



## CLEAR SPAN BRIDGES

This Operational Statement applies to the construction of small-scale bridge structures that completely span a watercourse without altering the stream bed or bank, and that are a maximum of two lanes wide. The bridge structure (including bridge approaches, abutments, footings, and armouring) is built entirely above the **high water mark** (HWM). A clear-span bridge is preferred to a culvert as no structures are placed on the stream bed and therefore there is no alteration of natural channel processes.

Clear-span bridge construction has the potential to negatively affect riparian habitat. Riparian vegetation occurs adjacent to the watercourse and directly contributes to fish habitat by providing shade, cover and areas for spawning and food production. Only the vegetation required to accommodate operational and safety concerns for the crossing structure and approaches, within the right-of-way, should be removed. Stormwater run-off and the use of machinery can introduce deleterious substances to the water body and result in erosion and sedimentation.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) is responsible for protecting fish and fish habitat across Canada. Under the *Fisheries Act* no one may carry out a work or undertaking that will cause the harmful alteration, disruption or destruction (HADD) of fish habitat unless it has been authorized by DFO. By following the conditions and measures set out below you will be in compliance with subsection 35(1) of the *Fisheries Act*.

The purpose of this Operational Statement is to describe the conditions under which it is applicable to your project and the measures to incorporate into your project in order to avoid negative impacts to fish habitat and maintain passage of fish. You may proceed with your clear-span bridge project without a DFO review when you meet the following conditions:

- the bridge is placed entirely above the high water mark (**HWM**), ([http://www-heb.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/decisionsupport/os/definitions\\_e.htm](http://www-heb.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/decisionsupport/os/definitions_e.htm)),
- there is no alteration of the stream bed or banks or infilling of the channel,
- the bridge is no greater than two vehicle lanes in width, does not include sidewalks and biking lanes and does not encroach on the natural channel width by the placement of abutments, footings or rock armouring below the **HWM**,
- the work does not involve the clearing of riparian vegetation – removal of select plants with the road right-of-way can occur to meet operational and/or safety needs,
- your project does not require multiple bridge crossings over the same watercourse, and
- you incorporate the *Measures to Protect Fish and Fish Habitat when Constructing Clear-Span Bridges* listed below in this Operational Statement.

If you cannot meet all of the conditions listed above and cannot incorporate all of the measures listed below then your project may result in a violation of subsection 35(1) of the *Fisheries Act* and you could be subject to enforcement action. In this case, you should contact the DFO office in your area if you wish to obtain DFO's opinion on the possible options you should consider to avoid contravention of the *Fisheries Act*.

**You are required to comply with all municipal, provincial, territorial and/or federal legislation that applies to the work being carried out in relation to this Operational Statement.** In British Columbia, please contact the *Water Stewardship Division, Ministry of Environment* ([http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wsd/water\\_rights/licence\\_application/section9/index.html](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wsd/water_rights/licence_application/section9/index.html)) for information on the Provincial *Water Regulation* notification requirements when planning to construct clear-span bridges in or around BC waters.

The activities undertaken in this Operational Statement must also comply with the *Species at Risk Act* (<http://www.speciesatrisk.gc.ca>). For general information on aquatic SARA species visit the following web site: [http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/species-especes/actMeans/actMeans\\_criticalHabit\\_factsheet\\_e.asp](http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/species-especes/actMeans/actMeans_criticalHabit_factsheet_e.asp) and/or contact DFO by email at: [SARA@pac.df-o-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:SARA@pac.df-o-mpo.gc.ca).

If you have questions regarding this Operational Statement, please refer to the list of **Frequently Asked Questions** ([http://www-heb.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/decisionsupport/os/os-faq\\_e.htm](http://www-heb.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/decisionsupport/os/os-faq_e.htm)) or contact DFO Regional Headquarters at 1-866-845-6776.

Please notify DFO 10 working days before starting your work by filling out and sending the Pacific Region Operational Statement **notification form** directly to DFO Regional Headquarters. This information is requested in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the work carried out in relation to this Operational Statement. It is recommended that you keep a copy of the Operational Statement at the work site to demonstrate to Habitat and Fishery Officer staff that the conditions and measures, as outlined in the OS, are being followed.

### Area of Application

This Operational Statement applies to the province of British Columbia and Yukon Territory freshwater systems only.

### Measures to Protect Fish and Fish Habitat when Constructing Clear-Span Bridges

1. Minimize the riparian area temporarily disturbed by access activities along the adjacent upland property. Use existing trails, roads, or cut lines wherever possible to avoid disturbance to the riparian vegetation.

