Traffic Control for Road Crews: Compliance Checklist

While rules vary slightly by jurisdiction, Canadian Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) laws require employers (and prime contractors/constructors at construction sites where workers employed by multiple companies work) to take six basic kinds of measures to protect road crews against traffic hazards.

- Create and implement a traffic control plan that includes the elements required by the jurisdiction's OHS regulations.
- Ensure that all personnel are trained and competent to carry out their assigned functions.
- Use barriers and other controls to physically separate work crews from traffic.
- Continuously inspect, monitor, and correct work zone hazards.
- Ensure workers wear reflective clothing and have appropriate safety equipment.
- Ensure protocols are in place to provide for safe and effective signaling and communication between workers and between workers and pedestrians, cyclists, motorists, and other outsiders moving through or near the work site.

Here's a Checklist you can use to verify compliance with OHS traffic control requirements. Advise supervisors who complete the Checklist to be on the lookout for common OHS violations,

including:

□ Missing or inadequate advance warning signs
□ Inadequate taper lengths
□ Workers exposed outside protected zones
□ Untrained flaggers
□ Poor nighttime visibility
□ Missing buffer vehicles
□ Failure to inspect work zones daily
□ Conflicting or uncovered signage
□ Improper pedestrian routing
□ Generic, non-site-specific traffic control plans
□ Lack of documented inspections
□ Failure to adjust controls for weather or visibility conditions

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Road Crews Traffic Control OHS Compliance Checklist

PRE-JOB PLANNING & TRAFFIC HAZARD ASSESSMENT

Work Classification

□ Determine whether the work is:

- Mobile
- Short duration
- Stationary short-term
- Long-term
- Emergency work

□ Determine whether the work affects:

- Traffic lanes
- Shoulders
- Sidewalks
- Bike lanes

- Intersections
- Median crossings
- Pedestrian routes

□ Identify whether lane closures, detours, alternating traffic, or full closures are required.

Site Hazard Assessment

□ Assess all of the following:

- Posted speed limits
- Traffic volume
- Peak traffic periods
- Visibility limitations
- Curves, hills, bridges, underpasses
- Weather exposure
- Night work conditions
- Pedestrian/cyclist exposure
- Nearby schools, hospitals, transit stops
- Emergency vehicle access

□ Assess intrusion risks from:

- Distracted driving
- High-speed traffic
- Aggressive driving
- Reversing construction vehicles

□ Document all identified hazards before work begins.

Traffic Control Plan (TCP)

□ Prepare a written TCP before starting work.

□ Ensure the TCP includes:

- Work zone layout
- Signage placement
- Cone/barrier layout
- Buffer zones

- Lane taper distances
- Speed reduction measures
- Worker access/egress routes
- Pedestrian management
- Emergency procedures
- Communications procedures
- Setup/removal sequence
- Night-work controls

□ Verify that the TCP complies with:

- Provincial transportation manual requirements
- Municipal permit conditions
- Road authority standards
- Applicable OHS regulations

□ Ensure the TCP is site-specific and not a generic template.

COMPETENCY, TRAINING, & SUPERVISION

Traffic Control Personnel

□ Verify that all traffic control persons/flaggers are properly trained and competent.

□ Ensure training includes:

- Stop/slow paddle procedures
- Hand signals
- Radio communication
- Emergency procedures
- Traffic psychology and driver behaviour
- Safe positioning
- Night operations
- Vehicle escape routes

□ Maintain current training records and certifications.

Supervisor Responsibilities

□ Designate a competent traffic control supervisor.

□ Ensure supervisors are authorized and capable of:

- Interpreting traffic control drawings
- Conducting inspections
- Correcting deficiencies immediately
- Suspending unsafe operations
- Coordinating with emergency responders

□ Conduct documented pre-shift safety briefings.

WORK ZONE SETUP REQUIREMENTS

Advance Warning Area

□ Install warning signs sufficiently in advance of the work zone.

□ Verify that signs are:

- Reflective
- Legible
- Unobstructed
- Appropriate for speed and road classification

□ Cover or remove conflicting permanent signs where necessary.

Transition & Taper Areas

□ Use proper taper lengths based on:

- Road speed
- Lane width
- Traffic conditions
- Visibility

□ Use approved channelizing devices, including:

- Cones

- Drums
- Delineators
- Barricades

□ Ensure spacing between devices meets applicable standards.

