Use of Work Zone Data

One of the major emphasis areas in the revisions to 23 CFR 630 Subpart J is the use of work zone data. Work zone data are necessary for any Agency to better understand the impacts of work zones, address problems as they arise, and improve Agency impacts estimation and work zone management for future projects. The updates to the Work Zone Safety and Mobility Rule added operational data to the existing requirement to use work zone data. The Rule now requires agencies to use both safety and operational data to manage the work zone impacts of ongoing projects and to improve the safety and operational efficiency of future work zones. The data should be used at the project level for ongoing improvements as well as to identify trends at the systemwide level.

There are many sources of data that can be utilized: crash records; field observations and operational information such as queue length or average delay, average speeds, or any other operational data measured; project documentation including construction diaries and inspection reports. At the project level, the data should be used to determine if the agency's goals for minimizing impacts are being met on any individual project. If the goals are not being met or if there are a number of crashes that could indicate a problem with the traffic control in the work zone, then personnel should be able to make prompt adjustments to the project to improve the operations. Systemwide, the data should be reviewed to determine if the agency's policies, procedures, or specifications should be revised.

The Process Review should determine if the agency is utilizing the data from all sources effectively to improve work zone safety and operations. Some sample questions follow. The responses to these questions should provide an insight into how the Agency uses the data.

- Are the crash reports reviewed by project personnel during the project? If so, have any adjustments been made to improve the work zone?
- Does the agency have methods in place to collect operational data? If so, how have the data been used?
- How does the Agency store and manage work zone data?
- Has the agency revised any policies, procedures, or specifications based upon the review of any of the data?
- Is there a process in place to review all crash data statewide to determine if there are any trends in crashes in work zones?