

Operator Quiz Corner
Work Zone Traffic Safety
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The US Dept. of Transportation's (US DOTs) Federal Highway Administration reports that in 2020 there were 102,000 crashes that occurred in a roadway construction zone which resulted in 44,000 injuries and 857 deaths. Utility employees often work within a roadway or immediately adjacent to one so it is important to be familiar with what is known as "Temporary Traffic Controls" (TTCs).

The bible of TTCs is the 860 page US DOT's Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). The Manual covers in great detail things like the required height and spacing of traffic cones to the type of reflective vests that must be worn.

Most construction projects in and along a roadway require that the area where TTCs must be used have four identifiable 'zones' or 'areas'.

Advanced Warning Area is the section of roadway where drivers are informed about the upcoming construction area. The types of signage and the distances of placement will vary depending upon the type of road (rural road vs highway) and the speed of vehicles.

Transition Area is the section where drivers are redirected out of their normal path of travel. The type of devices to be used and their spacing is dependent on the conditions of the roadway such as speed and width.

Activity Area is the section of roadway where the construction is taking place. It must provide enough space for work equipment, materials storage and the workers. This is known as the "Work Space". Included in the Activity Area there must also be a "Buffer Space" which is ahead of the "Work Space" and allows some protection from errant vehicles. No equipment/materials or workers should use this "Buffer Space".

Termination Area is used to return drivers to their normal driving path. The termination area extends from the end of the Activity Area to the last TTC device which is usually an "END OF WORK ZONE" sign. Similar to the Transition Area, the type of devices to be used and their spacing is dependent on the conditions of the roadway and the speed/width.

1. Which of the following areas is acceptable to store equipment and materials?
 - a. Advanced Warning Area
 - b. Transition Area
 - c. Activity Area
 - d. Termination Area

2. True or false. The spacing of channeling devices (cones/barrels) in the Transition Area depends only on the speed of the traffic.
 - a. True
 - b. False

3. The MUTCD recommends that the first Work Zone warning sign be placed at a distance (ft) of 4 to 8 times the speed limit in miles per hour. If the normal posted speed on a section of roadway where construction is to occur is 40 mph, the first warning sign should be located _____?
 - a. 40 to 80 feet before the work zone
 - b. 160 to 320 feet before the work zone

- c. 400 to 800 feet before the work zone
 - d. 1600 to 3200 feet before the work zone
4. The MUTCD requires that _____ be placed at least 100 feet in front of the activity area and that they wear _____.
- a. Competent person, Class 2/3 high visibility safety apparel
 - b. **Flaggers, Class 2/3 high visibility safety apparel**
 - c. Competent person, steel-toed boots
 - d. Flaggers, steel-toed boots
5. Which of the following best describes the person that is capable of identifying existing and predictable hazards to employees in the work zone and has the authority to take prompt and corrective action to eliminate the hazard(s).
- a. OSHA inspector
 - b. US DOT inspector
 - c. DPW Superintendent
 - d. **Competent Person**

