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**ASCE** AMERICAN SOCIETY  
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## 2026 CLARIFICATIONS Updated 12/18/2025

**Q6.1** Does a more complex bridge design lead to higher aesthetics rankings? *Jonathan Rimington, Olivet Nazarene University*

**A.** Not necessarily. Aesthetics rank is based on both the bridge's appearance and poster. The bridge's appearance is based on several factors including balance, proportion, elegance, and finish (among other physical attributes) that may or may not be influenced by the complexity of the bridge's design. The reason for selecting the overall bridge configuration, rather than its complexity, is considered in rating the poster. [6.2.1, 6.2.1.1.1., 6.2.1.2.1]

**Q8.1** What are the dimensional and thread requirements for an element of the bridge to be considered a threaded rod? *Albert Petry, Rochester Institute of Technology*

**A.** A threaded rod is any length solid bar or hollow tube of steel that contains external threads over all or a portion of its length. A threaded rod of any kind shall not be welded to the bridge. [8.2.2.5]

**Q8.2** Does the wall thickness of the box used to check the member dimensional requirement (3'-6" x 6" x 4") influence the allowable maximum size of a member? *Dominic Thomas, Mercer University*

**A.** No. The box used to ensure a member complies with Sub-Section 8.2.2.2 has internal dimensions of 3'-6" x 6" x 4". Therefore, the wall thickness of the box used to check the member dimensional requirement does not have an influence on this requirement. [8.2.2.2]

**Q9.1** Given the elevation view of the bridge envelope, is the bottom chord of the bridge required to be stepped? *Jonathan Rimington, Olivet Nazarene University*

**A.** The bridge envelope only specifies the boundaries within which the bridge must be contained at the end of timed construction. The configuration of the bridge within these boundaries is up to individual teams provided the bridge meets all other requirements specified by the SSBC Rules. [9.3, 9.3.4]

**Q9.2** May a threaded tube be used in conjunction with either a threaded hole or another larger tube with internal threads to connect two members or separate elements of a member? *Landen Wynston, Illinois Institute of Technology*

**A.** No. A connection between members utilizing a threaded tube and threaded hole (or another larger tube with internal threads) violates the requirements that every faying surface must be penetrated by at least one loose bolt secured by a loose nut and the restriction on interlocking connections. A connection between elements of a member utilizing a threaded tube and threaded hole (or another larger tube with internal threads) violates the requirement that parts of a member be welded together. Threaded rods, defined as solid bars or hollow tubes of steel that contain external threads, also cannot be welded to the bridge. [8.2.2.1, 8.2.2.5, 8.2.2.6, 9.5.2.1, 9.5.2.3, 9.5.2.5]

**Q9.3** How many faying surfaces are associated with a parabolic contact surface? *Philippe Martel, Université Laval*

**A.** A parabolic contact surface is treated as a single faying surface provided no inflection points are present over the entire surface. Further information on curved faying surfaces can be found in the 'Connection Safety Examples' document on the Team Resources page of the [SSBC website](#). [9.5.2.2]

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**Q9.4** Is there a minimum required length for the cantilever portion of the bridge? *Dawson Walker, Harding University*

**A.** The cantilever portion of the bridge does not have a length requirement that will be checked after the completion of timed construction. However, the stringer length requirement and location of the footings dictates that the cantilever portion of the bridge will be at least 3 ft. long. [9.3.4, 9.3.5, 9.3.6]

**Q9.5** May there be parts of a member that help retain a nut in its place such that once the nut is dropped into its position, a bolt can be threaded into the nut and the bolt and nut can be tightened without the need for the nut to be constrained with a tool? *Daniel O'Malley, University of California, Los Angeles*

**A.** Yes, provided that these parts of the member do not contact another member creating additional faying surfaces and provided that the nut and threaded end of the bolt are visible to be able to check compliance with the Connection Safety requirements (Sub-Section 9.5) [9.5, 9.5.4, 9.6]

**Q10.1** May an assembly touch the ground, tools, or other members within the staging yard once timed construction has begun? *Ryan De Haas, University of California, San Diego*

