

**Work Zone Safety Task Force Meeting
Employment Security Building
Maple Leaf Conference Room, Olympia
May 14, 2008 (9:00 am – 3:30 pm)**

Opening Remarks and New Direction

Chris explained to the group that the new focus is on getting the right people on the task force that can make changes happen. There is also increased importance placed on improved communication. A steering committee was developed with members of the construction, design, maintenance and traffic arenas to help guide the group.

Each WZSTF member introduced him or her self, Mike Frucci of Eastern Region and Marty Weed of HQ Traffic Office were unable to attend. Captain Hilton represented the Washington State Patrol (WSP), Cathy Nicholas represented FHWA but will be leaving federal government and no replacement has been announced. No industry representative was present. Next meeting will be October 28 at the Kent Maintenance Area hosted by the Urban Corridors Office.

Follow Up From Last Meeting

Frank talked about the new WZSTF tracking form. The steering committee wanted a form detailing what the item is that the WZSTF will track, an abbreviated work plan for each item, and the action required to complete each task and by whom. Vicky created a draft that Frank and Chris C. will review. There are currently four pending items on the form that have to do with removing and installing permanent and temporary striping. An implementation strategy team of Amy, Phil and Kirk will work with Frank and Jim Spaid to provide guidance on the use of temporary tape in work zones. Any new guidelines will be part of the action plan and appear in the Standard Specifications, Design and Construction manuals.

Chris C. and Linea talked about action strategies from the last meeting that included full directional closure, region communication, bike and pedestrian issues, ADA in work zones and more. Chris asked the group to think about what the WZSTF should work on. In the past the WZSTF has been more a “think tank” and Chris would like to see more implementation. Marketing, action strategies and a tangible action plan will all be part of the implementation process.

Work Zone and Safety Updates

Frank talked about being more proactive in setting up the work zone reviews and putting more emphasis on getting engineering managers involved. Normally there is good participation but last year a combination of project scheduling issues and a lean construction program in some regions lead to fewer choices for the reviews. Other regions had very busy construction programs and it was difficult to find available time for some to participate. This season the regions have committed to more participation. The purpose of the annual review report is not just detailing what needs to be corrected but also to create dialogue and share best practices and problems. This year’s report will include what is being done to resolve issues by both the region and headquarters. The group felt there would be value in looking at maintenance work zones as well. There is a need to get the M54-44 (*Manual on Traffic Control Guidelines*) out to the crews who are in work zones, especially bringing to their attention the new guidance on short duration work zones. The statewide MTCOT training should address this need.

Washington State legislation authorized a pilot program for the use of automated traffic safety cameras in work zones on state highways. WSDOT, in consultation with the Washington State Patrol, has selected several projects this summer that will use cameras in their work zones to ticket speeders. Some regions did not understand that the only cost to them to have photo enforcement is the cost of a few signs in the work zone noting the presence of the cameras. Since the pilot program is of such a short duration, crash data may be inconclusive, but speeds in work zones will be studied before, during and after the presence of photo enforcement. A report will be produced on the pilot program and results shared at the WZSTF October meeting.

A work zone safety bulletin was created in October 2007 regarding the use of motorcycle warning signs in construction work zones around the state. The bulletin outlines the requirements for the use of signs and guidelines for installing the signs. Frank pointed out now is a good time to get this bulletin circulated to pertinent personnel; he will forward the bulletin to the regions.

In response to two transients killed in work zones in the last year, homeless advocacy groups are meeting with WSDOT and WSP personnel to develop guidelines for clearing work sites where the homeless are living. WSDOT is starting to look at creating building structures that are not hospitable to transients.

November 24, 2008 FHWA's new rule on personal protective equipment goes into effect. Although WSDOT already requires ANSI 2 gear, now the equipment will have to have the 107 2004 label to qualify under the new rule. This applies to all people working on any project built with federal monies. Local agencies, utilities, and fire fighting personnel have all been made aware of this ruling. The Safety Office will transmit information on this subject through Chris C. and Linea.

The WZSTF Work Plan

The group brainstormed issues of concern, looked at the goals of the team to see if the issue was something the WZSTF should take on, then began to come up with ideas on how to implement the issues. Topics discussed were use of WSP in work zones, FHWA guidelines in regard to work zone accessibility and rolling slowdowns, inconsistent application of D55-20 (reduced speed limits), crashworthy sign stands, accessing WSP work zone accident reports, traffic management plans, utility work, M54-44 (Traffic Control Guidelines), durable striping, positive separation, construction road closures, work zone strategies education, and effective management decisions.

Other Updates

Frank explained that Southwest Region received a citation from the Department of Labor and Industries that led to a settlement whereby WSDOT agreed to provide additional advance warning to work zones in live lanes on a freeway or high speed multi-lane facility. Chapter 3 of the M54-44 was rewritten to reflect this change.

The revised M54-44 has been completed and released. The draft was sent out to the regions and feedback was incorporated into this version of the manual. The new M54-44 has tabs which make it easier to use, the electronic version has numerous links to other references. One of the biggest changes is the detail concerning short duration work

zones, this information needs to be available to maintenance folks as well as construction personnel and a training effort is underway.

Work zone performance measures are a requirement of the new Federal Rule. WSDOT has some processes that could be turned into performance measures such as the FHWA work zone assessment, and the annual work zone review process. Safety performance measures are more difficult to measure. Other states use different measures, such as the State Patrol's accident reports. The WZSTF Technical Team will work on creating performance measures and bring these to the October meeting.

Brian Walsh brought up the need for using innovative ways to sign work zones in order to capture the public's attention, including using overhead signs to post construction information. Pasco and Brian will look into this and make a report at the October meeting.

Phil Fordyce will provide a safety training video to be viewed at the October meeting.