



Work Zone Safety Bulletin

April 2002

TRAFFIC CONTROL PLANS (TCP'S)

TCP's are a required and necessary component of most work zones and may be the single most important tool for safe and effective traffic control operations when used appropriately. The following information explains the requirements for use of TCP's.

The following requirements are the *minimum allowed*. Supervisors must consider all work zone conditions and determine if additional traffic control and protective measures are needed. A TCP that accurately depicts the work zone and traffic control measures needed to safely provide for all traffic movements, traffic mobility and worker safety must be selected and implemented. The requirements for the following types of work zones provide the basic compliance level for most operations.

- Work zones (including all workers, materials and equipment) that are;
 - Behind approved traffic barriers
 - More than 2 feet behind a curb
 - 15 feet or more from the roadway shoulder

May not need traffic control devices or a TCP, if approved by the crew supervisor.

This is the only type of work zone that does not require advance warning to drivers.

All other work zones require advance warning as appropriate; hazard beacon, signs, etc.

- Intermittent work operations that use short stops of up to 15 minutes that are;
 - At low volume locations, or
 - At low speed locations, or (40 MPH or less)
 - On the roadway shoulder

May not need traffic control devices, (other than the work vehicle warning beacon) or TCP if approved by the crew supervisor.

60 minutes is the maximum time limit allowed if several intermittent work operations and locations are conducted within a 1-mile area. (See short duration or stationary work operation requirements.)

- Short Duration work operations lasting up to 60 minutes that are;
 - At low volume locations, or
 - At low speed locations, or (40 MPH or less)
 - On the roadway shoulder

May use simplified traffic control procedures, but still require an approved TCP.

- Long Term work operations lasting over 1 hour all require TCP's.
- Mobile work operations that generally move continuously at low speeds may require specialized TCP's to address the operations specific needs. The supervisor must ensure that an approved TCP is utilized.
- Operations that use flaggers must incorporate the flagger station and all other flagging requirements into the work operation. More than one TCP may be used if appropriate.
- Emergency response traffic control requirements allow the use of the best available devices for the first hour. Emergency response that lasts for more than an hour should implement appropriate traffic control measures in coordination with the on site emergency services authority. (see the Traffic Control Guidelines Book M54-44)
- Special work operations, such as;
 - Survey Crews
 - Roadway Testing Crews
 - Inspection
 - Traffic Data CollectionAre all required to use an approved TCP that conforms to the above listed requirements. Supervisors of these crews must ensure that appropriate TCP's are used.
- Work zone conditions are just as important as using the correct TCP and must be considered when selecting the TCP and planning for the work operation. Conditions such as;
 - High volume traffic hours
 - Weather conditions
 - Pedestrians and Bikes

Resources for TCP's, development and approval are available through;

- Traffic Control Guidelines Book, (M54-44)
- MUTCD Part VI
- Region Traffic Office

TCP's provide a focus point for supervisors and crews to plan ahead for the needed equipment, address work zone safety and traffic conditions and get all crew members on the same page. The TCP is also a reminder of what standards are involved and is your best evidence of compliance to those standards.

Remember, TCP's do not necessarily have to be complex or require lots of development time for every operation. Basic operations may be able to use the preapproved TCP's from the Traffic Control Guidelines Book (or slightly modified version) or other TCP's based on the MUTCD Part VI typical application diagrams. Original, specific, highly modified or complex TCP's should be developed in coordination with and approved by the Region Traffic Office.

The following excuses for not using or complying with the above TCP requirements are not acceptable and won't save you from an L&I citation, Law Enforcement citation, lawsuit, department corrective action, or worse yet a death or injury resulting from a work zone crash.

- "we've always done it this way"
- "we didn't have the right signs"
- "we didn't have enough cones"
- "we've never had a problem before"

Supervisors and Crew Members, consider this bulletin as a reminder to take the opportunity to review your work operations and ensure that the correct TCP's are in use. Many work zone operations take place in a harsh and unforgiving environment. The very nature of our work presents hazards that we all must recognize and take proper action to minimize the potential for an incident.