2. Avoid building on meander bends, braided streams, alluvial fans, active flood plains, or any other area that is inherently unstable and may result in the alteration of natural stream functions or erosion and scouring of the bridge structure.
3. While this Operational Statement does not apply to the clearing of riparian vegetation, the removal of select plants within the road right-of-way (ROW) may be required to meet operational and/or safety concerns for the crossing structure and the approaches. This removal should be kept to a minimum and within the road right-of-way. When practicable, prune or top the vegetation instead of uprooting.
4. Ensure that the clear span bridge is properly designed to address river and channel processes at flows above the ordinary high water mark.
5. Design and construct approaches so that they are perpendicular to the watercourse to minimize loss or disturbance to riparian vegetation.
6. Design the bridge so that stormwater runoff from the bridge deck, side slopes and approaches is directed into a retention pond or vegetated area to remove suspended solids, dissipate velocity and prevent sediment and other deleterious substances from entering the watercourse.
7. Generally there are no restrictions on timing for the construction of clear-span structures as they do not involve in-water work. However, if there are any activities with the potential to disrupt sensitive fish life stages (e.g., crossing of watercourse by machinery), these should adhere to appropriate fisheries **timing windows** ([http://www-heb.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/decisionsupport/os/timing\\_e.htm](http://www-heb.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/decisionsupport/os/timing_e.htm)).

Machinery fording the watercourse to bring equipment required for construction to the opposite side is limited to a one-time event (over and back) and should occur only if an existing crossing at another location is not available or practical to use. A *Temporary Ford Stream Crossings* Operational Statement is also available.

- 7.1. To exercise this option, the stream bed at the fording site must be comprised of stable gravel or bedrock and the stream banks must be low and stable.
- 7.2. If minor rutting is likely to occur, stream bank and bed protection methods (e.g., swamp mats, pads) should be used provided they do not constrict flows or block fish passage.
- 7.3. Grading of the stream banks for the approaches is not permitted.
- 7.4. If the stream bed and banks are steep and highly erodible (e.g., dominated by organic materials and silts) and erosion and degradation are likely to occur as a result of equipment fording, then a temporary crossing structure or other practice should be used to protect these areas.
- 7.5. Time the one-time fording to prevent disruption to sensitive fish life stages by adhering to appropriate fisheries **timing windows**.
- 7.6. Fording should occur under low flow conditions and not when flows are elevated due to local rain events or seasonal flooding.

8. Install effective sediment and erosion control measures before starting work to prevent the entry of sediment into the watercourse. Inspect them regularly during the course of construction and make all necessary repairs if any damage occurs.
9. Operate machinery on land (above the **HWM**) and in a manner that minimizes disturbance to the banks of the watercourse.
  - 9.1. Machinery is to arrive on site in a clean condition and is to be maintained free of fluid leaks, invasive species and noxious weeds.
  - 9.2. Wash, refuel and service machinery and store fuel and other materials for the machinery away from the water to prevent any deleterious substance from entering the water.
  - 9.3. Keep an emergency spill kit on site in case of fluid leaks or spills from machinery.
  - 9.4. Restore banks to original condition if any disturbance occurs.
10. Use measures to prevent deleterious substances such as new concrete (i.e., it is pre-cast, cured and dried before use near the watercourse), grout, paint, ditch sediment and preservatives from entering the watercourse.
11. No debris to remain within the high-water mark or placed into a stream.
12. Stabilize any waste materials removed from the work site to prevent them from entering the watercourse. This could include covering spoil piles with biodegradable mats or tarps or planting them with preferably native grass or shrubs.
13. Vegetate any disturbed areas by planting and seeding with native trees, shrubs or grasses and cover such areas with mulch to prevent erosion and to help seeds germinate. All seeding and/or planting trees should follow the DFO guidance on **Riparian Revegetation** ([http://www-heb.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/decisionsupport/os/riparian-reveg\\_e.htm](http://www-heb.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/decisionsupport/os/riparian-reveg_e.htm)). If there is insufficient time remaining in the growing season, the site should be stabilized (e.g., cover exposed areas with erosion control blankets to keep the soil in place and prevent erosion) and vegetated the following spring.
  - 13.1. Maintain effective sediment and erosion control measures until re-vegetation of disturbed areas is achieved.

