

# Worker visibility rule in effect November 24



Reflective vests must meet ANSI requirements.

“Worker” refers to those on foot whose duties put them in the right-of-way of a federal-aid highway.

### Resources

[www.safetysafetyequipment.org](http://www.safetysafetyequipment.org)  
Link to the International Safety Equipment Association (ISEA) publication on worker-visibility standard.



### HIGH-VISIBILITY

apparel is important protection for workers in the danger zone of a highway where motor vehicles, construction vehicles and equipment pose a threat to safety. Congress adopted the rule mandating such apparel two years ago in response to an increase in fatalities and injuries to workers exposed to moving vehicles while working on federal-aid highways. It goes into effect on November 24, 2008. This brief Q&A covers some of the essentials.

### Q What is the rule?

A All workers (public and private) within the right-of-way of a federal-aid highway who are exposed either to traffic (vehicles using the highway for purposes of travel) or to construction equipment within the work area shall wear high-visibility safety apparel.

### Q What qualifies as high-visibility safety apparel?

A Personal protective safety clothing that is conspicuous during both daytime and nighttime use. Apparel must meet ANSI Performance Class 2 or 3 requirements. Details available in the ANSI/ISEA 107–2004 publication “American National Standard for High-Visibility Safety Apparel and Headwear,” from the International Safety Equipment Association (ISEA).

### Q Who qualifies as a “worker” under the rule?

A The term “worker” refers to people on foot whose duties place them within the right-of-way of a federal-aid highway. This includes highway construction and maintenance forces, survey and utility crews, responders to incidents within highway right-of-way, and law enforcement personnel who direct traffic, investigate crashes, or handle lane closures, obstructed roadways, and disasters. The rule is broad to ensure that approaching motorists or equipment operators can see and recognize workers who cannot see them.

### Q What is a federal-aid highway?

A federal-aid highway is defined by its state functional classification. Roads classified as Major Collector, Minor Arterial, Principle Arterial, Freeway-Expressway or Interstate are on the federal-aid system. Almost 25 percent of Wisconsin’s 113,000 miles of roads qualify, including all US highways, most state highways, many county highways, and some city and village roads. County highway departments have maps showing the county’s functional classifications.

### Q If the rule does not apply to local roads, why should local governments be concerned?

A Although Congress limited application of the rule to federal-aid highways, the 2003 *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices* provides strong guidance for worker safety in Section 6D.03, stating that workers on local roads face the same risks from moving traffic or construction equipment and should wear safety apparel that meets ISEA requirements. ■

## TIC work zone training marks 10 years



ONE OF TIC’S popular training programs recently turned 10. The first work zone and flagger course debuted in the spring of 1998, targeting a need by local agencies to stay up-to-date on important safety practices.

More than 6,000 people have attended 162 work zone courses since then. TIC delivered over half of them on-site for local highway agencies, public and private utilities, state agencies and contractors. Many on-site courses are customized to meet a specific agency training need or time frame. The sessions give the agency a chance to re-evaluate work zone procedures and improve communication between

departments involved in work zone activities, such as inspecting construction, issuing permits, reviewing building permit plans, performing utility maintenance and enforcing traffic regulations.

### Publications reinforce best practices

Along with the training program, TIC developed materials that reinforce best work zone practices. ►



Participants in an on-site training session collaborate on practical work zone applications.

## After the storm: emergency cost-recovery easier with planning

**SEVERE WEATHER** triggered a federal disaster declaration for 30 southern Wisconsin counties between June 5 and July 25 of this year. The situation called attention to the need for advanced planning by agencies responsible for keeping local roads safe and passable.

When torrential rains, flooding, tornadoes, destructive winter storms or other adverse events affect transportation infrastructure, the chief concern is a swift response to damage or hazards that endanger public safety.

According to emergency management officials—and local governments with a few notches in their own disaster belts—a close second to mobilizing immediate protective measures is having a dependable method for tracking costs incurred during or after a disaster event. Thorough, real-time documentation speeds the process of recovering those costs from federal and state sources.

Communities in Wisconsin commonly tap emergency highway aid from an Emergency Relief

Program administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Public Assistance Program run by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Flood Damage Aids managed by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT).

Public Assistance is a partnership between FEMA and state and local officials. WisDOT's Flood Damage Aids program uniquely assists local governments to replace or improve roads and roadway structures that suffer major damage from flooding. These funds target repairs to any public highway, street, alley or bridge not located on the State Trunk Highway system. All the programs tie reimbursements to careful tracking of emergency costs.

### Track costs by site

Bob Fasick, a Highway Operations Engineer with WisDOT, coordinates emergency highway aid programs in the state and works closely with the federal agencies that provide assistance to state and local governments.



*An example of serious damage to road infrastructure from Wisconsin's storms of summer 2008.*

With experience of more than a dozen events that qualified for federal disaster declarations over the past 17 years, Fasick says nothing beats an efficient system of documenting labor, equipment, materials and contracted work for reporting accurate numbers and hastening the approval of reimbursement requests. He recommends tracking costs on a site-by-site basis.

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To date, TIC has distributed more than 100,000 copies of its *Work Zone Safety* pocket-sized guide and more than 50,000 copies of the *Flagger Handbook*.

Both publications are handy resources for police officers, engineers, inspectors, road work crews, supervisors and flaggers. Periodic updates by a team of TIC work zone instructors and WisDOT engineers keep the guide and handbook current with changes in the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices* (MUTCD). New editions of the two publications are planned in 2009 to include the most recent proposed MUTCD changes.

### Outstanding instructors

The work zone program has benefited from outstanding instructors throughout its history. One of those instrumental in developing



*Don Gordon demonstrates best work zone practices.*

the program was Don Gordon, who retired this past spring.

Don brought great expertise to the work zone training curriculum from the start. Before joining TIC, he was a member of the MUTCD national committee focusing on work zone provisions. Don took the lead in drafting revisions to Wisconsin publications to reflect

new provisions. He team-taught most of the work zone courses with Jim Schneider who will continue in the role. Everyone at TIC will miss Don's many contributions to the program.

### Upcoming courses

With a single work zone instructor available for the upcoming winter sessions, work zone courses will have a maximum class size of 30 participants. To provide more training opportunities, TIC has scheduled work zone courses for April 2009. See the *Calendar* section of this issue for dates and locations.

Agencies with a number of people who need training should contact TIC to talk about scheduling an on-site work zone course. The one-day session is available at a cost of \$600 for up to 30 participants. ■

*On-site sessions give the agency a chance to re-evaluate its work zone procedures and improve communication between departments involved in work zone activities.*