

Appendix F - History of Structure Numbering

Structure numbering prior to computerised records

Prior to any form of computerised records Divisions assigned bridge numbers on various bases, such as the road number and location along it, or a simple three- or four-digit number, unique within their own Division.

Structure numbering on Development of the RSBMS

When the RSBMS was introduced in the late 1990s a single numbering system for bridges was required for consistency, however RSBMS was (and still is) a distributed system with each Division maintaining its own records. In order to ensure unique bridge numbers across the entire network Divisions used a five-digit number for each with the leading digit (1 to 6) being an agreed unique value for each Division paralleling the Divisional finance code prefixes of the time:

- 1 – Ballymena
- 2 – Belfast
- 3 – Coleraine
- 4 – Craigavon
- 5 – Downpatrick
- 6 – Omagh

Within these blocks of numbers, each Division was free to allocate numbers as they chose and generally Divisions used their original number for the trailing digits prefixed by the Divisional value and padded with zeros as necessary. This maintained a link between old records and new in that, typically, the final digits were unchanged.

With time, the 9 prefix began to be used by Eastern Division for Lisburn Section.

Sign and Signal Gantries have been recorded in RSBMS on an informal basis using numbers from the blocks allocated to the relevant Division, often in a separate higher-numbered sub-range than that used for bridges. It is intended that these gantries will transfer to the Masts and Gantries structure type in SMS-R in due course.

Changes to structure numbering at re-organisation in 1999

Upon re-organisation in 1999 most bridges retained their numbers but some which “moved Division” had to be renumbered to avoid duplication, and the leading digits 7 to 9 were substituted for the original prefix in these cases:

- 7 – Formerly Ballymena Division moved into Western Division
- 8 – Formerly Ballymena Division moved into Eastern Division
- 9 – Formerly Downpatrick Division moved into Eastern Division.

Director of Engineering Memorandum
DEM 159/17
DEM TITLE: Allocation of Structure and VRS Safety Barrier Reference Numbers

Again, this retained the link with previous bridge numbers in the new numbers.

When VRS safety barriers were required to be inventoried in this period Divisions began using their own numbering systems. An overall numbering system for structures and VRS Safety Barriers was then proposed with the prospect of a centralised structures database which aimed to allow Divisions full access to all entries in five-digit blocks of numbers (i.e 00000 to 99999) by having the Divisional marker as a separate item, as well as a further "Structure Type" identifier which extended to cover bridges, retaining walls, slopes, masts & gantries and VRS safety barriers.

Changes to structure numbering at District Council re-organisation in 2014

Following re-organisation in 2014 action was required to review numbering records to reflect changes to Divisional boundaries.

- For bridges, some blocks were effectively split and Divisions were provided with access to multiple RSBMS databases to be able to manage all bridges in their stock. Selection of new numbers is at the discretion of Divisions, with care required to ensure duplication is not created.
- For VRS safety barriers some duplication occurred where the numbering approaches chosen by different Divisions resulted in a five-digit number transferring into a new Division which had already allocated that number elsewhere. Divisions have since made their own decisions about how to refer to such installations. This includes changing a prefix (in a similar manner to bridges) or using the original number.

Structure numbering in DBFO Company records

DBFO contracts were let after the five-digit bridge numbers were allocated and they have continued to use those. New numbers, where needed, are assigned by Divisions.

For VRS safety barriers, the DBFO companies use their own numbering systems and the PPP Unit interprets these in line with blocks which were not in use at the time but now do not always represent the allocation to their current Divisional location.