



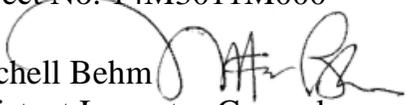
Memorandum

**U.S. Department of
Transportation**

Office of the Secretary
of Transportation
Office of Inspector General

Subject: **INFORMATION**: Audit Announcement –
Federal Railroad Administration’s Oversight of
Railroad Bridge Safety
Project No. 14M3011M000

Date: February 24, 2015

From: Mitchell Behm 
Assistant Inspector General
for Surface Transportation Audits

Reply to: JA-30
Attn. of:

To: Federal Railroad Administrator

The safety of railroad employees and the public is impacted by the structural integrity of railroad bridges. Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) records show that 24 train accidents caused by misalignment or failure of railroad bridges resulted in 392 injuries over the last 10 years. In recent years, railroad traffic has increased significantly, including the transport of hazardous materials such as crude oil.

In accordance with the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008,¹ FRA issued a rule² that requires railroad track owners to implement bridge management programs to ensure safety. The rule states that these programs must require annual bridge inspections and protection from overweight and oversize loads. Due to the potential destructive effects of bridge failures, we are initiating an audit of FRA’s oversight of railroad bridge safety. Our objective is to assess FRA’s oversight for ensuring that track owners’ bridge management programs comply with FRA’s rule on bridge safety standards.

We plan to begin this audit in March 2015, and will contact your audit liaison to schedule an entrance conference. The audit will take place at FRA Headquarters in Washington, DC, and other locations. If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact me at (202) 366-9970, Kerry R. Barras, Program Director (Audit), at (817) 978-3318, or Rodolfo Pérez, Program Director (Engineering), at (202) 366-2002.

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cc: FRA Audit Liaison, RAD-41

¹ Public Law No. 110-432, Div. A

² 49 CFR Part 237

DOT Audit Liaison, M-1