

Construction Safety Focus

August 2016



Safe Worker and Traffic

This document provides information about WorkSafe's current safety focus in the construction industry, and directs industry to detailed guidance regarding traffic management.

The Safe Worker and Traffic (SWAT) campaign is a joint initiative by WorkSafe's Construction Program, VicRoads and industry to promote safe traffic management at roadside worksites throughout Victoria.

As part of the SWAT campaign, WorkSafe inspectors are visiting construction sites to ensure that traffic related hazards and risks are adequately controlled where employees (including contractors and their employees), pedestrians and road traffic interact.

Background

In recent years there has been:

- a significant increase in the number of construction sites impeding onto public roadways, and
- an increasing number of incidents at construction sites involving errant vehicles.

Inspectors are routinely finding traffic management controls in place that do not conform to those specified in the Traffic Management Plans (TMP).

Inspector focus

WorkSafe inspectors will be checking to ensure that:

- a safe workplace is provided for employees
- pedestrians and motorists are not exposed to risks to their health and safety and are provided with clear instruction and direction (eg signage/line marking)
- hazards and risks associated with the tasks and the environment, including working near traffic have been identified and controlled
- the documented TMP is implemented to control any associated health and safety risks to employees, pedestrians and motorists, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Note: compliance with a TMP does not necessarily equate to compliance with broader occupational health and safety obligations.

- the TMP controls are followed and maintained
- any changes to the TMP are documented and communicated to all relevant employees
- a safe work method statement (SWMS) has been developed, reviewed and updated, as site conditions change.

Safe work method statement

Whilst employers (including self-employed persons) are required to control all risks to health and safety at a workplace, construction work on or adjacent to live roadways is prescribed as 'high-risk construction work' (HRCW), and further specific duties apply.

This includes a requirement that HRCW must not commence unless a SWMS has been developed.

The SWMS must:

- identify work that is HRCW
- state the hazards and risks to health or safety of that work
- sufficiently describe measures to control those risks, and
- describe the manner in which the risk control measures are to be implemented.

The SWMS must be followed during the work. If it is not being followed the work must stop.

Note: affected employees and their health and safety representatives must be consulted when identifying risks and hazards and determining risk control measures

Duty holder obligations

In general, a duty holder (eg an employer) must eliminate any risks to health and safety, so far as reasonably practicable. If it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate the risk, it must be reduced so far as is reasonably practicable. The table below provides examples of the risk control measures.

Selecting risk control measures

- 1. Eliminate the risk**
eg close the road, detours onto other roads, traffic diversions (following formal authorisation process by VicRoads/Municipal council).
- 2. Substitute / engineer / isolate to reduce risk**
eg rated safety barriers, close the lanes adjacent to work area, use different construction method, vehicle mounted attenuators.
- 3. Administrative controls to reduce risk**
eg speed reduction, warning signs, variable message signs, portable traffic signals, delineation of travel path.
- 4. Personal protective equipment to reduce risk**
eg high visibility clothing.

Note: that a combination of risk control measures will usually be required.

Employee obligations

Employees must take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work. This includes cooperating with the employer (eg complying with SWMS and TMPs) and not interfering with or misusing things provided at a workplace in the interests of health, safety or welfare (eg barriers, signage).

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Related publications

WorkSafe has a range of construction specific publications for managing a safe site, including:

Information about – Safe Work Method Statements (2015)

A guide to managing safety in Civil Construction – Industry Standard

Working safely in general construction – Handbook

Working safely in housing construction – Handbook

Further guidance on traffic management controls is available from:

VicRoads

The Worksite Safety – Traffic Management Code of Practice (2010)

Working within the road reserve, information including Memorandum of Authorisation Forms

VicRoads design notes for accepted safety barrier products (barriers/screens)

Standards Australia – Australian Standard

AS 1742.3 Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices – Traffic Control for Works on Roads

AS 3845.1 Road Safety Barrier Systems and Devices – Road Safety Barrier Systems

Further Information

Contact WorkSafe's Advisory Service on **(03) 9641 1444** or free call **1800 136 089** or visit worksafe.vic.gov.au/info to download WorkSafe guidance.

Further information about VicRoads specific traffic management requirements and to access VicRoads guidance contact **13 11 71** or visit vicroads.gov.au

For Australian Standards contact SIA Global on **13 12 42** or saiglobal.com/online

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