



Traffic Control Device: **Work Zone**

Date of Revision: **March 15, 2002**

Division:

Subject: **Work Zone Components**

Page **1 of 2**

### **Purpose**

A work zone consists of the section of the roadway between the first advance warning sign and the point beyond the activity area where traffic is no longer affected. Most work zones can be divided into five areas as described below.

### **Policy**

All work zone Traffic Management Plans (TMP) will be designed to include the five areas of a work zone traffic control zone.

- Advance Warning Area
- Transition Area
- Buffer Space
- Activity Area
- Termination Area

### **Standard**

#### **Advance Warning Area**

An advance warning area is required for all work zones to alert motorists to the road work ahead. Motorists need enough time and distance to adjust to the altered conditions prior to reaching them. The warning area may vary from a single traffic control device, such as a ROAD WORK sign (WD-A41), to a series of traffic control devices.

#### **Transition Area**

When redirection of the driver's normal path is required, traffic must be channelized from the normal path to a new path. This redirection is intended to occur at the beginning of the transition area. In mobile operations, this transition area moves with the work space. Transition areas usually involve strategic use of tapers, which (because of their importance) are described in Policy/Standard 900-C-4.

RECOMMENDED: \_\_\_\_\_  
Director, Traffic Engineering

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_  
Executive Director  
Highway Engineering

**Buffer Space**

The buffer space is an open and unoccupied space between the transition area and the work area. The buffer space provides a margin of safety for both motorists and workers. It must be designed to provide adequate stopping sight distance from the middle of the lane closure taper to the beginning of the work area. The buffer space must be coned or otherwise channelled off at all times and free of workers, equipment, and material.

**Activity Area**

The activity area is that portion of the roadway closed to traffic and set aside for exclusive use by workers, equipment, and material. Activity areas may be in fixed locations or may move as the work progresses. In mobile operations, extra care must be taken to ensure that an adequate buffer space is left between the work area/vehicle and the trailing buffer vehicle.

**Termination Area**

The termination area provides the distance necessary for traffic to clear the work area and return to the normal traffic lanes. A downstream taper placed in the termination area indicates that vehicles can move back into the closed lane(s) and helps smooth the flow the traffic.