

Final Rule on Work Zone Safety and Mobility

The *Final Rule on Work Zone Safety and Mobility* was published on September 9, 2004, in the *Federal Register*. This rule updates and broadens the former regulation on “Traffic Safety in Highway and Street Work Zones” (23 CFR 630 Subpart J). All state and local governments that receive federal-aid highway funding are affected by this rule and are required to comply with the provisions of this rule no later than October 12, 2007.

The Rule:

- Focuses on a state-level work zone policy approach to institutionalize work zone processes and procedures.
- Reflects changing times to address more traffic, more congestion, greater safety issues, and more work zones.
- Broadens the regulation to address more of the current issues affecting work zone “safety” and “mobility.”
- Facilitates customer-focused project development for comprehensive consideration of “work zone impacts.”

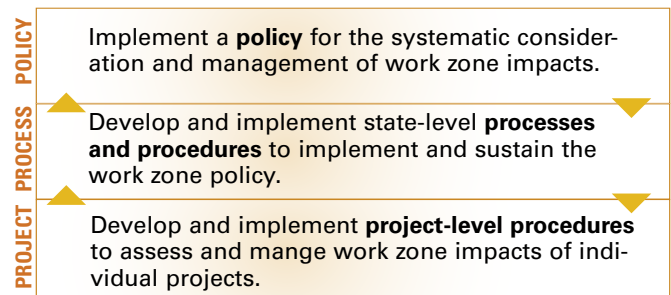
Why Update the Rule?

- Many of our roads are facing growing traffic volumes and congestion.
 - Vehicle travel is up, but there has been very little growth in road miles.
- Our highways are approaching middle age.
 - More construction and repair are needed, which means more work zones.
- A growing portion of this work is rehabilitation done under traffic.
 - More traffic exposed to work zones and more workers exposed to traffic.
 - Compressed contractor schedules.
 - Increasing night work.
- Work zone safety is a concern.
 - More than 41,000 injuries and 1,028 fatalities in 2003
- Travelers are not happy with work zones.
 - Unexpected road conditions, delays, and inconsistency cause traveler frustration.

Rule Overview

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

The new rule was written to be flexible, taking into account different project types. The rule has three primary components, illustrated in the figure below:



As indicated in the figure, the policy will affect the state- and project-level processes and procedures, and the outcomes of projects may cause states to reassess their processes and procedures and policy.

For each of the components, the rule includes provisions and guidance intended to help transportation agencies address work zone considerations starting early in planning, and progressing through project design, implementation, and performance assessment.

Policy-Level Provisions

- Implement a policy for the systematic consideration and management of work zone impacts. The policy:
 - May take the form of processes, procedures, and/or guidance.
 - Should be customized as appropriate to an individual state’s needs.
 - Should be sensitive to varying project characteristics and expected work zone impacts.
- Work in partnership with the FHWA to develop and implement the policy.

State-Level Processes and Procedures

- Develop and implement processes/procedures for systematic work zone impact assessment and management

- Use work zone safety and mobility information and data to manage impacts on ongoing projects, and to conduct performance assessments across multiple projects to improve state work zone procedures.
- Require training for personnel involved in work zone planning, design, implementation, management, and enforcement.
- Conduct process reviews to assess widescale performance of work zones with the goal of improving work zone processes and procedures.

Project-Level Provisions

- Identify significant projects early in the project development process. Significant projects are those anticipated to cause sustained work zone impacts greater than what is considered tolerable based on state policy and/or engineering judgment.
- Develop transportation management plans (TMPs) that consist of strategies to manage the work zone impacts of projects.
 - TMPs for **significant projects** must consist of a temporary traffic control (TTC) plan. The TMPs must address transportation operations (TO) strategies that will be used to ease work zone impacts. They must also address public information (PI) strategies to inform the public and concerned stakeholders about the project, its expected work zone impacts, and changing conditions.
 - TMPs for **all other projects** must consist at least of a TTC plan and may include TO and PI strategies as well.
- Include appropriate TMP provisions in the plans, specifications, and estimates (PS&Es).
- In the PS&Es, include appropriate pay item provisions for implementing the TMP—either unit pay items or lump sum pay items.
- Assign a responsible person (state and contractor) to monitor the TMP and other safety and mobility aspects of the project.

FHWA Support Efforts

FHWA is committed to providing the guidance that practitioners need to implement this rule. An outreach strategy has been developed to promote awareness of the rule and the availability of implementation guidance. A comprehensive implementation guide will be available in late 2005. This guide will address each component of the rule and provide related case studies, examples, and resources. Other guidance includes:

- **Work Zone Impacts Assessment**—guidance on developing procedures to assess work zone impacts of projects.
- **Transportation Management Plans**—guidance on developing TMPs for managing work zone impacts of projects.
- **Public Information and Outreach**—guidance on the development of communications strategies that seek to inform affected audiences about construction projects, the expected work zone impacts, and the changing conditions on projects.
- **Roadside Safety Audits**—guidance on performing audits to assess a project's accident potential and safety performance.
- **QuickZone Traffic Impact Analysis Tool**—a tool that can be used to estimate work zone delays, allowing road owners and contractors to analyze and compare project alternatives, such as the effects of doing highway work at night instead of during the day, or of diverting the traffic to different roads at various stages of construction. Information on the tool is available at <http://www.tfrc.gov/its/quickzon.htm>.
- **Full Road Closure for Work Zone Operations**—a series of documents providing a description of how several state DOTs each used a full closure approach to reduce the impacts of a road rehabilitation/reconstruction project. The documents are available at http://www.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/wz/construction/full_rd_closures.htm.
- **Innovative Contracting Guidance**—resources for innovative contracting methods, including a link to an online knowledge exchange, are available at <http://www.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/wz/contracting/index.htm>.
- **ITS in Work Zones**—a series of documents to raise awareness among maintenance and construction engineers and managers of the applications and benefits of ITS in work zones. These documents are available at <http://www.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/wz/its/index.htm>.
- **Work Zone Training Courses**—a new NHI course, Advanced Work Zone Management and Design (#380072A), will provide planners, designers, construction managers, and other transportation professionals with additional skill and knowledge of both technical and non-technical aspects of work zone design and traffic management practices. The course is expected to become available in Summer 2005.

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