important that there is a communication and consensus between all parties involved. Similarly, when requesting to delete a SFN, it is with utmost importance to rethink, reconsider and communicate to develop a consensus between all parties involved.

**Requesting an Existing SFN to be Retired**

When a SFN is retired, it can no longer be seen by anybody who has had access to it in the past.  Be sure you want to retire a SFN before requesting it.  A SFN retired by accident can be set back to active or inactive status, but that bridge might miss an important safety inspection during the period it was retired.

**Requesting a SFN to be Deleted**

When a SFN is deleted, it can’t be brought back or restored.  Please be sure that there is no information contained in the inventory and no inspection is done on the SFN to be deleted before making this request.

**Requesting a New SFN**

Communication is the key when requesting a new SFN.  At times, several people are requesting one for the same bridge.

When inventorying any structure(s) with a closed median, it is to be recorded as one. A closed median is where:

1. The area between the two roadways on the structure is bridged over and is capable of supporting traffic, or
2. The longitudinal deck opening at back-to-back median barriers is a maximum of 3 inches (75 mm) wide.

Separate superstructures with an open median (not meeting the closed median criteria above) sharing a common substructure unit or units are to be recorded as two bridges. A structure carrying a ramp that merges into another structure, has at least one distinct abutment, and is greater than 10 feet (3.05 m) in length, is to be recorded as a separate bridge. The separating point between bridges should be the closest deck joint or other logical and reasonable location as determined by the bridge owner.

A structure that divides into two (or more) separate structures (or vice versa) is to be recorded as two (or more) bridges. The separating point between bridges should be the closest deck joint or other logical and reasonable location as determined by the bridge owner.

The SFN of a bridge should usually not change when work is performed, or the portions of a structure are reconstructed except in unusual circumstances. A SFN is retained to maintain the history of the structure. Existing SFN of a bridge should be retired and a new SFN shall be assigned when a completely new structure is built to replace the old structure (example: totally new super and sub structures or when the existing deck, superstructure and substructure are removed with the exception of the piles).

In case it is deemed necessary to retire the existing SFN and assign a new SFN to an existing bridge, a reference to the old SFN shall be made.

For other complex or unique situations not covered here, the bridge owner should contact the Office of Structural Engineering (OSE), Structure Inventory Section (SIS). Some general examples are given below:

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| **Example** | **Scope** | **Need A New SFN?** |
| 1 | Repairing or replacing deck | No |
| 2 | Replacing superstructure with same type | No |
| 3 | Widening bridge | No |
| 4 | Replacing superstructure with same type, modifying piers and abutments | No |
| 5 | Replacing complete bridge, including foundations | Yes |
| 6 | Replacing superstructure with different type | Contact OSE |
| 7 | Replacing or adding wearing surface | No |
| 8 | Replacing super and substructure except piles | Yes |
| 9 | Repairing, replacing or removing joints, bearings, railings, parapets, sidewalks, etc. | No |
| 10 | Other than above  | Contact OSE |