Loss Prevention T.I.P.S.
Together Improving Processes & Safety

Work Zones: Traffic Control Planning

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 effective traffic control measures are essential to preventing accidents. Employees working in and around construction zones 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 them to execute their responsibilities effectively, while minimizing the risks associated with controlling traffic in construction zones.

1. **Conduct a Comprehensive Site Assessment:** Before initiating any work, conduct a thorough assessment of the work zone. Identify key factors such as traffic volume, speed limits, road geometry, and existing signage. This initial step provides crucial insights into the specific challenges posed by the site, allowing the traffic control plan to be tailored accordingly.

2. **Develop a Site-Specific Traffic Control Plan:** A one-size-fits-all approach is insufficient in work zone safety. Craft a site-specific traffic control plan that aligns with the unique characteristics of each project. Consider factors such as the type of work being performed, the duration of the project, and the impact on traffic flow. Clearly communicate the presence of a work zone well in advance, giving motorists ample time to adjust their speed and lane position.

3. **Comply with Regulatory Standards:** Adhere to all relevant local, state, and federal regulations governing work zone safety. Familiarize yourself and your team with the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)* guidelines and ensure that your traffic control plan complies with these and other state and local standards.

4. **Consider Traffic Flow and Minimize Disruption:** Strive to minimize disruptions to traffic flow whenever possible. Implement strategies such as off-peak work hours, alternating lane closures, or temporary road diversions to maintain a smoother traffic flow.

5. **Train Personnel on Traffic Control Procedures:** All personnel involved in the work zone must be well-versed in traffic control procedures. Provide comprehensive training on apparel, communications, the use of traffic control devices, proper flagging techniques, and emergency response protocols. Regular refresher courses can help ensure that everyone remains current on safety procedures. Solicit feedback from team members regularly.

6. **Emphasize a Safety Culture:** Above all, instill a safety-first culture within the team. Prioritize the well-being of everyone involved in the project, including workers and motorists. Encourage a proactive approach to identifying and addressing potential safety hazards, fostering an environment where everyone feels empowered to contribute to a safer work zone.

Resources

- TMLIRP's Media Library contains multiple DVD's related to this topic that are department specific.
- The Texas Department of Insurance offers Workplace Safety Videos focusing on work zone safety including "Work Zone Safety" by TML Risk Pool, "5 TIPS For Safe Driving in Work Zones," and a comprehensive series on "Avoiding Fatalities."
- FHWA Traffic Analysis Toolbox: **https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/trafficanalysistools/**
- MUTCD - Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices: **https://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/**
- ITE - Institute of Transportation Engineers: **https://www.ite.org/**
- NACTO - National Association of City Transportation Officials: **https://nacto.org/**
- ATSSA - American Traffic Safety Services Association: **https://www.atssa.com/**