Guidance for
ADA Compliant Temporary Traffic Control Devices
For Pedestrians

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Pedestrian guidance through or around a sidewalk work zone is often confusing, incomplete, or non-existent. All pedestrians traversing a pedestrian unfriendly work zone are in peril of injury. At-risk pedestrians, those with no or limited vision or mobility issues, are more vulnerable to tripping on uneven sidewalks, construction debris, holes, or obstacles in the pathway. The foundation for safe, temporary, pedestrian pathways is an accessible and detectable pathway.

An accessible pathway is defined as an alternate pedestrian pathway through a sidewalk work zone that pedestrians can safely reach, enter, and travel through to the end of the work zone. A detectable pathway is one that describes traffic control devices which are placed within a temporary pedestrian pathway to provide a continuous upper surface and lower edge. Pedestrians with no or limited vision can safely follow that continuous edge by hand or walking device, such as a cane, to the end of the pathway.

Together, the draft PROWAG and MUTCD identify the following design criteria for ADA-Compliant devices:

- devices provide continuous, safe guidance;
- individual devices interlock, with no gaps;
- smooth upper surface for hand-trailing;
- bottom guide rail for walking devices;
- minimal gap at bottom to prevent trapping of canes; and
- do not present tripping hazards

The current MDT practice for providing ADA-compliant temporary traffic control devices for pedestrians in work zones does not comply with the requirements discussed above. The photos below are examples of non-conforming pedestrian traffic control in work zones.



Non conforming



Non conforming



Non conforming



Non conforming

The MUTCD specifies that sidewalk closures shall cover the full width of the sidewalk and shall be detectable for pedestrians with no or limited vision. Devices used shall provide detectable guidance with top and bottom rails for pedestrian hand or walking device guidance. The bottom of the detectable edging shall be no higher than 2" above the ground. The top of the detectable surface shall be no lower than 32" above the ground. (MUTCD Section 6F.63, Lines 4 and 5, Standards).

Alternate or temporary pathways provided must maintain a clear width of 5 feet to accommodate two pedestrians in wheel chairs. If a 5 foot width is not available, a space 5 foot by 5 foot must be provided every 200 feet to allow for passing. The accessibility and detectability shall be maintained along the entire alternate pedestrian route. The surface of the pathway should be firm, stable, and slip resistant in order to maintain safe passage for all pedestrians.

When an alternate pathway channelizes pedestrians over a curb face or a vertical/steep slope or drop off, a temporary pedestrian ramp must be installed to accommodate pedestrians in wheelchairs to traverse safely through the work zone. The ramp shall have a maximum slope of 12:1 and have a minimum width of 4 feet.

The photos below are good examples of ADA-compliant pedestrian traffic control through the work zone:





Pedestrian Channelization





Pedestrian Channelization







Pedestrian Work Zone Separation

A Type II Barricade, or other acceptable device, with the advanced warning sign, SIDE WALK CLOSED AHEAD CROSS HERE, is suitable for use as advanced warning. This device/sign should be placed at the upstream corner from the actual sidewalk closure to inform pedestrians of the closure. This device/sign must not be placed within the open sidewalk so as not to obstruct pedestrians with no or limited vision or pedestrians in wheelchairs. The photo below illustrates the use of a Type II Barricade for advanced warning.



Conclusion

This guidance was initiated because of a presentation at the 2016 Traffic Control Contractor/MDT Conference. The presentation identified the non-conformity and offered solutions in order to adapt to the requirements. The purpose of this guidance is to address those needs for conformity. As of the date of this guidance, a number of projects are currently using devices that do not conform to this guidance. Therefore, time will be allowed for traffic control contractors to obtain devices to meet these requirements.

As of September 1, 2016 all pedestrian traffic control devices used for accessible and detectable pathways must meet the requirements of the MUTCD outlined in this guidance. This is not a change in specifications but an implementation of current MUTCD requirements that have not been addressed on past projects. The Traffic Control Rate Schedule, Group #40, Pedestrian Barricade, will continue to be used for payment of the barricade. Current non-compliant devices must be replaced with the devices described in this guidance. As such, payment for new replacement devices will also be made under Group #40.

***** End of Guidance *****