

The signs of spring:

# Traffic protection

Whether you are setting up for long-term work on a busy roadway, or for a short job in the middle of a busy intersection, companies have two critical responsibilities:

1. Keep your workers safe from traffic hazards.
2. Protect the public travelling through your work zone.

## 1. Keep your workers safe from traffic hazards

The *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and the *Construction Regulation* set out responsibilities and requirements for working around traffic. Federally regulated companies should look to the *Canada Labour Code Part II* for traffic protection requirements.

You need a written traffic protection plan when you do work that exposes employees to traffic-related hazards. Here are some things that can keep your workers safe:

- Personal protective equipment (PPE) – Everyone should wear the right PPE for the job. It should include a Class E hardhat, CSA-certified grade 1 boots, reflective vest or clothing, and eye and hearing protection when required. You need additional reflective clothing when working at night or in poor visibility.
- Training – Workers and supervisors dealing with traffic-related hazards need training. Schedule regular safety or tailboard talks to review details of the traffic protection and control plans.

- Inspections and documentation – Perform regular inspections, documenting the results and correcting any deficiencies. Inspect equipment daily or before use. You also need to inspect the work zone to ensure that signs, cones, barrels, and other equipment are in good condition and placed correctly to maximize safety.

## 2. Protect the public travelling through your work zone

The *Ontario Traffic Manual Book 7 - Temporary Conditions* (OTM Book 7) office or field edition describes the basic, uniform requirements for companies engaged in work on or near roadways.

The manuals provide information on designing a traffic control plan that allows safe and efficient movement of vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrian traffic through work zones.

# Commercial vehicles: emergencies on roadways

If your commercial vehicle breaks down,

1. Remain calm
2. Signal to leave the roadway
3. Reduce your speed as quickly as possible
4. Bring your vehicle to stop as far off the road as possible.

## Emergency warning devices

Any commercial vehicle operating on a provincial highway between one-half hour before sunset to one-half hour after sunrise must have an adequate supply of emergency warning devices. While these specific times are outlined in the *Highway Traffic Act*, a defensive driver will use warning devices whenever needed and particularly when visibility is reduced by fog, rain, or snow.

Emergency warning devices include flares, lamps or lanterns that have been approved by the Ministry of Transportation (MTO). They must be capable of continuously producing two warning lights, each visible from a distance of at least 150 metres (500 feet) for a period of at least eight hours. MTO-approved portable reflectors can also be used.

At least two warning devices must be placed

- approximately 30 metres (100 feet) in front of the vehicle
- approximately 30 metres (100 feet) to the rear of the vehicle. The rearward device must be visible from at least 150 metres (500 feet).

If there is a hill, curve, or other obstruction within 150 metres (500 feet) of the disabled vehicle an additional warning device must be placed beyond the obstruction (i.e., so that oncoming drivers can see it before they get to the obstruction—refer to image below). This is because the obstruction can prevent drivers from seeing the disabled vehicle.

## Implementing a good traffic plan

Make sure you identify the work area clearly. There are a variety of signs and devices available for you to alert the public. The signs must be positioned according to OTM Book 7 specifications and, to ensure visibility, signs and devices must be clean and well maintained.

It's important to prevent the public from getting into your work area by using barriers, barricades, or crash trucks. The best method depends on the duration of the work, the type of road encroachment, and the posted speed limits.

Since human error is a major factor in traffic collisions, provide vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians with clear direction through the work zone. Make signs obvious and space them at proper distances to allow the public to respond safely. Reduce speeds only if there is good reason to do so. The road authority may insist on additional protection such as hiring police officers to control traffic.

## How IHSA can help

IHSA provides training in effective traffic control in a one-day course called *Traffic Control—Temporary Work Zones*. This course teaches participants how to develop an effective traffic control plan. Visit [www.ihsa.ca](http://www.ihsa.ca) to learn more.

