

Regional Administrator

Don Whitehouse believes that Secretary MacDonald's safety program has brought the safety culture to where it should be. WSDOT is more proactive regarding safety and making the effort to reduce accidents by 30%. The key is to look at why an accident happens. Don also talked about communication. When positive separation of workers from traffic cannot be in place, then communicating with drivers to slow down and be alert is essential. The public expects instantaneous information; communication is the key to building public confidence. Communication between regions is also important.

Washington State Patrol

Lt. Jim Keightley of the WSP talked about double fines in work zones. He understands that the Administrator of the Courts set the penalty for speeding in school zones and work zones at \$177, which is the double rate. Lt. Keightley says since the law states that fines double in work zones, there is no need for the double fine signs, but if it helps slow drivers down then the signs should be posted. Lt. Keightley believes that whether a trooper is patrolling or sitting in the work zone with his light flashing, the driver coming into the work zone understands to slow down. Mike Fallon asked if the double fine signs are written into traffic control plans, Kevin Dayton says this is a region issue. Ted Trepanier reminded the group that too many courts are not enforcing double fines without the signs being in place, and he would like to send out joint guidance to the regions reminding them of this issue. Lt. Keightley did note that his people only apply double fines to fully signed work zones and when workers are present. SW Region said both VMS and HAR could be used as a public announcement conduit. Kevin would like to bring back the 555 program from last year where five WSP troopers patrol a work zone for five hours in five different areas. The 555 program becomes a media blitz and focuses attention on the need to drive safely in work zones.

Flow Management – Rick Gifford

South Central Region is under pressure to keep the passes open. Weekend and holiday traffic can exceed capacity on I-90, which diminishes the ability of the maintenance crews to remove snow. Any accident can cause a total road closure; avalanche control can also cause traffic delays. SC looked for ways to improve flow, and using Donner Pass as an example, began traffic metering eastbound on Snoqualmie Pass. Controlling the volume by closing the road down to one lane on a selected section of the road has worked well. Metering is determined by factors such as snowfall and volume, and not implemented during chain enforcement. HAR, VMS, media announcements and WSP assistance have made the program successful. Rick also talked about other ways that WSDOT is striving to keep the pass open including an aggressive anti icing/deicing program, involving the Traffic Management Centers in active resource management, more gang plowing, and aggressive avalanche control. A new program is being tested this year whereby two vendors will install (not sell) chains on vehicles for a fee; WSDOT gets no revenue from this program.

Region Roundtable

South Central Region – Tom Lenberg talked about his region using pre activity safety plans, and being proactive and taking safety seriously. They put together a written plan by committee, developed a site plan and created posters to advertise safety. They've developed a program where one section will review another section to look for safety opportunities, from "another set of eyes." Tom also mentioned that many of the frequently used forms have been created electronically to save time.

North Central Region – Kirk Berg said they are also looking at safety, both in the office and on site. Knowing where to park in a construction site is a big issue; employees need to look at their surroundings and know what they are doing. The road through Tumwater Canyon was closed for four days, and because of good communication, the closure was well received by the public. Other pluses include the fact that a good detour was available, coordination was created to help clear the road, and shuttles were provided for the ski area. This afforded the workers a much higher degree of safety as well. Kirk pointed out the advantages of providing work zone traffic plans and overall strategy early in the development.

Southwest Region – Chris Tams noted the importance of knowing when to make the decision to close a road. He feels the product is better in the end since the contractor has full use of the facility during a full closure. Public communication is essential to the success. Next year a portion of US97 will be closed for a bridge deck removal and replacement.

Olympic Region – Steve Haapala said construction is winding down. He talked about a nighttime road closure on SR101 where people missed the closed sign and drove to the closure where turning around was difficult. Flaggers had to be posted to make sure drivers did not pass the road closed sign, a variable message sign also helped. Steve explained that on a HOV project on I-5 in Pierce County, the hours the lanes were closed was based on careful scrutiny of traffic. Steve talked about a maintenance matrix they have developed to track a project. He also talked about issues with lane closures during the day. Steve asked how to post seven foot signs when they cannot find any stands that are NCHRP crash tested, Frank Newboles will research. Olympic Region is looking at combining HOV projects that may be design build, and the necessity of including traffic control early. The new *Design Manual* Chapter 810 will help to ensure design build quality inspection and full strategy development, as will looking at other design build projects.

Northwest Region – Phil Fordyce noted an automated flagger device has been written into a paving job coming up this year. NW Region has a design build HOV project where the HOV lane is split and barriered off, it is working well because there is a lot of room. Phil said that roads that are split can work well if there is good site distance, and any columns are protected by attenuators. Rumble strips, reflectorized buttons or tubular markers can also be added. This coming July and August, "quiet pavement" construction on I-20 will be done during the day because of temperature requirements, forcing daytime lane closures. Noise attenuation and durability will be monitored over the next five years.

