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6.4.1 Introduction

A Critical Finding (CF) is defined as a structural or safety related deficiency that requires immediate action to ensure public safety.

6.1.1 6.4.2 Critical Findings

A CF is a structural or safety related deficiency that requires immediate follow-up inspection or action.

Any of the following will be considered a CF:

- Structural conditions that, if not promptly corrected, could result in a collapse or partial collapse (or partial failure) of the tunnel. This also includes any structural condition that warrants immediate closure of the tunnel.
- Non-structural safety hazards that pose an immediate threat to the traveling public, including but not limited to deteriorated non-structural elements located above the roadway.

6.4.3 Procedures for Tunnel Team Leaders (TTL)

When a CF is identified, the safety of the traveling public must be the initial focus.

The immediate actions taken by the TTL will vary with the circumstance. Based on the conditions present, a conservative decision to limit traffic or close the tunnel should be considered until further analysis can be performed.

The CF must be submitted to the State Program Manager (SPM) and FHWA within 24 hours of discovery. If notification is via phone or verbal, then inspector shall follow up with an email notification. That notification shall be sent to the SPM, RPM, and ASPM. The email shall include all the pertinent data including pictures, sketches, and other related files in addition to the DT2026 Critical Findings Report.

The TTL will make a preliminary determination to identify the CF as Urgent or Severe per the definitions below:

An **Urgent** CF is where a deficiency is discovered which threatens the integrity of the structure. The Tunnel is closed immediately until the deficiency can be investigated. The deficiency may require tunnel replacement or major rehabilitation to put the structure back in service.

A **Severe** CF is one where either a structural deficiency or a non-structural safety hazard is discovered that necessitates immediate lane restrictions or partial closures of the structure until repairs are performed.

The SPM will record the CF for tracking in WisDOT's CF Log and will notify the FHWA within 24 hours of the incident. The owner and SPM will ensure that immediate action is taken on the closures.

Once closures are in place, a plan of action (POA) to address the CF will be developed by the owner and submitted to the SPM no later than seven (7) days after the discovery of the finding.



The SPM will review the POA and request updates, as appropriate, from the owner until the POA is completed and the CF is closed out.

6.4.4 Documentation

The Critical Finding will become a permanent record in the Tunnel file. The Critical Findings Report (DT2026) shall be used to document the incident. This form shall be included in the Tunnel file, along with all pertinent photographs, sketches, calculations, and other documents necessary.

For quarterly and annual reporting requirements to FHWA, the tunnel critical findings will be logged in the same spreadsheet as is used by WisDOT for bridge critical findings. This spreadsheet will be forwarded to FHWA on request, or at specified intervals.