**A.** Yes. There are no restrictions on members, assemblies, tools, loose nuts, or loose bolts touching each other or the ground within any part of the staging yard once timed construction has begun. [10.3.7.2, 10.6, 10.9.1]

**Q10.2** Are barges restricted from entering the navigation channel? *Ryan De Haas, University of California, San Diego; Ethan Ortega, University of Texas at El Paso; Efren M Vazquez, California State University, Northridge; Lydiana Hernandez, University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez*

**A.** No. The navigation channel is a regular part of the river in which a barge can move and construct the bridge. The navigation channel only defines the location where the bridge needs to have additional vertical clearance at the end of timed construction. At the beginning and end of timed construction, barges must be in a designated dock area. [9.3.4.1, 10.1.3, 10.1.4, 10.1.8, 10.3.6, 10.3.12, 10.4.2]

**Q10.3** For the 2026 SSBC is there only one construction zone on the east side of the river unlike past years where there have been multiple construction zones? *Kayla, University of Nevada, Las Vegas*

**A.** There is only one construction zone for the 2026 SSBC as shown in the Site Plan Drawing (DWG 1). The SSBC rules change every year, so a previous rule, site plan, bridge envelope, or load plan may not apply to the current competition. [10.1.4, 10.3.12]

**Q10.4** During timed construction, may more than one assembly be in the staging yard at one time? *Rogelio Mendez Castro, Universidad Panamericana Guadalajara*

**A.** Yes. There is no restriction on how many assemblies are present in the staging yard at one time during timed construction. [10.3.7, 10.3.7.1, 10.3.7.2, 10.4.4]

**Q10.5** Does an assembly require a connection with a bolt and a nut? *Joshua Menjivar, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona*

**A.** Yes. An assembly is formed by joining together two members in the staging yard during timed construction with one or more connections utilizing at least one bolt and nut. [glossary, 10.3.7, 10.3.7.1, 10.3.7.2]

**Q10.6** If multiple builders hold the same tool, may that tool be used to support as many members or assemblies that are not part of the constructed portion of the bridge as there are builders holding the tool? *Joshua Menjivar, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona*

**A.** No. Even though the support of multiple members is shared by the multiple builders holding the tool, each builder is still supporting all members supported by the tool. [10.3.8]

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**Q10.7** May either a builder or barge be in possession of a tool at the end of timed construction? *Joshua Menjivar, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona*

**A.** Yes. At the end of timed construction all tools must be in contact with the ground in the staging yard or in a builder's or barge's possession. [10.9.1]

**Q10.8** Do assembled tools need to be disassembled before the end of timed construction? *Joshua Menjivar, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona*

**A.** No. [10.2.4, 10.9.1]

**Q10.9** May barges enter the riverbank during timed construction? *Daniel O'Malley, University of California, Los Angeles*

**A.** No. Both non-barge builders and barges are restricted from entering the riverbank during timed construction with the exception that they may enter the riverbank to retrieve an object that has been dropped. [10.1.8, 10.4.1, 10.4.2]

**Q10.10** Is there a minimum number of builders required for timed construction? *Daniel O'Malley, University of California, Los Angeles*

**A.** There is no minimum on the number of builders a team uses for timed construction. The total number of builders (non-barge builders and barges) shall be no more than 6. [10.2.2]

**Q10.11** May parts of a builder not touching the ground, tools, assembled tools, clothing, pouches, members, assemblies, nuts, bolts, or personal protective equipment extend past the site boundary during timed construction? *Daniel O'Malley, University of California, Los Angeles*

**A.** Parts of a builder not touching the ground, tools, assembled tools, clothing, pouches, members, assemblies, nuts, bolts, or personal protective equipment may break the vertical plane above the site boundary during timed construction if it does not expose anyone to risk of injury. A constructed portion of the bridge shall never extend beyond the site boundary during timed construction. The area outside the site boundary is not controlled by the rules and teams must accommodate all local conditions during timed construction. [10.1.2, 10.3.1, 10.3.14, 10.4.1, 10.4.2, 10.4.3]

**Q10.12** May two builders simultaneously exchange the member or assembly that each is holding with the other outside of the staging yard? *Daniel O'Malley, University of California, Los Angeles*

