

Work Zones: Verify the Traffic Setup

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Why this matters

Drivers meet a work zone from the approach, not from where the crew is standing. A displaced sign, hidden device or new work position can change how traffic reaches us. The setup needs verification before exposure and as conditions change.

Objective: Identify today's protected work area, approved access and the person responsible for traffic-control changes.

Key hazards or failure points

Traffic entering the work area; confusing or damaged devices; poor visibility; workers crossing uncontrolled traffic; equipment reversing inside the zone; blocked escape or pedestrian access.

Practical controls

- Use the applicable temporary traffic-control plan and authorized setup. Have trained personnel place, inspect and adjust controls through the required protected process. Do not improvise spacing or lane closures.
- Know worker entry/exit points, pedestrian routes, internal equipment routes and the planned escape area. Keep buffer areas clear as the plan requires. Cones and high-visibility clothing do not stop an intruding vehicle.
- Confirm assigned flaggers, communication and required visibility apparel. Report changes in traffic, queues, weather, light or the work location to the person responsible for the setup.

Verify It in the Field

Before the crew enters, the authorized traffic-control person compares the installed arrangement with the current plan. Check the approach, work area and departure using a safe inspection method; never step into live traffic to inspect.

Verify required devices are present, correctly placed, visible and functioning; confirm required barriers or protective vehicles are installed as specified. Use plan, road-authority and equipment criteria, not distances guessed from this talk.

The leader shows the crew its access and escape arrangements. Check radio communication from assigned safe positions and confirm pedestrian accessibility. Record the plan/revision, location, checker, time and gaps; obtain corrections before affected work.

Stop and reassess

Withdraw to the planned safe area for an incursion, failed communication, displaced protection or conditions beyond the setup's design. Notify the traffic-control lead. Do not enter traffic to retrieve a device. Have authorized personnel correct and recheck the arrangement, then rebrief before work resumes.

Ask the crew

1. What could change how traffic approaches our work today?
2. What evidence shows the installed setup matches the approved plan?
3. Where will we go if protection fails, and who authorizes the correction?

Before exposure: verify the setup from approach to exit and keep watching for change.

Sources: OSHA 1926.200(g), 1926.201(a), 1926.6(n); applicable MUTCD and road-authority plan.

Free next step: [JHA/JSA planning & field-verification worksheet](#)

Expanded guidance, references, supervisor check and attendance record accompany this talk.