

Flagging Operations JSA

Completed instructional example | Edition v1.0 | October 6, 2026

Learning and planning resource. Adapt with the people doing the work, verify actual controls and follow required authorization. This document supplies no completed field inspections, signatures or work approval.

Work and worksite

Fictional example: a daytime road-repair crew closes one lane of a two-lane road under an authority-approved temporary traffic-control plan. Two trained flaggers control alternating traffic through the remaining lane using STOP/SLOW paddles and two-way radios. A side entrance, pedestrians, and construction vehicle deliveries require specific coordination. This example does not design sign spacing, tapers, buffer distances, or lane geometry. It excludes night work, intersections, rail crossings, emergency incident control, and automated flagging devices.

- Identify the roadway authority, permit/plan revision, adopted MUTCD and state supplement, actual speeds, traffic mix, sight distances, operating hours, and person responsible for traffic control.
- FHWA identifies the 11th Edition with Revision 1, dated December 2025, as its current national MUTCD. Confirm the applicable authority's adopted requirements and project conditions before using the example.
- Confirm flagger training and any jurisdiction-required certification, approved apparel and devices, reliable communication, relief coverage, weather/heat arrangements, and the emergency alert method.
- The plan must account for pedestrians, bicyclists, mobility needs, driveways, emergency vehicles, and construction plant movements; their movements cannot be left to improvisation.

Actual project records needed: Location, crew and responsible people; equipment models and instructions; permits/releases; emergency arrangements; actual checks and approvals.

Task | Hazard | Control | Verification

Review the traffic-control plan and assignment

Hazard: An unsuitable layout or unclear release authority sends road users toward the work or into opposing traffic.

Control: The traffic-control supervisor confirms the applicable plan and field suitability with the responsible authority as needed. Assign one coordinator and brief both flaggers, equipment operators, and relief personnel on lane clearance, side-entry control, emergency signals, and stop-work conditions.

Verification: Identify the plan revision, responsible personnel, limits, and communication procedure; resolve field discrepancies before opening the operation.

Reasoning: A JSA explains how the crew will implement a traffic plan; it cannot establish whether an unreviewed layout is adequate.

Install and verify the temporary controls

Hazard: Workers setting signs or channelizers are struck; drivers encounter a lane closure without understandable advance warning.

Control: Use the authorized setup sequence and protection for the installation crew. Place devices and pedestrian routing according to the plan. Verify the approach from a road user's perspective before commencing alternating traffic.

Verification: The supervisor checks signs, visibility, devices, buffers, pedestrian provision, and access arrangements against the plan; correct deficiencies first.

Reasoning: The setup crew needs protection before the completed work zone exists.

Establish flagger stations and communications

Hazard: A flagger cannot be seen in time, lacks an escape route, or releases vehicles after an unclear message.

Control: Use planned stations with adequate approach visibility, stopping provision, and an available escape route. Select compliant high-visibility apparel. Test radios, use agreed identifiers and clear acknowledgements, and rehearse communication-loss and intrusion actions.

Verification: Each flagger identifies the escape route and demonstrates the message sequence with the coordinator before taking control.

Reasoning: Two working radios do not establish a reliable procedure unless both people understand what a message authorizes.

Stop and release alternating traffic

Hazard: Opposing vehicles enter together, an unexpected side-entry vehicle joins the lane, or a flagger steps into moving traffic.

Control: Use trained STOP/SLOW procedures from the planned station. Release traffic only after positive coordination confirms the opposite stream is stopped and the section is clear. Coordinate side entrances and construction deliveries; do not use personal phone activities while flagging.

Verification: Confirm the actual clearance of all road users, including slow-moving bicycles, rather than relying solely on elapsed time.

Reasoning: The last vehicle may take longer than expected, and an entrance can add a vehicle after the first stream passes.

Monitor queues, conditions, and relief

Hazard: The queue extends beyond warning coverage; glare or weather reduces visibility; fatigue leads to missed movements.

Control: Monitor both approaches and report growing queues or deteriorating conditions. Have the supervisor adjust the operation through the authorized process. Arrange hydration, breaks, and trained relief with a positive handover; stop the dependent activity if effective control is lost.

Verification: Record observed issues and corrective action; the relieving flagger confirms the traffic state and communication method before taking over.

Reasoning: A layout suitable at opening can become inadequate as traffic demand or visibility changes.

End the operation and remove controls

Hazard: Devices are removed too early, exposing workers, or obsolete signs confuse drivers after normal operation resumes.

Control: Confirm the work area and roadway are ready for reopening. Use the authorized removal sequence while maintaining worker and road-user protection. Remove or cover controls no longer applicable and hand the road back under the authority's procedure.

Verification: The supervisor verifies the final road condition, restored routes, remaining restrictions, and completion of required handover records.

Reasoning: The traffic-control task continues until the temporary arrangement is safely removed or transferred.

Pause and reassess

- Pause for lost communication, an intrusion, inadequate visibility, queue growth beyond the plan, or an unbriefed replacement flagger.
- Reassess a changed closure length, work location, speed environment, side access, night operation, or new pedestrian restriction.

Correct the condition, revise the analysis, communicate the change and obtain required authorization before restarting.

Improve the control

Needs improvement: Traffic: wear a vest and stay alert.

More useful: Implement the approved layout, verify station visibility and escape, coordinate releases positively, and monitor queues and intrusions.

Needs improvement: Flaggers will use radios.

More useful: Test radios and agree identifiers, clearance messages, acknowledgements, coordinator authority, and the action for communication loss.

Decisions that change the analysis

Radio contact fails after one direction has been released. What happens?

Apply the prebriefed communication-loss procedure: do not release opposing traffic into an unconfirmed lane, alert the coordinator, and restore reliable control before resuming. Never assume the first stream has cleared.

The queue reaches around a bend. Is the original plan still sufficient?

Notify the traffic-control supervisor immediately. Evaluate warning visibility and queue protection under the authorized change process; maintain safe control while resolving the condition.

References and adaptation

FHWA: Current MUTCD edition

https://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/kno_11th_Editionr1.htm

FHWA MUTCD 11th Edition with Revision 1: Part 6; Chapters 6C, 6D and 6E

https://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/pdfs/11th_Editionr1/mutcd11theditionr1hl.pdf

OSHA 1926.201: Signaling

<https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1926/1926.201>

This original walkthrough was informed by review of uploaded examples, then rewritten for the stated fictional scenario using current primary references. It does not reproduce a source document or its approval record.

Walkthrough and draft builder: <https://www.toddjeromejenkins.com/jha-jsa-examples/flagging-operations-jsa>