

# Flagger – Traffic Control Field Training

## Why is the flaggers job so important?

Your safety the safety of your co-workers, and the safety of the public is in your hands. Everyone's safety depends on your ability to control the vehicles moving through our jobsites.

As a flagger, you have a very important job. It should be carried out with authority and dignity. Using proper flagging techniques ensures your authority and control.

Keep in mind you are the only person that will represent the company to the public. Most people moving through our work zones will see only you. Their impression of our company and the others on your crew will depend on how well you do your job and how you look.

People don't like to be stopped or delayed from their intended tasks. They also don't like someone telling them what to do. Being nice, having good people skills, being helpful and showing authority will make flagging a good experience for the public and it will make our jobsite safer.

To flag traffic, you must be a certified flagger. This is a Texas State law.

## Basic Duties

1. You will direct traffic safely through the work area.
2. You will watchout for the safety of your coworkers who are working in or near traffic.
3. You can avoid unreasonable delays to motorists traveling through our site.
4. You should answer any questions courteously.
5. Be courteous, your actions reflect on you and your coworkers.
6. If you act like you are in control the motorist will follow your directions.

## Distractions

1. Cell phones should not be used for personal use while flagging. NEVER!
2. Don't let coworkers stand at the flagger station, it distracts you and the motorist.
3. Reading or other activities while you are flagging take your attention from the job.
4. Watch traffic at all times, don't rely on them to watch you.
5. Do not sit down or use anything to hold your flagger paddle sign.

## **Flagger Ahead Signs**

The flagger sign should be placed at the beginning of the work zone where flagging will take place. Only in an emergency should you stop traffic without a flagger sign in place. That sign warns motorists about what to expect ahead. The location of that sign should conform to the "Traffic Control Plan" for the job. Where flagger signs are placed depends on the road size and speed

When flagging is complete for the day or even for a short period like lunch time, the flagger ahead sign must be removed, turned over, hidden, or somehow made not visible to the traveling motorist.

If you leave the flagger ahead sign up when you are not flagging, people will start to ignore the warning.

## **Stop Slow Paddle**

The stop/slow paddle will be supplied by the company in the proper size and colors. The pole that supports the paddle needs to be 6 feet from the bottom of the sign to the ground. The paddle itself needs to be 2-foot x 2-foot.

It may not seem like it, but it is very important to use the proper size device. If you are standing on the side of the road and holding the proper size and color stop slow paddle, then the motorist must respect your message – that is the law. If you have the wrong size paddle, you're sitting down or not in the proper location, the public motorist can say they didn't understand your message.

You need to stand and hold your stop paddle as if it were a typical stop sign.

## **Location of the flagger**

A flagger should stand on the side of the road, off the pavement. Your flagger station should not be in an area where motorists can not see you clearly. Do not stand under trees or at vehicles. Always have an escape route figured out in case you need to run from a driver not paying attention.

Never stand in the lane of travel.

Always have 3 cones in front of you when on the side of the road. They should be off the side of the pavement and across the front of you. Perpendicular to the roadway. These three cones are a requirement of a flagging station.

Hills and curves are bad places for a flagger station. If you are going to stop traffic near a hill always move the flagger station to a location before the hill. You wouldn't want traffic to come over a hill and suddenly find out traffic is stopped. Same for a curve. Set your station before the curve. Its all about visibility.

## **PPE Required**

Safety Vest (type 2 in daytime) (type 3 in low visibility), hard hat, safety glasses and steel toe boots/shoes are required. A new or clean vest is needed for visibility.

## **How To Stop Traffic**

Stand on the shoulder of the road facing traffic.

Hold the stop paddle away from your body and facing traffic. Just like an actual stop sign. You're in the right spot and holding a familiar sign to the public.

Hold the sign with your RIGHT hand. Raise your LEFT hand about shoulder height with the palm facing the approaching cars. You're taking control and giving directions.

Try to make eye contact with the driver.

Give the vehicle plenty of time to stop. Don't put up the stop sign when the car gets to you.

## **Releasing Traffic**

Once you get notice that its ok to release traffic, turn the stop/slow paddle to display the slow side and wave the traffic through using your left hand. Again, take control and show them what to do.

If the driver of the vehicle is not paying attention to you while stopped and you need them to continue driving; step forward and point at them. Get their attention then signal to move on.

Stand on the side of the road holding the slow paddle to the public so the approaching vehicles know its ok for them to continue. Reassure them with your left hand that it is ok to continue.

## **Slowing Traffic**

If you notice a vehicle traveling too fast, raise and lower your free arm with the palm facing down. Keep giving this slow signal until the vehicle passes your location. Like we noted earlier – take control.

## **Signal All Clear**

When you stop your traffic, give the flagger on the other end of the job an all-clear signal. This may be by radio, or it can be with a hand signal. Be careful not to give a signal that your stopped motorist could think is for them.

Many teams use the raising of a hardhat to signal its all clear. This can only work if you are visible to the other flagger.

## **Pilot Cars**

These work great if you have a long-closed area or one where you need traffic to drive at a very slow speed.

The pilot car must have a sign on the back saying, "Pilot Car Follow Me".

The flaggers hold all traffic on each end of the work area until the pilot car arrives and leads the traffic through the work zone.

Do not allow late vehicles to try and catch up. When your last vehicle passes your station, stop all traffic until the Pilot Car returns.

## **Using a flag to direct traffic**

This is for emergency use only. If you suddenly need to stop traffic or slow it down you may use a flag but if the condition lasts anytime at all you need to setup a proper flagging station.

Flags are to be 2-foot x 2-foot and of a red or red/orange color. They are to be mounted on a staff about 3-foot long.

Stand on the shoulder of the roadway holding the flag out into traffic with your right hand. Hold your left hand up with the palm out to traffic. Do not wave the flag. Straight out to the side is the stop signal.

To release traffic put the flag down by your side as if to put it out of sight. Motion vehicles to start moving with your left hand.

To slow traffic, extend the flag out and slowly move it up and down. Do not move it quickly.

## **Things not allowed**

Standing in the traffic lane.

Standing in the shade or where you're not visible.

Sitting down while flagging.

Placing your stop slow paddle in a stand or cone.

Talking on the cell phone.

Listening to a radio

Turning your back on traffic.