

Barricades: What Does This Boundary Keep Out?

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Why this matters

A boundary is useful only if it suits the hazard and people can understand and follow it. Tape may warn people, but it cannot provide the physical protection required for every opening, moving machine or falling object.

Objective: Explain the boundary's purpose and verify that access and protection match today's work.

Key hazards or failure points

Gaps or damaged barriers; an unclear hazard; hidden signs; people approaching from another direction; blocked safe routes; unauthorized removal; warning tape mistaken for physical protection.

Practical controls

- Have the responsible person select the protection required for the actual hazard. Use the applicable plan, standard and design. Do not substitute warning tape for a required guardrail, cover or protective barrier.
- Identify restricted areas, authorized entry points and who controls access. Explain the site's signs and tape conventions; never assume a color means the same thing on every site.
- Provide a usable route around the restriction and coordinate other crews, deliveries and visitors. Plan how any necessary opening or removal will occur while required protection is maintained.

Verify It in the Field

Before work, inspect the boundary from protected positions along the routes people actually use. Check its full extent, access points, signs, visibility and damage. Confirm it still covers the hazard after changes in equipment or work location.

The appropriate person compares physical protection with the applicable design and installation criteria. For a required cover or guardrail, verify its specified installation and inspection evidence. Do not lean on, climb over or load an unverified system to test it.

Ask a crew member to identify the permitted route and entry process. Confirm who will monitor changes and restore protection after authorized access. Record the area, source/criterion, observed gaps, corrective owner and recheck result.

Stop and reassess

Hold affected work or access for missing protection, a gap, displaced boundary, unclear entry permission or a changed hazard. Keep people clear and contact the responsible person. Correct and recheck before use; do not move a barrier simply because it blocks the quickest route.

Ask the crew

1. What hazard does this boundary control, and what can it not stop?
2. Where could someone approach without seeing the warning?
3. Who may authorize access or a change to the protection?

Before exposure: verify the protection and the route people will use.

Sources: OSHA 1926.200(a); 1926.502(b), (i) where applicable; site/task plan.

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

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