

Skagit River Bridge

Facts & Statistics

- Bridge was built in 1955. 58 years old. (WSDOT)
- In the most recent inspection it was listed as “functionally obsolete” Federal Highway Administration (FHA).
- Prior to the collapse, the bridge was last inspected in November 2013. (WSDOT).
- There were no signs leading up to the bridge warning about its clearance height. (WSDOT)
- The bridge has a sufficiency rating of 57.4 out of 100. 80 is the statewide average bridge sufficiency rating. (FHA)
- The Skagit River Bridge is a “fracture critical” bridge. A “fracture critical” bridge is defined by the FHWA as a steel member in tension, or with a tension element, whose failure would probably cause a portion of or the entire bridge to collapse. Fracture critical bridges, of which there are a total of about 18,000 throughout the U.S., lack redundancy, which means that in the event of a steel member’s failure there is no path for the transfer of the weight being supported by that member to hold up the bridge.
- NTSB Chairman Deborah Hersman said the driver had a permit for a load measuring 15 feet, 9 inches and he reported measuring the height of his load multiple times along the route. But Hersman said the bridge portal is higher in the middle than it is on the outside corners near the shoulders. ***“The permit was for 15 feet, 9 inches. This bridge, at its lowest point, the clearance is 14 feet, 6 inches.*** The bridge clearance, at its lowest point, that’s on the outside of the bridge near the shoulder - and as I mentioned it’s an elliptical bridge so you have more clearance towards the middle of the bridge – those clearances, those heights, are not posted on the bridge, and so it is the responsibility of the operator, solely to determine if they can clear through all of the structures on their route,” said Hersman. ***Washington state does not require vertical clearance to be posted unless the clearance is 14 feet, 4 inches or less,*** Hersman said.
Source: <http://www.king5.com/news/local/NTSB-on-scene-of-Skagit-River-bridge-collapse-208948511.html>
- Dave Chesson, a state DOT spokesman, said ***there were no signs leading up to the bridge warning about its clearance height.***
Source:
http://seattletimes.com/html/localnews/2021049669_apusi5bridgecollapse22ndldwritethru.html