

A guide to temporary traffic control at construction sites



While traffic control impacts almost everyone who drives or walks on or near roadways, it is crucial to contractors who work on road construction projects, or projects which may be impacted by nearby roadways. Proper traffic control will not only improve worker safety, but the safety of others in the area. When determining what type of traffic control plan will be needed for public roads, it is likely that contacting the local municipality, county, or state agency for guidance will be required.



When working on or near a roadway, it may be necessary to develop a plan to protect motorists, pedestrians, cyclists and workers in the area.

When is temporary traffic control needed?

While the requirement for a traffic control plan may not always be readily evident, there is guidance available for making a determination. The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) advises that a trained person, designated by the employer, should be utilized to assess the worksite and work to be performed, to determine which type(s) of protective measures to utilize.

OSHA's "General Duty Clause", Section 5(a)(1) of the Occupational Safety and Health Act requires the provision of a workplace free from recognized hazards that cause or likely to cause death or serious physical harm.

If your organization does not have the personnel capable of engineering a Temporary Traffic Control plan, you may wish to utilize a company which specializes in this area. Many of the companies providing traffic control equipment also have the resources to provide an appropriate plan or provide direction on specific steps you may need to take in the area you are working. Proper implementation of the traffic control plan will require employee training and use of a competent person for monitoring the exposures and effectiveness of the traffic control plan.

Benefits of a temporary traffic control plan

Use of an effective, temporary traffic control plan will provide several benefits. Those benefits include but are not limited to:

- Improved worker safety
- Improved public safety
- Control of liability exposures
- Reduction of business interruption potential

Items to consider

When developing, using, and evaluating a Temporary Traffic Control plan, it is important to follow the tips and guidelines below.

Equipment safety devices must be used and maintained:

- Strobe lights
- Back-up alarms
- Window rolled down to hear surroundings
- Mirrors installed and in good condition
- Integrity of signs, cones/channeling devices, strobe lights, and hi-vis clothing

Ensure frequent inspections and feedback on the following items:

- Tire marks on pavement or screech sounds could be warning of inadequate controls
- Displaced channeling devices
- Horn blowing from traffic
- Negative verbal feedback from drivers, pedestrians, etc.

Potential hazards

Use extra caution for petextrians (distracted pedestrians with phones). Don't assume pedestrians see equipment and trucks.

Use extra caution near the following areas:

- Schools
- Universities
- Crosswalks
- Retail areas
- Parking lots
- Driveways
- Bus stops
- Emergency vehicles
- Postal deliveries
- Senior centers

Equipment hazards

Ensure proper jobsite management of equipment and materials, such as:

- Laydown areas away from blind curves
- Avoid storage that may spill onto road way (i.e. aggregate spill on curve that wipes out a motorcycle)
- Accessibility for wheelchairs
- Buffers (attenuation vehicle) for collision avoidance
- Remove keys from parked/idle vehicles or equipment (avoid attractive nuisance)
- Don't block fire hydrants, fire lanes or prepare an emergency lane
- Site specific safety plan with emergency numbers
- Investigation program and documentation of crashes
- Request law enforcement assistance with traffic

Other hazards to avoid

- Having pedestrians walk in traffic
- Backing vehicles
- Hidden views behind equipment, material, trucks, etc.



Resources

To assist with traffic control planning, the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) is available, at no cost, in PDF format, via [the Federal Highway Administration \(FHWA\) website](#). Also, some states have adopted state-specific manuals which substantially conform to the National Manual. The FHWA website also provides a list of those specific states.

Other useful resources include:

[American Traffic Safety Services Association](#)

[National Work Zone Safety Clearinghouse](#)

[NIOSH Highway Work Zone Safety](#)

[OSHA Highway Work Zone Safety](#)

[Federal Highway Administration Work Zone Management Program](#)

If additional guidance is needed, please contact your Nationwide Loss Control Services representative.

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