

Traffic control flagging

SUPERVISOR TALK

Do you feel that drivers are out to get you? Do you feel that if you don't move out of the way quickly enough, they will run you down? It is probably because many drivers take the attitude that we should see them and keep out of their path. This is just one of the hazards of flagging traffic.

When flagging traffic, we want to do everything we can to prevent an accident. When an accident occurs, everyone suffers — the motorist, our company, and possibly you. An accident can mean damaged vehicles and equipment, personal injury, and fatalities.

Signs can't think

Signs normally do a good job of conveying messages or direction. But they have one disadvantage. They can't think. And if a situation changes suddenly, signs can't automatically adjust. That is where we come in. A flag person is used in situations where conditions are constantly changing and traffic instructions must change, too.

For traffic control to be effective, it has to be set up properly. We put out the necessary signs in advance to warn motorists they're entering a construction area and to let them know that a flag person will be giving directions.

Make sure they see you

Motorists will be looking for the promised flag person and should be able to spot you quickly. That is one reason you wear a fluorescent vest — to stand out. But let's not defeat its purpose. Don't allow other employees to gather around you so that you can't be seen. What do you suppose motorists think when they see an entire group of workers waving their arms, all directing various pieces of construction equipment and no one directing the driver? Sometimes motorists find two people giving them conflicting directions. We can avoid such situations by following these few basic rules:

1. As a flag person, you should understand what our operation involves so you know what to anticipate when directing traffic.
2. You should be properly dressed and neat in appearance. Footwear is important. Remember that pavement can get quite hot or cold depending on the weather. Sturdy shoes or boots are advisable. Wear a clean, regulation reflective vest.
3. Depending on state requirements, paddles or flags of the correct size must be used. Flags should be at least 24" square.
4. There is only one correct way to signal traffic, but many wrong ways. We should all use one standardized set of signals.
5. Only designated flag people should direct traffic, except in emergency situations. These individuals must be alert to traffic conditions and the construction operations at all times.
6. Never turn your back on traffic. Do not stand in the travel lane!
7. A flag person should be firm, but courteous with the public at all times. The general public could form an opinion of the entire construction industry based on the impression they receive from you. Face traffic and make eye contact with drivers.

Their highway

Always remember that it's the public's highway, not the company's. So, we want to be courteous. At the same time, we want to make sure that an accident doesn't happen. We may have to be especially firm with some motorists to keep them from hurting themselves or others. Being a flag person is an important job because you have the responsibility of protecting the public, your fellow workers, and yourself.

Note: A supervisor talk record form can be found on the last page.

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SUPERVISOR TALK RECORD

How the topic applies to this job:

Additional topics covered: _____

Attendees:

Print name:

Signature:

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Date: _____

Supervisor/Foreman Signature: _____

Jobsite/Project #: _____

NOTE: You may type in your own information on all lines of this form, except "Signature". However, to keep your information you will need to save this file under a different name.