



Flagging Operations

In 2022, more than 25,000 traffic crashes occurred in work zones in Texas, resulting in 205 deaths and another 788 serious injuries. Those statistics show that working as a road construction traffic “flagger” requires a keen awareness of safety protocols to ensure the well-being of both workers and motorists. A flagger should stay **R.O.A.D. Ready** by continuously: (1) recognizing the hazards; (2) observing people, processes, and equipment; (3) assessing the risk level; and (4) determining the safest course of action. Doing so while following this step-by-step guide will allow a flagger to execute their responsibilities effectively, while minimizing the risks associated with controlling traffic in construction zones.

1. **Wear Appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):**

Prioritize safety by wearing high-visibility clothing, such as a reflective vest, gloves, and a hard hat. Make sure your clothing meets industry standards for visibility. For daytime and nighttime activity, flaggers must wear safety apparel that meets Class 2 or 3 requirements of ANSI/ISEA 107-2004 and labeled as meeting the performance for Class 2 or 3.

2. **Attend Training:** Familiarize yourself with the responsibilities of a traffic flagger. Know when and how to stop, slow, or guide traffic safely by completing the necessary training courses on flagging procedures and safety guidelines. Stay updated on any changes in regulations or best practices.

3. **Know Your Work Zone:** Position yourself safely, be familiar with traffic control devices and familiarize yourself with the layout of the work zone, including escape routes, emergency exits, and the location of other workers. Be aware of potential hazards.

4. **Communication is Key:** Use standardized signals to establish effective communication with other flaggers, construction workers, and drivers. Use two-way radios or hand signals to coordinate movements. Make eye contact with drivers whenever possible.

5. **Stay Alert and Focused:** Avoid distractions while flagging and anticipate driver behavior. Stay focused on your duties and be alert to changing conditions. If you need a break, request assistance from a fellow flagger.

6. **Prepare for Emergency Situations:** Have a plan for responding to emergencies, such as accidents or aggressive drivers. Know escape routes and the location of emergency services.



Resources

- [Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices](#) (MUTCD Part 6, the “Bible” of traffic control)
- [National Work Zone Safety Clearinghouse](#)
- [Flagger Safety \(English\)](#)
- [Flagger Safety \(Spanish\)](#)
- [Online Learning Center](#) - Work Zone Safety
- [TMLIRP Media Library](#) - Defensive Flagging: A Survivor's Guide #23, and Safety First: Work Area Traffic Control #80