

# Working in a Bucket Truck in Traffic – Ask the Expert



Working in a bucket truck as an electrician is already risky business – there are various safety factors you have to take into account. But when you add in the stressful scenario of working in traffic, you want to make sure you are doing everything you can to keep yourself and your workers safe.

Understanding the safety precautions recommended for scenarios like these and best practices to avoid traffic accidents and create an effective work environment are integral to being a compliant worksite manager.

## QUESTION

I am inquiring about best practices for an electrician that is working in a bucket truck in active traffic on streetlights. What are the safety precautions recommended for this work? Is it considered a construction site if it's a quick job? Are there best practices or regulations that suggest someone on the ground should direct traffic or are the indicators on the bucket truck sufficient? We are located in Ontario.

## ANSWER

The work would be subject to OHS Construction Project Regulations and traffic control requirements for work on a “highway,” defined as “a common and public highway, street,

avenue, parkway, driveway, square, place, bridge, viaduct or trestle, any part of which is intended for or used by the general public for the passage of vehicles". However, you need to know what to do in case a worker might be endangered by traffic.

## EXPLANATION

If a worker may be endangered by vehicular traffic, which would presumably include the electrician in the bucket truck, you or the project manager must:

1. Use any of the following necessary to protect the worker: Barriers, Barricades, Delineators, Lane control devices, Warning signs, Flashing lights, Flares, Traffic control devices, Blocker trucks, Crash trucks, Sign trucks, Speed control devices, and/or Longitudinal buffer areas (Regs, Sec. 67(2)).
2. Employer must implement a written traffic protection plan for its own workers that specifies the vehicular traffic hazards and measures listed above used to protect workers and is kept at the project and made available to an MOL inspector or worker on request (Regs., Sec. 67(5)).
3. The Regulations say that workers "may be used" to direct traffic but don't specify criteria on when they MUST be used (Regs. Sec. 67(3)).
4. If workers are used to direct traffic, their signs must meet the requirements of Sec. 68.

68. The following requirements apply with respect to a sign used by a worker to direct vehicular traffic:

1. It shall be octagonal in shape, measure 450 millimetres between opposite sides, and be mounted on a pole that is 1.2 metres long.
2. It shall be made of material with at least the rigidity of plywood that is six millimetres thick.

3. On one side it shall be high-intensity retro-reflective grade red in colour, with the word "STOP" written in legible high-intensity retro-reflective grade white letters 150 millimetres high in a central position on the sign.
  4. On the other side it shall be high-intensity retro-reflective micro-prismatic fluorescent chartreuse in colour, with a black diamond-shaped border that is at least 317 millimetres by 317 millimetres, and with the word "SLOW" written in legible black letters 120 millimetres high in a central position on the sign.
  5. It shall be maintained in a clean and legible condition. O. Reg. 145/00, s. 22; O. Reg. 142/17, s. 12.
5. If workers are used to direct traffic on a "public way," i.e., a highway or other street, avenue, parkway, driveway, square, place, bridge, viaduct, or other open space to which the public has access, as of right or by expressed or implied invitation, you must meet the requirements of Sec. 69 and wear reflective clothing that meets the requirements of Sec. 69.1.
69. (2) A worker shall not direct vehicular traffic for more than one lane in the same direction. O. Reg. 145/00, s. 23.
- (3) A worker shall not direct vehicular traffic if the normal posted speed limit of the public way is more than 90 kilometres per hour. O. Reg. 145/00, s. 23.
- (4) A worker who is required to direct vehicular traffic,
- a) shall be a competent worker;
  - (b) shall not perform any other work while directing vehicular traffic;

(c) shall be positioned in such a way that he or she is endangered as little as possible by vehicular traffic; and

(d) shall be given adequate written and oral instructions, in a language that he or she understands, with respect to directing vehicular traffic, and those instructions shall include a description of the signals that are to be used. 0.  
Reg. 145/00, s. 23.