Eastern Region – Mike Frucci asked about the automatic flagging device. Frank said that it has been used in field tests but so far has not been written into a specification. Ken Smith said there is money available from FHWA’s Highways for Life Program for innovative projects. Ken suggested that regions look for ways to submit ideas.

Wilder Construction – Mike Fallon is looking at the FHWA new proposal in regard to positive barrier protection and how to apply it to mobile paving. He also talked about making the traffic control plan compatible to the project before the first shovel of dirt is turned. Mike said falls are still a major cause of accidents in the industry.

Traffic Control Oversight Subcommittee

ATSSA is going to provide training in March 2007, WSDOT will monitor one class and L&I will monitor another before ATSSA is approved to offer TCOC training in Washington State. Discussion ensued as to how to determine the competency of a newly trained flagger, especially since there is such a high turnover in flaggers. Dave Hamacher talked about the FHWA high visibility apparel rule that became final November 2007, with total compliance by November 2008. The rule states all roadway apparel must be a minimum ANSI 2 reflectivity, currently all WSDOT vests meet this rule. Several WSDOT manuals will need to have the apparel spec rewritten.

Safety/New Products Subcommittee

Frank Newboles and two other WSDOT employees traveled to 3M Headquarter in St. Paul, Minnesota where they visited the 400 acre research site, primarily to look at roadway safety products. They were impressed with the reflective performance of a new sign sheeting and a wet reflective marking tape.

Technical Subcommittee

This team met recently and looked at the M54-44, some feedback is that the manual is getting too complex. Frequent users know how to use it, but it could lose its effectiveness if too much is added. Frank Newboles talked about the new ruling whereby Category 4 devices, such as trailer mounted VMS, do not need to meet NCHRP crash tests. It is recommended that these devices be trailered off site or put behind barriers when not being used.

L&I Meeting

Dan McMurdy and Lou Flores met with WSDOT personnel to discuss issues of interest to both agencies. L&I will be involved in future MUTCD development meetings, and they may be co-chairs of the TCOC with WSDOT. Two possibly conflicting WACs are being looked at by both agencies. L&I is reviewing the M54-44, as well as looking at some sort of modified flagging for short duration work zones. Both agencies are looking forward to gaining understanding of each other’s point of reference in regard to work zones.

Work Zone Reviews

Frank said this is the first year the positive column over shadowed the needs improvement column. There was more focus on a new design build category, there seems to be both positive and negative issues. In the improvement opportunity section there were not as many repeated issues, but some that stood out include work zone strategies and constructability issues that need to be addressed early on, traffic analysis is

not done in enough detail, and the traffic control plan does not fully address all issues. Follow up actions were not always promptly attended to if there was not an agreement that something needed fixing or if the fix was not considered a high priority. Design Build RFPs can also be an issue. In the solution, innovation and best practices section it was noted that there is more effort to include the media and the WSDOT public information officers in advance notice of projects, and there is more design effort to include bikes and pedestrians. Future actions include possibly creating performance measures for the work zone review process and offering work zone review training so the regions can be more involved.

New Work Zone Policy Final Rule

Cathy Nicholas says with the new rule there is more emphasis for states to think about the work zone earlier in the process, to get more public involvement and to have more thorough procedures. WSDOT is generally in compliance, but there is still some work to do including updating manuals, training, and design build concerns. Other changes in the design phase may be noted, including more guidance in traffic management plans, and changes being incorporated into standard business processes.

Design Manual, Chapter 810

The *Design Manual* update was mailed out in November. This chapter implements the new FHWA rule, with more emphasis on mobility through the work zone. The Transportation Management Plan is a new requirement for all significant projects, a traffic capacity analysis and impacts assessment are to be included in this plan. Chapter 810 provides guidance for preparing capacity analysis. This chapter also includes guidance on developing a work zone impacts assessment. Work zone classifications have been condensed to three, they are long term stationary work zones, short duration work zones and mobile work zones. Basic work zone types have been expanded from ten to fourteen. Chapter 810 provides work zone training resources to develop or increase proficiency in work zone design and management. The rewrite includes a work zone traffic control design check list, but no longer includes work zone traffic plans, sign plans, barricade or delineator types and devices which can be found in the *MUTCD* and the *WSDOT Work Zone Traffic Control Guidelines* (M 54-44).

Traffic Manual, Chapter 5, Work Zone Traffic Control

This chapter outlines what it takes to operate a work zone. It's a good resource for region traffic offices working with other entities currently being developed.

M54-44

The 2005 update pulled together sections, including short duration work zone information. The 2006 update included seven revisions, and will be coming out this winter.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be March 1, 2007 hosted by Northwest Region.