



Public Sector Safety Talks—APERMA

Short-Term Roadside Work: 7 Rules for Staying



The whoosh of traffic as cars fly by can be an unsettling feeling, and you probably know it well if you are involved in maintenance work or other short-term operations near roadways. Jobs like pothole patching, vegetation control, traffic signal repair all put you in close contact with drivers who may be unsure how to respond to your presence.

Follow these seven rules of temporary traffic control to help make sure you stay safe while working roadside.

1. Plan Ahead for *Everyone's* Safety

The goal of temporary traffic control is to help road users (drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians) move safely and efficiently through work zones while also protecting workers. Balancing these goals requires some advance planning, no matter how small the roadside project.

- While efficiency is important, the *safety* of the workers and road users is the most important fact to consider when planning a roadside task.
- Consider the needs of vehicles and pedestrians that will be traveling near your work area. When planning your detours, don't forget about pedestrians with disabilities who may need an accessible route.
- Make sure all workers are outfitted with the appropriate high visibility clothing.

2. Avoid Drastic Changes Whenever Possible

If you have to redirect the movement of road users—whether they are vehicles, bicycles or pedestrians—the goal is to make those changes as small as possible to avoid surprises that drivers may not know how to respond to. Changes to traffic patterns should be gradual. Don't force rapid vehicle maneuvers.

3. Make Sure Guidance is Clear and Positive

Road users shouldn't have to guess about where they are supposed to walk or drive.

- Give adequate advance warning to all users of upcoming temporary traffic control zones.
- Use appropriate traffic control devices, such as cones or portable sign supports.
- Remove/cover any conflicting signage to help prevent confusion.
- Use flaggers when necessary.



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4. Maintain Your Signage

Keep your traffic control devices in good shape with regular inspection and maintenance.

- Check on control devices regularly, and repair or replace promptly if needed.
- As the project progresses, modify your signage and control devices accordingly.

5. Be Prepared for the Unexpected

Despite your best-laid plans, unexpected events will occur. Help minimize the interruption of these roadside incidents by thinking ahead.

- Provide a recovery area for errant vehicles.
- Store your equipment and materials where they won't get hit.

6. Make Sure Workers Receive Required Training

Everyone involved in the planning, design, construction and maintenance of your temporary traffic control zones should have the appropriate safety training to understand what is being done and why.

7. Maintain Good Public Relations

Communicating proactively with the community works in your favor. Informed users are better prepared to react to changes, or they might choose another route entirely.

- Provide advance notice with on-site signage, and work with appropriate news media to publicize projects that are likely to affect more road users.
- Consider the needs of neighboring property and business owners and make allowances for them when possible.
- Address the needs of all emergency service providers.

**Should you have any questions or need additional safety topics, please feel free to contact us. Phil Hinton
601-956-5810**

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