## DFO REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS

Fisheries & Oceans Canada  
 Regional Habitat Manager  
 200-401 Burrard Street  
 Vancouver, BC V6C 3S4.  
 Toll Free: 1-866-845-6776  
 Fax: (604) 666-7907  
 Email: [dfo\\_epmp@pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:dfo_epmp@pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca)

*Aussi disponible en français*

[http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans-habitat/habitat/modernizing-moderniser/epmp-pmpe/index\\_f.asp](http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans-habitat/habitat/modernizing-moderniser/epmp-pmpe/index_f.asp)

DFO/2007-1283

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# NOTIFICATION FORM

## Fisheries and Oceans Canada Pacific Region Operational Statement

Version 3.1

### PROPONENT INFORMATION

NAME: STREET ADDRESS:  
CITY/TOWN: PROVINCE/TERRITORY: POSTAL CODE:  
TEL. NO. (RESIDENCE): TEL. NO. (WORK):  
FAX NO: EMAIL ADDRESS:

### CONTRACTOR INFORMATION (provide this information if a Contractor is working on behalf of the Proponent)

NAME: STREET ADDRESS:  
CITY/TOWN: PROVINCE/TERRITORY: POSTAL CODE:  
TEL. NO. (RESIDENCE): TEL. NO. (WORK):  
FAX NO: EMAIL ADDRESS:

### PROJECT INFORMATION

#### Select Operational Statements that are being used (check all applicable boxes):

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aquatic Vegetation Removal in Lakes                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Ice and Snow Fill Bridges                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Routine Maintenance Dredging for Navigation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bridge Maintenance  | <input type="checkbox"/> Isolated Pond Construction                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Small Moorings                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Culvert Maintenance                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance of Riparian Vegetation<br>in Existing Rights-of-Way | <input type="checkbox"/> Small Clear-Span Bridges                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Directional Drilling                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Overhead Line Construction                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Temporary Ford Crossings                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dock and Boathouse Construction<br>in Fresh Water Systems | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Beach Maintenance  | <input type="checkbox"/> Underwater Cables in Fresh Water Systems    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dry Open-Cut Crossings                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Punch and Bore Crossings  |  |

#### Select the type of water body or watercourse at or near your project:

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> River, Stream, Creek         | <input type="checkbox"/> Marine (Ocean or Sea) | <input type="checkbox"/> Pond or wetland (pond is less than 8 hectares) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lake (8 hectares or greater) | <input type="checkbox"/> Estuary               |   |

### PROJECT LOCATION (S) (fill out this section if the project location is different from Proponent Information; append multiple project locations on an additional sheet if necessary)

Name of water body or watercourse	Coordinates of the Project (UTM co-ordinate or Degrees, Minutes, Seconds), if available
Nearest Town to site	Easting: Northing: Latitude: Longitude:
Legal Description (Plan, Block, Lot, Concession, Township, Section, Range)	Directions to Access the Project Site (i.e., Route or highway number, etc.)
Proposed Start Date (YYYY/MM/DD):	Proposed Completion Date (YYYY/MM/DD):

Please notify DFO, preferably 10 working days before starting your work, by filling out and sending in, by mail, email or by fax, this notification form to the DFO Regional Headquarters. This information is requested in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the work carried out in relation to the Operational Statement.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (print name) certify that the information given on this form is, to the best of my knowledge, correct and complete.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** If you cannot meet all of the conditions and cannot incorporate all of the measures in the Operational Statement then your project may result in a violation of Subsection 35(1) of the *Fisheries Act* and you could be subject to enforcement action. In this case, you should contact the DFO office in your area if you wish to obtain DFO's opinion on the possible options you should consider to avoid contravention of the *Fisheries Act*.

Information about the above-noted proposed work or undertaking is collected by DFO under the authority of the *Fisheries Act* for the purpose of administering the fish habitat protection provisions of the *Fisheries Act*. Personal information will be protected under the provisions of the *Privacy Act* and will be stored in the Personal Information Bank DFO-SCI-605. Under the *Privacy Act*, individuals have a right to, and on request shall be given access to, any personal information about them contained in a personal information bank. Instructions for obtaining personal information are contained in the Government of Canada's Info Source publications available at [www.infosource.gc.ca](http://www.infosource.gc.ca) or in Government of Canada offices. Information other than "personal" information may be accessible or protected as required by the provisions of the *Access to Information Act*.

This Notification Form (Version 3.1) may be updated as required by Fisheries and Oceans Canada. It is your responsibility to use the most recent version. Please refer to the Operational Statements web site at [http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans-habitat/habitat/modernizing-moderniser/epmp-pmpe/index\\_e.asp](http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans-habitat/habitat/modernizing-moderniser/epmp-pmpe/index_e.asp) to ensure that a more recent version has not been released.

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## DFO REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS

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