

Toolbox Topics: Unattended Workzone Safety | Compliance Safety Manager

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Toolbox Topics: General Safety for Unattended Work Zones



When workers go home, traffic control devices are expected to stand on their own, without monitoring. This can be a dangerous situation if the proper practices are not followed. Danger is greater at night when visibility is reduced. If an accident happens, who is at fault? You or the vehicle operator? How can you testify to the condition of the site when you left? Documentation is the key, but how do you document the condition of the site?

We invite you to incorporate these critical activities into a job-site checklist and ongoing safety awareness program for your project managers, foremen and crew.

1. Make the work zone as safe as possible before leaving for the day.
2. Pay special attention to the visibility of traffic control devices, equipment, and other hazards.
3. Use sturdy devices. The heavier they are, the more difficult they are to move.
4. Signs used at night should be either illuminated or retroreflective.
5. Post-mounted signs in urban areas should be mounted high enough to provide protection to pedestrians.
6. Portable supports for signs are too easily displaced and generally not sturdy enough for unattended work zones.
7. Channelizing devices such as cones, drums, barricades, tubular markers, and vertical panels should be constructed and ballasted so they perform in a predictable manner when struck by vehicles.
8. Cones and tubular markers are easily displaced and not generally suitable for unattended work zones.

9. Work zone requirements can vary from state to state, so always check to make sure you're in compliance with any state-specific regulations.
10. Type I and Type II barricades are more effective than cones for unattended work zones. They may be equipped with steady-burn lights for delineation.
11. Flashing lights draw attention to hazards and warning signs.
12. Drums are effective for long-term and unattended work zones. They are more difficult to move, but still require frequent monitoring.
13. Remember, **GOOD VISIBILITY IS CRUCIAL!**
14. Do not leave any hazard in the clear zone.
15. Remember pedestrians and bicyclists. Protect them as well as motorists.
16. Barricade excavations or cover them. Use steel plates for motorists.
17. Inspect, inspect, inspect. Document your inspections. Personal notes, logs, journal entries, inspection forms, etc. can be used in a trial. Stick to the facts. Do not falsify any record. Do your job correctly and document accordingly.

About Craig Safety Technologies

Craig Safety Technologies, Inc. was founded in 1998 by Brenda Craig, a leader in industrial safety and safety software. Craig Safety Technologies provides Compliance Safety Manager™, a comprehensive and highly flexible web-based safety compliance management solution created to help companies understand and meet the regulatory requirements of the Department of Transportation (DOT) and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

Craig Safety Technologies, Inc. specializes in providing accountability and risk management for personnel and equipment assets for organizations across multiple industries. Specific CST services include: conducting on-site assessments of compliance readiness; training, documentation; and prescribing and implementing activities to ensure compliance with federal regulations. In 2004, CST delivered one of the industry's first comprehensive patented software to document DOT and OSHA compliance activities necessary to comply with federal mandates.