

CORNER

By Lenny Hulme

ERTIFICATION



While immobilized in a brace and recuperating from a broken back this summer, I found I had a lot of time to catch up on my reading. Since I was forbidden from reading my ATV racing magazines, I decided to familiarize myself with the updated work zone safety regulations.

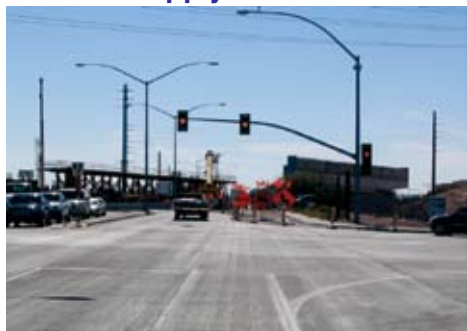
As you are probably aware, the Rule was published on September 9, 2004 in the Federal Register. **The rule states that all state and local governments that receive federal-aid funding must be in compliance by October 12, 2007.** This rule updates the existing regulation (23 CFR 630 Subpart J), and was necessary to address the current issues affecting the impacts of work zone safety and mobility, as they pertain to project development and project delivery. Specific issues and trends identified were:

- increasing traffic volumes and congestion (with little growth in road miles);
- aging of existing highways and the need for more construction and repair;
- contractors faced with increased pressure to work under traffic, compress schedules, and perform work at night in order complete projects early;
- concerns over work zone safety (over 41,000 injuries and 1,028 fatalities in work zones in 2003);
- frustration of motorists with delays, unexpected road conditions and overall inconvenience caused by work zones.

I know that after a cursory overview of the reasons behind the rule update, I still had additional questions as to its implementation. The FHWA website provides a link to "frequently asked questions" for the Work Zone Safety and Mobility Rule (http://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/wz/resources/final_rule/pdf/rule_faqs.pdf). These are just a few of the questions and answers I thought were relevant to the update, and would be a useful frame of reference when discussing the changes with staff:

Q: Who does this Rule apply to?

A: The Rule specifically applies to all State and local agencies that receive Federal-aid highway funding. Specifically, the provisions of the Rule apply to all highway construction projects financed in whole or in part with Federal-aid highway funds. However, agencies are encouraged to apply the good practices that the Rule fosters to all road projects.



Q: What are the key components of the updated Rule?

A: The Rule is characterized by the following main components:

- Development and implementation of an overall, agency-level work zone safety and mobility policy to institutionalize work zone processes and procedures.
- Development of agency-level processes and procedures to support policy implementation, including procedures for work zone impacts assessment, analyzing work zone data, training, and process reviews.
- Development of procedures to assess and manage work zone impacts of individual projects.

Q: What is a significant project?

A: The Rule defines a significant project as "one that, alone or in combination with other concurrent projects nearby, is anticipated to cause sustained work zone impacts that are greater than what is considered tolerable based on State policy and/or engineering judgment." In addition, the Rule specifies that all Interstate system projects within the boundaries of a designated Transportation Management Area (TMA) that occupy a location for more than three days with either intermittent or continuous lane closures are considered significant projects. Simply stated, a significant project is a project that an agency expects will cause a relatively high level of disruption.

Q. What is a Transportation Management Area (TMA)?

A. 23 U.S.C. 134 (i)(1)(A) & (B) requires the Secretary of Transportation to designate as a TMA each urbanized area with a population of over 200,000 individuals. In addition, at the request of the Governor and metropolitan planning organization (MPO) (or affected local officials), other areas may be officially designated as TMAs by the Administrators of the FHWA and the FTA. The TMA designation applies to the entire metropolitan planning area(s).

Q: What is a TMP (Transportation Management Plan)?

A: A TMP lays out a set of coordinated transportation management strategies and describes how they will be used to manage the work zone impacts of a road project. Transportation management strategies for a work zone include temporary traffic control measures and devices, public information and outreach, and operational strategies (e.g., travel demand management, signal retiming, traffic incident management, etc.). The scope, content, and level of detail of a TMP may vary based on the State or local transportation agency's work zone policy and the anticipated work zone impacts of the project.

Q: When do I have to comply with this Rule?

A: The Rule effective date is October 12, 2007. As of that date, all State and local governments that receive Federal-aid highway funding are required to comply with the provisions of the Rule.

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Conference in Overland Park the Special Education Committee requested "seed money" from the Board of Directors to retain a consultant to prepare a "strategic plan" addressing special education options. The plan would look at short and long term development of educational programs, and the distribution, funding and revenue mechanisms associated with the programs. Some ideas discussed were: an online library of PowerPoint courses that could be shared with sections, internet based training classes, and "Webinars" to present information on a larger scale.

A common theme expressed by a number of Directors and Committee members at this year's Annual Conference was the need for IMSA to update its strategic plan. The topic of providing more educational opportunities was just one issue that needed to be addressed. I decided to restart the Strategic Planning committee and asked Jan Siedler, who previously chaired the committee, to be the chairperson. I also asked Glen Bollinger to accept an appointment to chair the Business Plan committee.

By the time this article is published a joint meeting of the Strategic Planning committee and the Business Plan committee will have been held in Newark, New York. I asked for this special meeting to help us get a head start on developing new goals for IMSA's future, and to work on a strategic plan on how to accomplish them.

Hopefully, by the next issue we will have some good news to report. In the meantime, I wish everyone a happy and prosperous New Year!



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Q: How can I find out more about the FHWA Work Zone Program?

A: The FHWA Work Zone Mobility and Safety web site provides a vast amount of information about the FHWA Work Zone Program and work zone specific topics.

This site is available at: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/workzones>.

I encourage you to familiarize yourselves with these rule changes. Also, mark your calendars for National Work Zone Awareness Week scheduled for April 2-8 of 2007.

Have a safe and happy holiday season!



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