

SAFE WORK ON THE ROAD:

Good traffic protection the
key to road safety

In June of this year a worker was killed on a jobsite in Milton, Ontario. With this just the start of summer roadwork season, it is time for all drivers to be extra vigilant when travelling near road-based construction sites.

When the weather gets warm, road construction season begins. Whether the work consists of filling potholes, building bridges, directing traffic around construction or utility vehicles, or any of the other tasks required of road workers, safety must always be a priority.

Companies need to make sure they keep their workers safe from traffic hazards during this work as well as protecting the public who travel through the work zone.

Workers are often injured or killed while working on our roads. Last year the Ontario Road Builders' Association launched a social-media campaign in an effort to raise awareness of the issue with the public. Their Facebook page (www.facebook.com/SafetyATwoWayStreet) provides important facts and information about road safety. In 2009, Thunder Bay Hydro launched its own public safety campaign on the issue. Signs and vehicles were labeled with the slogan "Hit the Brakes...NOT US" in an effort to reduce the number of near misses the utility had seen near its work zone setups.

**HIT THE
BRAKES**

NOT US.

PLEASE SLOW DOWN IN WORK ZONES.
CELEBRATING NORTH AMERICAN OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH WEEK.

 **THUNDER BAY
HYDRO**



In June, the Ministry of Labour held an inspection blitz that looked specifically for dangers found in traffic control during roadwork. That means this area of work has been identified as one with hazards that, if left unchecked, could result in serious harm to workers.

Every year, lost-time injuries that take place during work on and around streets and highways number in the hundreds. In the past decade there have been more than 8,200 such injuries in a wide range of categories, including falls, being struck by vehicles or equipment, and overexertion.

What the law says

The *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and the *Regulations for Construction Projects* set out responsibilities and requirements for work around traffic. Federally regulated companies will find their responsibilities in the *Canada Labour Code Part II*.

The *Ontario Traffic Manual Book 7—Temporary Conditions* (OTM Book 7)—both the office and field editions—outlines the rules that companies must follow for work on or near roadways. The manual provides information on designing a traffic control plan that allows vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians to move safely and efficiently through the work zones.

Traffic protection plans

When you do work that exposes your employees to danger from traffic, you must have a written traffic protection plan. Here are a few things to remember for the plan.

- Make sure you identify the work area clearly. There are a variety of signs and devices available for alerting the public. The signs must be positioned according to the specifications in OTM Book 7, and they must be clean and well-maintained.
- It's important to keep the public out of your work area by using barriers, barricades, or crash trucks. The best method will depend on the duration of the work, the type of encroachment on the road, and the posted speed limits.

- Since human error is a major cause of traffic collisions, you need to provide drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians with clear directions through the work zone. Make the signs obvious, and locate them so that the public has time to respond safely. If there is good reason, ask the road authority to reduce the speed limit. The road authority may also insist on additional protection, such as hiring police officers to control traffic.

Key considerations in the field

When you are responsible for keeping your workers safe in the field, here are a few other things to consider beyond the creation of a traffic control plan.

- **Personal protective equipment (PPE)**—Everyone needs to wear the right PPE for the job. It should include a Class E hard hat, CSA-certified Grade 1 safety boots, reflective vest or clothing, and eye and hearing protection when required. Additional reflective clothing is needed at night or when visibility is poor.
- **Training**—Workers and supervisors dealing with traffic-related hazards need training. Schedule regular safety or tailgate talks to go over the details of the traffic protection and control plans.
- **Inspections and documentation**—Perform regular inspections, document the results, and correct any deficiencies. Inspect equipment daily or before it is used. You should also inspect the work zone to make sure that signs, cones, barrels, and other equipment are in good condition and placed where they will maximize safety.



How IHSA can help

IHSA provides training in effective traffic control through several courses. To learn more, visit ihsa.ca, or read the article *Traffic Control: What you need to know* on page 10 and 11.