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**Acronyms in this issue**

AASHTO American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials  
 CTRE Center for Transportation Research and Education  
 FHWA Federal Highway Administration

Iowa DOT Iowa Department of Transportation  
 ISU Iowa State University  
 LTAP Local Technical Assistance Program  
 MUTCD Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices

## Tailoring traffic control plans for specific projects

THE 2002 construction season is right around the corner. As you prepare bid documents, remember to include a carefully thought-out traffic control plan.

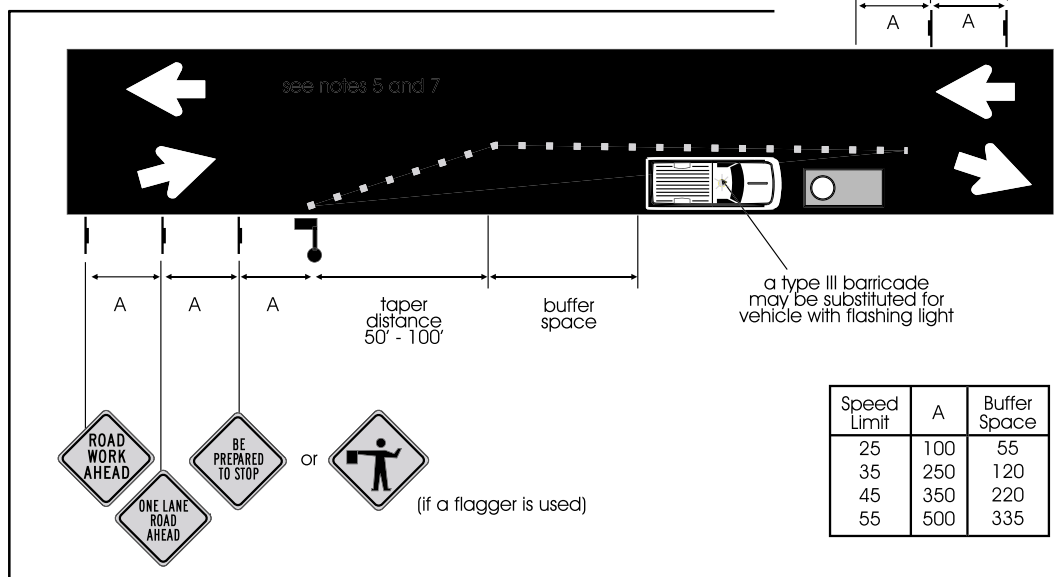
Developing a traffic control plan specific to each work site can help transportation agencies protect road workers and users, minimize inconvenience to motorists, and reduce agencies' potential exposure to tort liability.

**Goals for a traffic control plan**

The level of detail in traffic control plans for work zones may vary, but at a minimum such a plan should

- implement MUTCD recommendations, state and city specifications, and your agency's policies,

*TRAFFIC continued on page 2*



Even a typical traffic control plan for a one-lane closure of a higher volume, two-lane gravel roadway should be finetuned for the specific project and site. (This and other "standard" traffic control plans are discussed in *Iowa Traffic Control Devices and Pavement Markings: A Manual for Cities and Counties.*)

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Iowa's LTAP is housed and administered at Iowa State University's Center for Transportation Research and Education (CTRE):

ISU Research Park  
2901 S. Loop Dr., Suite 3100  
Ames, IA 50010-8632  
515-294-8103 (voice)  
515-294-0467 (fax)  
www.ctre.iastate.edu/

Stephen J. Andrle  
Director of CTRE  
andrle@iastate.edu

Duane Smith  
Director of Iowa LTAP  
desmith@iastate.edu

Marcia Brink  
Editor  
mbrink@iastate.edu

Tom McDonald  
Safety Circuit Rider  
tmcdonal@iastate.edu

Sharon Prochnow  
Program Coordinator  
prochnow@iastate.edu

Melanie Auen  
Bridget Moore-Riannon  
Michele Regenold  
Contributing Writers

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## **TRAFFIC continued from page 1**

- be consistent throughout,
- allow for adequate protection in the work zone,
- reduce liability exposure,
- lessen contract administration conflicts, and
- minimize traffic disruption.

### **On site and pre-/post-bid planning**

Development of a work zone traffic control plan should begin with a field review of the site. During such a review,

- determine the degree of roadway restriction that will be necessary,
- anticipate effects on traffic of potential traffic control measures,
- record existing traffic control alternatives, important road features, traffic volumes and speed, and type of traffic control devices needed, and
- consider homeowners, businesses, and services when planning closures and detours.

Back in the office, use field notes, specifications, recommendations, and experience to develop alternative traffic control plans for the work zone. When preparing a cost analysis for high traffic volume locations, consider traffic delay time, out of distance travel, and effects on project schedule (see the note about QuickZone on the next page).

Include your final traffic control plan with your bid documents. When the project is let, be open to the contractor's suggestions for alterations to the plan that might improve safety, efficiency, and cost effectiveness.

### **Ongoing inspection**

Once temporary traffic control for a work zone is established, it will require ongoing inspection, monitoring, and documentation.

Begin with an initial detailed inspection immediately after implementation. Inspections should compare the traffic control plan to actual conditions at the work site, carefully considering visibility of traffic control devices and the overall effectiveness of the traffic control setup.

If any traffic flow problems are observed, alter the setup.

Many local and state transportation agencies have developed standard forms for assessing temporary work zone traffic control conditions. Inspection forms include information about traffic control devices and flagger operations.

Colorado's LTAP suggests using the following simple checklist for regular, day and night drive-through inspections, asking yourself, "What does the driver see?"

1. All devices meet specifications and quality standards.
2. Traffic control flaggers and other staff are adequately trained and equipped.
3. All signs are properly installed and legible and are covered, turned, or removed when not needed.
4. Arrow displays and portable changeable message signs are properly aligned and maintained.
5. Taper and buffer lengths meet specifications.
6. Channeling devices are clean, aligned, and appropriately spaced.
7. Temporary barriers and attenuators are properly installed and maintained.
8. Pavement markings are in place at the end of the work shift.

### **For more information**

Developing, implementing, and maintaining an effective traffic control plan may be time consuming, but the benefits for road workers and users make the investment worthwhile.

For more information about developing a traffic control plan for work zones, contact Tom McDonald, Iowa's Safety Circuit Rider, 515-294-6384, tmcdonal@iastate.edu. •