Buffer Zones

□ Establish longitudinal buffer space between traffic and workers.

□ Keep the buffer zone free from:

- Equipment
- Materials
- Parked vehicles
- Workers

□ Increase buffer distances for:

- High-speed roads
- Poor visibility
- Wet/slippery conditions
- Night work

Work Area Protection

□ Use physical protection where reasonably practicable, including:

- Concrete barriers
- Water-filled barriers
- Crash trucks
- Truck-mounted attenuators

□ Use shadow vehicles for mobile or moving operations.

□ Ensure impact attenuators are properly deployed and inspected.

TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICE COMPLIANCE

Signage

□ Ensure all temporary signs are:

- Standardized
- Reflective
- Correct size for roadway speed
- Maintained in good condition

□ Remove damaged, faded, or non-compliant signs immediately.

Lighting & Visibility

□ Provide adequate illumination for:

- Night operations
- Dawn/dusk work
- Adverse weather

□ Ensure that lighting:

- Illuminates workers and hazards
- Does not blind motorists

□ Use arrow boards where required.

Temporary Speed Controls

□ Implement reduced speed zones where permitted and necessary.

□ Confirm that temporary speed reductions are:

- Authorized
- Properly signed
- Enforceable under local rules

WORKER SAFETY CONTROLS

High-Visibility Apparel

□ Ensure workers wear compliant high-visibility apparel meeting CSA visibility standards.

□ Verify that apparel is appropriate for:

- Daytime work
- Night work
- Wet weather
- Winter operations

□ Replace damaged or faded garments.

Safe Work Practices

□ Prohibit workers from standing outside protected work zones.

□ Require workers to:

- Face oncoming traffic where possible
- Maintain escape paths
- Stay alert to intrusion hazards

□ Minimize backing movements of work vehicles.

□ Use spotters/signallers for reversing equipment.

Communication Systems

□ Ensure reliable communication between:

- Flaggers
- Supervisors
- Equipment operators
- Emergency responders

□ Test radios and backup communication systems before work begins.

PUBLIC PROTECTION MEASURES

Pedestrian & Cyclist Safety

□ Maintain safe pedestrian routes.

□ Provide:

- Temporary sidewalks
- Barrier-separated walkways
- Accessible detours
- Cyclist routing where needed

□ Prevent pedestrians from entering active work areas.

Public Notification

□ Notify affected stakeholders where appropriate, including:

- Municipalities
- Transit authorities
- Nearby businesses
- Residents
- Emergency services

□ Use advance public advisories for major disruptions.

DAILY INSPECTION & MONITORING

Pre-Shift Inspection

□ Inspect the entire work zone before each shift.

□ Verify:

- Signs are correctly positioned
- Cones/barriers remain aligned
- Lighting functions properly
- Devices are clean and visible
- No unauthorized modifications occurred

Ongoing Monitoring

□ Conduct periodic inspections during the shift.

□ Increase monitoring during:

- Heavy traffic
- Rain/fog/snow
- Night operations
- Traffic complaints
- Near misses

□ Correct deficiencies immediately.

INCIDENT INVESTIGATION & EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Emergency Planning

□ Develop emergency response procedures for:

- Vehicle intrusions
- Worker strikes
- Traffic collisions
- Medical emergencies
- Hazardous spills

□ Ensure emergency access routes remain available.

□ Train crews on emergency shutdown procedures.

Incident Investigation

□ Investigate:

- Intrusions
- Near misses
- Traffic complaints
- Device failures
- Worker injuries

□ Document corrective actions.

□ Review recurring deficiencies during safety meetings.

WORK ZONE REMOVAL & SHUTDOWN

□ Remove traffic control devices in reverse order of installation.

□ Ensure workers remain protected during teardown.

□ Remove or cover all temporary signs immediately after work ends.

□ Conduct final roadway inspection for:

- Debris
- Trip hazards
- Uneven pavement
- Residual equipment
- Confusing signage

DOCUMENTATION & RECORDKEEPING

Maintain the following records:
□ Traffic Control Plans
□ Hazard assessments
□ Daily inspections
□ Training records
□ Pre-job briefings
□ Equipment inspections
□ Incident investigations
□ Municipal permits
□ Speed reduction approvals
□ Corrective action logs