

Work Zone Impacts Assessment

The **Final Rule on Work Zone Safety and Mobility** was published on September 9, 2004, in the *Federal Register*. All state and local governments that receive federal-aid funding are required to comply with the provisions of this rule no later than October 12, 2007.

The rule updates and broadens the former regulation at 23 CFR 630 Subpart J to address more of the current issues affecting work zone safety and mobility. Within the rule are three primary components:

- Implementation of an overall, state-level work zone safety and mobility **policy**.
- Development and implementation of standard **processes and procedures** to support policy implementation, including procedures for work zone impacts assessment, analyzing work zone data, training, and process reviews.
- Development and implementation of procedures to assess and manage work zone impacts on individual **projects**. This includes requirements for identifying *significant projects* and developing and implementing transportation management plans (TMPs). A *significant project* is defined in the rule as one that, alone or in combination with other concurrent projects nearby, is anticipated to cause sustained work zone impacts that are greater than what is considered tolerable based on state policy and/or engineering judgment.

The full text of the rule can be found at http://www.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/wz/docs/wz_final_rule.pdf.

While the rule encourages agencies to develop and implement procedures for work zone impacts assessment, it does not prescribe any specific approach. To assist agencies with developing their own procedures for assessing the work zone impacts of road projects, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is developing a work zone impacts assessment guidance document. The document will set forth some guiding principles for work zone impacts assessment.

This fact sheet provides an introduction to the forthcoming guidance document.

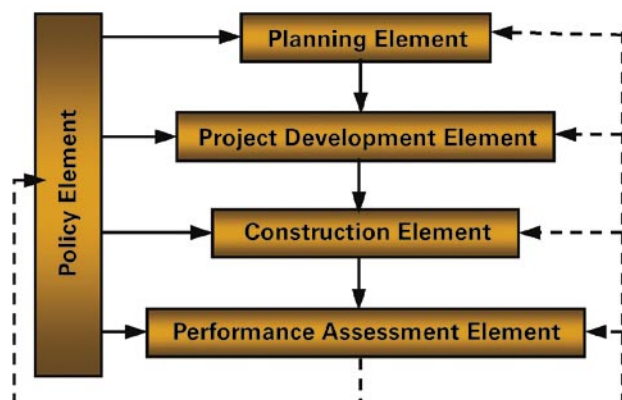
What Are the Benefits of Work Zone Impacts Assessment?

Assessing work zone impacts is intended to help transportation professionals:

- Understand the work zone safety and mobility impacts of their road projects.
- Understand the work zone safety and mobility implications of alternative project options and design strategies.
- Identify *significant projects*.
- Identify transportation management strategies that help manage the expected work zone impacts of a project.
- Develop a suitable TMP for a road project.
- Implement a TMP and monitor and manage the impacts of a project during construction.
- Provide guidance and input to conduct post-construction performance assessment studies.

Contents of the Guidance Document

The guidance document provides a general approach for assessing the potential impacts of road projects and developing strategies to manage the expected impacts. The approach is envisioned as a decision support tool. The impacts assessment process presented in the guidance document consists of five elements that represent the major activities of program delivery. As illustrated in the following figure, information from one element of the impacts assessment process feeds into the other elements. For example, what is learned through performance assessment could lead to changes in a state's policies.



- **Policy Element.** The policy element provides guidance on assessing, developing, and applying work zone safety and mobility policies. It is intended to help agencies use their existing policies and further develop them, as needed, to implement an overall work zone safety and mobility policy.
- **Systems Planning Element.** The systems planning element sets forth guidance on incorporating work zone safety and mobility in long range and short-term transportation planning. It provides a systematic decision structure at the systems planning level to identify potential work zone impacts of projects; identify potential transportation management strategies and estimate their costs; and schedule projects so as to minimize their cumulative impacts.
- **Project Development Element.** The project development element provides decision support in progressively assessing the work zone impacts of individual projects through the various stages of project development, and in developing an appropriate TMP for the project. The level of impacts assessment and the strategies included in the TMP will vary with the type, duration, size, length, and anticipated work zone impacts of the project.
- **Construction Element.** The construction element provides guidance on implementing the TMP, monitoring the impacts of the project during construction, and revising the TMP, if necessary.
- **Performance Assessment Element.** The performance assessment element provides guidance on assessing the performance of individual work zones, conducting process reviews, and using the information from the reviews to improve the agency's work zone processes and procedures.

Within the guidance document, a variety of methods will be used to describe recommended activities and decision-making factors for each of these elements:

- Process diagrams
- Work-flow explanations
- Decision matrices
- Real-world examples
- Links to locations where more detailed information may be obtained on the example cases

Implementation Guidance

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is currently developing an Implementation Guidance document to help state and local transportation agencies implement the provisions of the work zone final rule and attain compliance. To supplement the overall Implementation Guidance document, FHWA is also developing a suite of companion guidance documents that will provide more detail on the following aspects of the final rule:

- Work Zone Impacts Assessment
- Work Zone Transportation Management Plans (TMPs)
- Work Zone Public Information and Outreach Strategies

The guidance documents will be available in late 2005 and will provide guidelines and sample approaches for implementing the rule, examples from states using practices that relate to the rule, and sources for more information.

This fact sheet is one in a series of final rule fact sheets meant to increase awareness and understanding of the rule and the products being developed to assist agencies with implementation of the rule. Fact sheets are available for the three specific guidance document topics as well as for the final rule itself.

All final rule resources will be posted to http://www.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/wz/resources/final_rule.htm as they become available.

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