

# Keeping Roadside Workers Safe: What Employers Need to Know



This document outlines what employers need to do to keep employees safe when working on or beside the road. The focus is on low risk roadside work where planned work does not exceed one daytime work shift and certified traffic control persons (TCPs) are not required.

*High-risk work sites that may require a certified Traffic Control Person (TCP) include:*

- Sections of a two-way road are temporarily reduced to one lane.
- Traffic must be stopped to permit work zone equipment to enter or cross a road.
- Workplaces identified as high-risk based on a hazard identification and risk analysis.

*See Part 18 Traffic Control of the OHSR and related Guidelines for more information, or call the WorkSafeBC Prevention Information Line at 604.276.3100, toll free 1.888.621.7233.*

## Your responsibilities

The Occupational Health and Safety Regulation (OHSR) requires that every BC employer must ensure that effective traffic control is provided and used whenever traffic could be hazardous to a worker.

As an employer, you must ensure that

- Workers understand the traffic control arrangements and procedures.
- Appropriate traffic control devices are in place before start of work and are removed when they are no longer required.
- All workers involved in traffic control operations – whether high or low risk, are adequately trained.

In general, traffic control equipment, arrangements and procedures must meet the requirements of BC's *Traffic Control Manual for Work on Roadways*, issued by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI). The manual is available [online](#) on the MOTI website.

See Part 18 Traffic Control of the [OHSR](#) and the related [Guidelines](#) for more information.



Ensure workers understand the traffic control arrangements and procedures.

## Have a plan to protect your workers

A traffic control plan can help you to identify and document an appropriate work zone set-up for your work site. Read this brief [traffic control plan primer](#). You may wish to use this [traffic control plan template](#) as you develop your plan.

### 1. Identify roadside hazards and contributing risk factors

Each roadside work site is unique. The type of road, type and volume of traffic, visibility, etc. can affect the risks that roadside workers are exposed to.

If possible, visit the work site in advance to identify possible hazards and risk factors. The traffic control plan template includes a listing of risk factors to consider. Also view the listing of potential roadside hazards on the Safety at the Roadside worker handout.

### 2. Understand basic traffic control principles

Most motorists and other road users don't expect to see workers on or beside the road. To effectively alert and guide them, they must be given clear and consistent instructions. This and other key principles are outlined in BC's [Traffic Control Manual for Work on Roadways](#).

Review [Chapter 1 of the Traffic Control Manual](#). This introductory chapter also explains

- Common traffic control terminology
- Parts of a work zone
- BC regulations and standards for work zone set-up

### 3. Plan your work zone layout

Review the typical work zone layouts in the *Traffic Control Manual* that are relevant for your roadside work.

Review [Chapter 2 of the Traffic Control Manual](#) to become familiar with the different types of traffic control devices.

Draw your work zone layout, using the relevant layout diagram in the *Traffic Control Manual* as a guide.

*Develop standard work zone layout diagrams based on your typical roadside work sites. Use these standard diagrams as you plan your work, modifying them as required for each work site.*

Keep in mind that the diagrams are minimum guidelines. You may need to modify these guidelines based on your particular work site and the hazards you've identified. You may wish to use this [traffic control plan template](#) to document your work zone layout.

### 4. Identify the person who will be responsible for safe work zone set-up at the site

This person should know how to do an on-site hazard identification and risk assessment, and have the authority to modify the work zone layout and/or take other corrective action as required.

*Supply standard layout diagrams to workers who may not know their work site in advance. They can quickly reference the appropriate diagram when they're on the road, documenting changes to the standard diagram as required.*

## Ensure you have the proper traffic control equipment

Depending on your work zone layouts, you will need the following types of traffic control equipment:

- Signs warning of work ahead
- Traffic channelizing devices such as cones and flexible drums
- Barricades and barriers
- Tubular markers
- Other types of equipment such as arrow boards and portable message signs

The equipment can be purchased from safety supply companies. Ensure they meet the standards outlined in [Chapter 2 of the Traffic Control Manual](#).

Ensure work vehicles are stocked with the proper equipment. Note that flexible, roll-up signs are often available. These take up less room in the vehicle.



## Ensure your workers are trained and prepared

*Depending on the work zone layout, you will require different types of traffic control equipment.*

### 1. Ensure your workers understand:

- Your organization's safe work procedures for roadside work, including work around mobile equipment and work vehicles.
- The work zone layout at the work site.
- Who is responsible for work zone set-up at the work site.
- Escape routes in case vehicles cross over into the work zone.
- Procedures and contact information in case of an emergency incident.

### 2. Regardless of whether or not you have a certified TCP at the work site, all workers must be aware of the hazards at their roadside work site and how to protect themselves.

Distribute Safety at the Roadside handout.

### 3. Workers must have appropriate high-visibility garments.

Ensure they have any other personal protective equipment (PPE) that may be required for their job activities.



*Ensure workers know the hazards and how to protect themselves.*

**4. Instruct supervisors to conduct a safety briefing before work begins.** The briefing should cover hazards, safe work procedures, and the work zone layout. Do this every day, as hazards may differ from one day to the next. Review safety mistakes and successes from the previous day.

### Inspect and document

- Ensure you have documented safe work procedures.
- Document your planned work zone layout. The layout should include type, condition and position of signs, cones and other traffic control devices. You may wish to use this [traffic control plan template](#). Be sure to record any changes from the planned layout.
- Inspect your traffic control devices regularly to ensure they are in good condition.
- Inspect workers' high-visibility garments regularly to ensure they are clean and in good usable condition – not torn or faded.
- Schedule regular inspections of the roadside work site to ensure work zone set-up follows the planned layout. Ensure that any changes made to address on-site hazards are documented.
- Keep records of worker training and safety communications.



*Inspect traffic control devices regularly to make sure they are in good condition.*

See [ConeZoneBC.com](https://www.conezonebc.com) for more information on roadside worker safety.