



Weekly Safety Meeting

Flagger Safety

A flagger is a person who provides temporary traffic control. The two primary functions of traffic control procedures are to:

- Move vehicles and pedestrians safely, and as quickly as possible, through or around temporary traffic control zones; and
- Protect workers and on-site equipment.

To maintain the primary functions, flaggers are a critical component of worksite safety related to traffic control.

In 2017, 132 workers died in roadway work zone crashes, according to WorkZoneSafety.org.

Studies have shown that worksites using flaggers are less likely to incur accidents when used in addition to other traffic control devices, and yet the job of flagger itself is probably the most dangerous and challenging position in the work zone.

Flaggers must have a sense of responsibility for the safety of the public and workers and be trained in safe traffic control practices.

Flaggers must be in good physical condition (including vision and hearing), be mentally alert, and have the ability to react quickly in an emergency.

High-visibility Clothing:

For daytime work, the flagger's vest, shirt, or jacket shall be either orange, yellow, yellow-green, or a fluorescent version of these colors. For nighttime work, similar outside garments shall be retroreflective. The retroreflective material shall be either orange, yellow, white, silver, yellow-green, or a fluorescent version of these colors, and shall be visible at a minimum distance of 1,000 ft. The retroreflective clothing shall be designed to clearly identify the wearer as a person.

Hand Signaling Devices:

Hand signaling devices such as STOP/SLOW paddles, lights, and red flags, are an essential part of controlling traffic in temporary control zones.

The STOP/SLOW paddle should be the primary and preferred hand-signaling device because the paddle gives road users more positive guidance than red flags. Use of flags should be limited to emergency situations.

Hand signaling devices not only have required design dimensions but have required methods of use. These methods are designed to keep the flagger out of the way of traffic and yet give the traffic direct visible guidance as to the action which the flagger requires. It is very important to know how to use the STOP/SLOW paddles and flags correctly.

The most important thing all flaggers must remember is to NEVER place your body or any part of your body in the path of a motor vehicle.

Stop/Slow Paddles:

Stop/slow paddles shall have an octagonal shape on a rigid handle. The paddles shall be at least 18 in. wide with letters at least 6 in. high and should be fabricated from light semi-rigid material. The background of the Stop face shall be red with white letters and border. The background of the Slow face shall be orange with black letters and border. When used at night, the Stop/Slow paddle shall be retro reflectorized. The Stop/Slow paddle may be modified to improve night visibility by incorporating white flashing lights.

Flagger Stations:

Must be located far enough ahead of the workspace so that approaching traffic has sufficient time to stop before entering the work zone. The distance is related to variables like approach speed, friction factors, pavement type, and conditions and tire capabilities. The flagger should stand either on the shoulder adjacent to the traffic being controlled or in the barricaded lane. At a “spot” construction, a position may have to be taken on the shoulder opposite the barricaded section to operate effectively. Flaggers should NEVER stand in the path of oncoming traffic to give direction but may move into the lane after the traffic has stopped if they need to communicate with the driver or need to be visible to other traffic.

Flaggers should be clearly visible to approaching traffic at all times.

It is suggested that the flagger have an escape route to use in the event a vehicle does break all the rules.

- The most effective combination of traffic control devices for work zones on multi-lane highways is cones, flashing arrows, and flaggers; for urban two-lane highways it is cones and flaggers, or signs and flaggers. Traffic movement should be restricted as little as practicable;
- Inspections of the traffic controls and working conditions should be completed at least twice a day and as needed based on performance of the devices to guide traffic safely. Inspections at a minimum should be done before work begins and midday;
- Adequate warning must be given to the motorists so they have time to interpret the warning and respond appropriately;
- Drivers and pedestrians should be guided in a clear and obvious manner throughout the work zone;
- Use barriers whenever there is a need for positive protection as determined by an engineering analysis; and

- Periodically inspect the devices. Repair or replace any damaged or missing devices. All devices should be clean.

Summary:

Working in traffic areas always presents some risks. It takes everyone working together to minimize hazards and create a safer work environment. Follow all safety policies and procedures and, if you are ever unsure about how to safely perform flagging duties, see your supervisor immediately.

BE ALERT! EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED!!