**A.** A builder outside the staging yard shall not simultaneously support or touch more than one member or more than one assembly that is not part of a constructed portion. If the judges deem that a builder is supporting or touching more than one member or assembly at the same time, the clock will be stopped, and the judges will explain the violation. The builders will then need to use a safe procedure when resuming construction. [10.3, 10.3.8]

**Q10.13** May loose bolts and loose nuts be contained within a tool held by a builder or barge at the end of timed construction? *Daniel O'Malley, University of California, Los Angeles*

**A.** Yes. [10.9.1]

**Q10.14** May an article of clothing or personal protective equipment touch the ground without causing an accident? *Daniel O'Malley, University of California, Los Angeles*

**A.** An article of clothing such as footwear, pants, shorts, shirts, pouches, or knee pads worn by a builder may touch the ground within the staging yard, transportation zone, or construction zone without causing an accident. An article of clothing such as footwear, pants, shorts, shirts, pouches, or knee pads worn by a barge may touch the river or navigation channel without causing an accident. If personal protective equipment (hardhats and protective eyewear)

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touches the riverbank, river, ground outside the staging yard, or floor outside the site boundary, an accident has occurred, and a penalty will be assessed. [10.4.1, 10.4.2, 10.4.3]

**Q10.15** If an assembly becomes a constructed portion of the bridge, may one of the members making up the assembly then be disassembled from the assembly creating an individual member? *Daniel O'Malley, University of California, Los Angeles*

**A.** Yes. Provided that one of the members making up the assembly remains part of the constructed portion of the bridge, a builder in the construction zone or a barge in the river may disassemble one of the members from the assembly. [10.1.7, 10.3.7, 10.3.8, 10.3.11, 10.3.12, 10.3.13, 10.3.14, 10.4.4]

**Q10.16** Does the connection between members making up an assembly need to ensure that the assembly remains rigid? *Daniel O'Malley, University of California, Los Angeles*

**A.** No. There is no requirement that the assembly be rigid (i.e. no relative movement between the two connected members), but the individual members making up the assembly must be rigid. [8.2.2.1, 10.3.7, 10.3.7.1, 10.3.7.2]

**Q10.17** What is the criteria for a builder to be considered inside the construction zone during timed construction? *Daniel O'Malley, University of California, Los Angeles*

**A.** A builder is inside the construction zone if they have at least one foot on the ground completely within the construction zone and no other part of their body touching the ground outside of the construction zone. [10.1.4, 10.3.12]

**Q10.18** Is the container used to hold loose nuts and loose bolts prior to the start of timed construction and placed in the "Nuts & Bolts" area of the staging yard considered a pouch if it is worn once time construction commences? *Daniel O'Malley, University of California, Los Angeles*

**A.** No. The container is considered a tool whether or not it is worn by a builder after the start of timed construction. [10.6.1.2, 10.6.1.3, 10.6.2]

**Q10.19** Must tools be rigid? *Daniel O'Malley, University of California, Los Angeles*

**A.** No. There is no rigidity requirement for tools. The only requirements are that the tool not require external power, and it must fit within a right rectangular prism of dimensions 3'-6" x 6" x 4". [10.2.3, 10.2.4, 10.6.1.1]

**Q10.20** May spectators verbally assist builders? *Daniel O'Malley, University of California, Los Angeles*

**A.** No. Other team members, associates of the team, coaches, faculty, advisers, and spectators shall not interfere with the competition. This includes but is not limited to verbally assisting the builders. [10.2.1]

**Q11.1** If a portion of the bridge deflects upward from its initialized point, will the deflection be counted as zero or negative when computing the aggregate deflection? *Philippe Martel, Université Laval*

**A.** The aggregate deflection is computed by adding the absolute values of the deflections at D1 and D2. [11.5.2, 11.5.3]

**Q11.2** What type of material will the bridge rest on during the lateral and vertical load test? *Daniel O'Malley, University of California, Los Angeles*

**A.** The floor material or material that the bridge will rest on during the lateral and vertical load test are determined at the discretion of the host school. [11.3, 11.4.1]