Temporary Traffic Control Devices Final Rule
23 CFR 630 Subpart K
Questions and Answers (Updated: April 27, 2026**)**

Q: Is this Rule an entirely new regulation?

A: No. It is an update to 23 CFR 630 Subpart K that was published on December 5, 2007.

Q: Why did FHWA update 23 CFR 630 Subpart K ?

A: The Rule was updated to:

- Make the subpart consistent with the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) § 1405.
- Improve overall work zone safety.

Q: What are the key components of the updated Rule?

A: Key components of the new Rule include the following:

Definitions

- Added definition for Engineering Study.
- Updated the definition of Positive Protection Devices to meet applicable industry crashworthiness evaluation criteria.

Policy and procedures for work zone safety management

- Modified § 630.1106(b) to clarify that strategies and devices to be used may be determined by a project-specific engineering study or determined from agency guidelines developed from an engineering study that indicate when positive protection devices or other strategies and approaches are to be used based on project and highway characteristics and factors.
- Updated § 630.1106(b) to provide examples of the types of engineering decisionmaking tools that could be used in the engineering study.

Work zone safety management measures and strategies

- Modified § 630.1108(a) to (i) require that positive protection devices be used in work zones with high anticipated operating speeds that provide workers no means of escape from motorized traffic intruding into the workspace unless an engineering study determines otherwise; and (ii) remove redundant language indicating that decisions regarding the use of longitudinal traffic barriers shall be based on an engineering study, as longitudinal traffic barrier is one of the Positive Protection Devices.

- Updated § 630.1108(c) to add (i) Enhanced flagger station setups or use of automated flagger assistance devices, (ii) Protection or shadow vehicles used to protect workers and equipment from impacts by errant vehicles, and (iii) Intelligent Transportation Systems and other advanced technology solutions and strategies to the list of other traffic control measures for consideration by State and local agencies.

Q: When do I have to comply with this Rule?

A: The Rule compliance date is December 31, 2025, for agencies to update their policies and December 31, 2026, for agencies to implement the policies.

Q: How can I find out more about work zone management?

A: The FHWA Work Zone Management Program and the National Work Zone Safety Information Clearinghouse websites provide a vast amount of information about work zone management topics. These sites are available at https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/wz/index.asp and https://workzonesafety.org/, respectively.

Q: What does terms "safety impacts" used in § 630.1106 (b)(3) "anticipated traffic safety impacts" mean?

A: As noted in § 630.1004 – definitions of "Safety" and "Work Zone Impacts," work zone safety impacts refer to work-zone-induced potential hazards to road users in the vicinity of a work zone and highway workers at the work zone interface with traffic. Anticipated traffic safety impacts refer to identifying the safety risks to work zone workers and road users associated with various factors such as exposure to traffic, time of activity, type of activity, intrusion of motorized traffic into activity area, lane widths, speed limits, crash frequency and severity prior to work zone implementation, and pre-work zone inspection findings. This safety impact identification approach can be a simple checklist for short-term and limited-exposure projects and a more involved assessment for long-term and complex projects.

Q: Will an engineering study to determine if positive protection measures are warranted be necessary for each project?

A: Not necessarily – The strategies and devices to be used may be determined by a project-specific engineering study or determined from agency guidelines developed from an engineering study that indicate when positive protection devices or other strategies and approaches are to be used based on project and highway characteristics and factors.

Q: Is FHWA planning on providing additional guidance on the use of positive protection – such as defining the depth of a drop-off that will require positive protection?

A: Agencies are responsible to define acceptable drop-off thresholds for requiring positive protection.

Q: How does the updated Rule impact determination of use of positive protection devices in work zones?

A: The updated Rule requires agencies to use positive protection devices in work zones with high anticipated operating speeds that provide workers no means of escape from motorized traffic intruding into the workspace unless an engineering study determines otherwise (§ 630.1108(a)).

The updated Rule retains the requirement for agencies to consider positive protection devices in other situations that place workers at increased risk from motorized traffic, and where positive protection devices offer the highest potential for increased safety for workers and road users, such as:

(1) Work zones that provide workers no means of escape from motorized traffic (e.g., tunnels, bridges, etc.).

(2) Long-duration work zones (e.g., two weeks or more) resulting in substantial worker exposure to motorized traffic.

(3) Projects with high anticipated operating speeds (e.g., 45 mph or greater), especially when combined with high traffic volumes.

(4) Work operations that place workers close to travel lanes open to traffic.

(5) Roadside hazards, such as drop-offs or unfinished bridge decks, that will remain in place overnight or longer. such as the five examples mentioned above.

Q: How does the updated Rule impact the requirements for positive protection devices to meet crashworthiness evaluation criteria?

A: The updated Rule still requires positive protection devices to contain or redirect vehicles and meet applicable industry crashworthiness evaluation criteria. For example, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials' (AASHTO's) Manual for Assessing Safety Hardware (MASH) includes current industry crashworthiness evaluation criteria. Industry crashworthiness evaluation criteria are not regulatory, and use of them is voluntary and not required by law. The updated Rule removed requirement to meet the evaluation criteria contained in National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Report 350, Recommended Procedures for the Safety Performance Evaluation of Highway Features, 1993, Transportation Research Board, National Research Council. The Rule removed reference to this specific evaluation criteria document as it is out of date.

Q: Why did the Rule use the "high anticipated operating speeds" qualifier?

A: The Rule added the “high anticipated operating speeds” because the majority of fatal work zone crashes occur on high-speed roadways such as urban and rural interstates, urban and rural principal arterials, and freeways/expressways. These facility types generally operate at high speeds (e.g., 45 mph or greater).

Q: Who can conduct an engineering study?

A: An engineer, or an individual working under the supervision of an engineer, shall perform an engineering study through the application of procedures and criteria established by the engineer. The person conducting the engineering study shall document such study. Benefit-cost analyses, decision matrices, decision tree analysis, or other appropriate engineering decision-making tools may be used in the engineering study. (§ 630.1106(b)).