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# CROSSROADS

WISCONSIN TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION CENTER - LTAP



*"Too often I see trucks and workers in the public right of way without proper signing."*

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## Wisconsin adoption of MUTCD affects work zones

**WISCONSIN DOT** expects to publish its Supplement to the 2003 federal MUTCD (Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices) shortly after the beginning of 2005. That will put the rules and guidelines of the 2003 MUTCD into effect in the state.

"There are almost 300 changes in Part 6 of the Manual, though the major ones don't take effect for a few years," says Consultant Don Gordon. He teaches the TIC's January Work Zone Safety workshop along with Jim Schneider. They will cover this year's changes, how to set up work zones for common maintenance situations, and the basics of flagging. (See Calendar on back page for times and locations.)

The MUTCD's work zone guidance has been developed using research on how people respond so they can understand, prepare, and react, Gordon says. To keep drivers and workers safe, signs, flaggers, arrow panels, drums, cones, and other items need to:

- command attention
- have a clear simple meaning
- give adequate time for response

"A lot of folks, especially county highway departments, are doing a good job with work zones," says Gordon. "But, way too often I see trucks and workers in the public right of way without proper signing. Often it's contractors doing water or sewer or cable TV work."



**FAR LEFT** The new MUTCD has changes for work zones and flaggers.

**LEFT** Flaggers now must have ANSI standard reflective vests.

Unfortunately, there are no work zone police, he notes, and it's municipalities who will get sued if there's an injury or death.

The TIC invites local officials and maintenance supervisors to publicize the Work Zone Safety workshop to their contractors, and encourage them to send a representative.

"If the timing isn't convenient, or they want to train a lot of people, we can present the workshop on their site," says Steve Pudloski. He coordinates work zone programs for the TIC.

### Changes for flaggers

Several changes in the MUTCD pertain to flaggers and other workers.

**Illumination** The Manual requires that the flagger station shall be illuminated with floodlights when flagging takes place during hours of darkness, except in emergency situations. Streetlights and vehicle headlights do

not meet this standard, and the lights can't be shining into the eyes of approaching drivers. "We have been training flaggers to use a flashlight," says Gordon, "but that does not meet the illumination requirement." This takes effect when Wisconsin adopts the MUTCD in early 2005.

**Stop/Slow paddles** The new Manual expands the options available for incorporating flashing lights into the Stop/Slow paddle to supplement the message. It now allows white or red flashing lights on the Stop side; white or yellow on the Slow side; and expands the allowable patterns for arranging lights on the paddle.

**Safety vests** It is now mandatory for flaggers to wear apparel that meets ANSI Class 2 standard for the amount of reflective striping and background material. Class 3 apparel should be considered when flagging at night. Other workers exposed to traffic or construction equipment should (guidance) wear apparel that meets ANSI 107-1999 standard.

*For readers unfamiliar with the MUTCD, information is presented as mandatory (a "shall" statement), strong guidance (a "should" statement), or suggested (optional; a "may" statement).*

*MUTCD . . . continues on page 3*

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"Typically, orange t-shirts do not meet that standard," says Tom Notbohm, State Traffic Engineer of Design, WisDOT Bureau of Highway Operations. Although the compliance date is December 2006, supervisors will want to be aware of the change as they are making budgets and purchasing new safety equipment.

### Making work zones accessible

The new Manual Part 6 has many changes designed to better accommodate buses, bicycles, pedestrians, and persons with disabilities. "Basically the Manual now says that we have to assess the needs and use judgment to provide for effective continuity of pedestrian routes and bus stops," says Tom Notbohm. These changes have a compliance date of December 2008.

To conform to the new Manual, pedestrian features have to be consistent with the existing facility. For example, if the old walkway was paved, the work zone walkway must have a hard surface. The Manual gives the guidance that "In general, pedestrian routes should be preserved in urban

and commercial suburban areas. Alternative routing should be discouraged." (6D.01)

The Manual is now in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). "That has a great impact on Part 6 because of pedestrians near work zones," says Gordon, who serves on the national MUTCD advisory committee.

To accomplish this goal, there are many changes throughout the section and they require assessment and planning. For example, if you determine that pedestrians with visual impairment will need to pass through the work zone, you must provide a walkway with "detectable channelization." The walking path must have some kind of raised, continuous edge that a blind person can feel with a cane. Drums with tape strung between them would not work. Details will be covered in the January workshop.

Reviewing these changes can make it seem like setting up a work zone is impossibly difficult. While some situations are complex, following a few standard setups will take care of most work zone situations.



*Working in the right of way without proper signing is a hazard that occurs frequently.*

### For safety in work zones

**PREPARE** Have on site an adequate supply of signs, cones, Stop/Slow paddles, reflective vests, and other basics.

**PLAN** Develop a plan and train a lead worker in proper work zone set up.

**TRAIN** Teach proper flagging and work zone set up to the workers.

**SUPERVISE AND INSPECT** Ensure that workers and contractors are using proper procedures and work zone set ups on the site.

## Plowing champions

**THE WINNING TEAM** at the APWA Snow Plow Rodeo in September was Manitowoc #1, Kerry Krajnik and Paul La Croix.

Second place went to Sheboygan Team #1, Scott Buboltz, Mark Oldenburg, and Mark Pawasara (mechanic).

Third place winners were a combined team consisting of Tyson Barnes from Jefferson County and Rod McGee from Polk County.

Competition was stiff with 52 teams participating—the highest number ever. Next year the Rodeo will be back at Lambeau Field on Wednesday, September 21, 2005.



*Kerry Krajnik (l.) and Paul LaCroix, Manitowoc's championship plowing team.*

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