



Establishing Temporary Traffic Controls in Mobile Work Zones

November and December means leaf season in many towns. Leaf collection is typically a mobile work zone, as is bulk pick-up, hot / cold patching, and jetting / vacuuming catch basins. As we move into winter, plowing snow and spreading salt / brine are two more examples of mobile work zones. Now is a good time to remind employees of the regulations and safety considerations of these seasonal tasks.

The 2009 edition of the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) is the law in New Jersey when working on or near roadways. Supervisors and workers **MUST** be aware of the requirements in this document. It can be downloaded or viewed for free at <http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov>. Note that Part 6 on Temporary Traffic Control is the standard when conducting routine tasks, whether they are road repair or maintenance, utility work, or any other work within 15 feet of a road. Part 6 defines a 'Mobile Work Zone' as an operation that "moves intermittently or continuously." Typically, 15 minutes is thought of as the duration of a stop before the operation becomes a 'Short Duration Work Zone' and those rules apply.

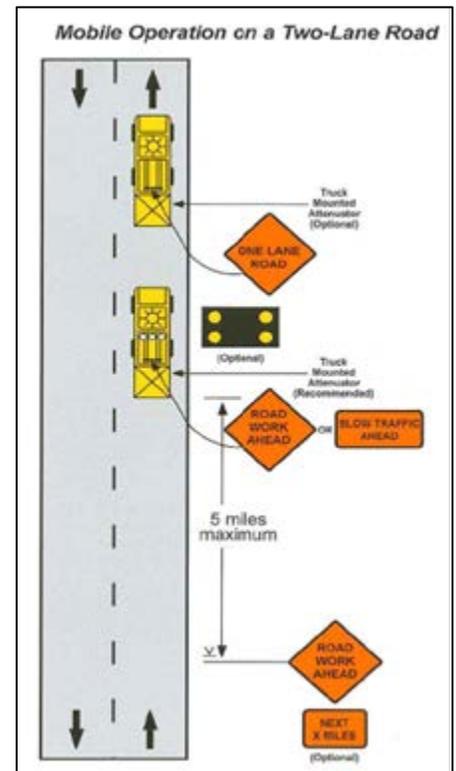
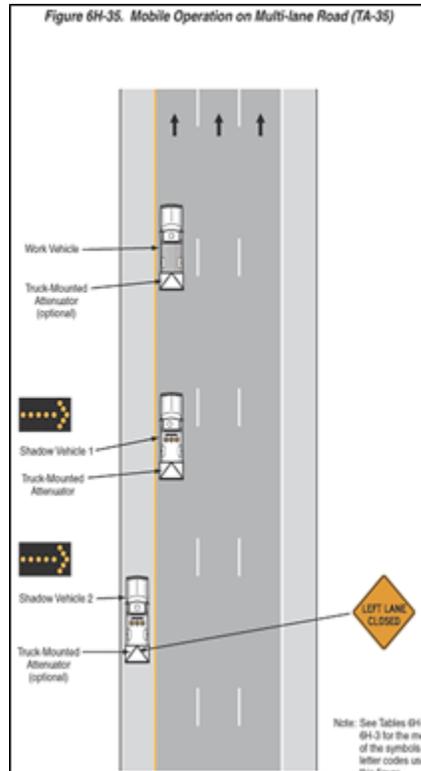
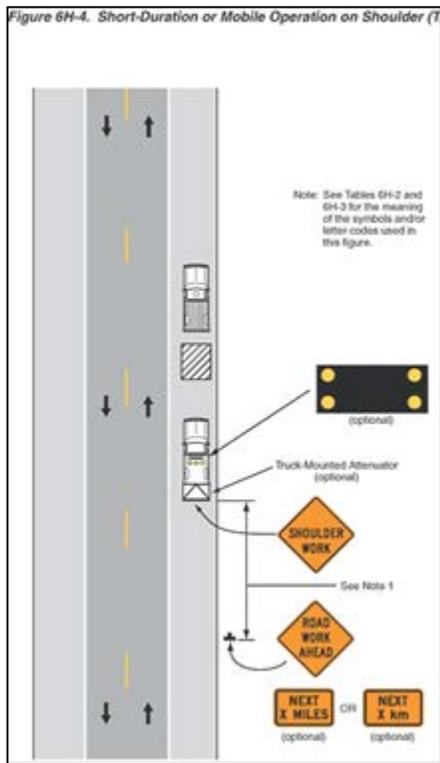
Safety in mobile operations should not be compromised by using fewer warning devices simply because the operation will frequently change its location. According to the MUTCD, devices having greater mobility might be necessary, such as signs mounted on trucks or larger, more imposing and visible signs can be used effectively and economically. Additional guidance from the MUTCD includes:

- Workers must wear ANSI Class 2-2004 or later high visibility apparel. Class 3 is recommended when there is high speed or high volume traffic, or low visibility (rain, snow, fog, dusk / dawn, etc.).
- Warning signs, arrow / message boards, flags, and channelizing devices may be used and should be moved periodically to keep them near the mobile work area.
- Work vehicles must be equipped with high intensity rotating / strobe amber warning lights, visible from both directions. **The four-way hazard lights of a vehicle MAY NOT be used in place of high-intensity amber lights.** Vehicles may be augmented with signs or arrow panels.
- Flaggers may be used for mobile operations that involve frequent short stops. Flaggers must use a STOP/SLOW paddle. Only properly equipped and trained flaggers should direct traffic.
- When mobile operations are performed, a shadow vehicle equipped with an arrow panel or a sign may follow the work vehicle(s), **especially when vehicular traffic speeds or volumes are high.** Where feasible, warning signs may be placed along the roadway and moved periodically as the work progresses.

Some additional considerations:

- The above are **MINIMUM STANDARDS**. Towns must use good judgment and local knowledge when establishing traffic control for temporary work zones.
- Workers and supervisors are required to receive training on setting up TTC in accordance with MUTCD. The MSI offers such a course, Flagger / Work Zone Safety.

This bulletin is intended for general information purposes only. It should not be construed as legal advice or legal opinion regarding any specific or factual situation. Always follow your organization's policies and procedures as presented by your manager or supervisor. For further information regarding this bulletin, contact your Safety Director at 877.398.3046.



The three figures above and Notes below are taken from *Section 6H - Typical Applications* of the MUTCD. They should be considered the minimum standards for worker and motorist safety. However, New Jersey is one of the most densely populated states, and our roadways are some of the most heavily traveled. Minimum standards may not be sufficient for many operations.

NOTES:

1. For low-volume, low-speed conditions, a shadow vehicle may not be practical. For high-volume and/or high-speed conditions, the shadow vehicle should be used.
2. Shadow vehicles are used to warn traffic of the operation ahead. The distance between the work and shadow vehicles may vary according to terrain, speed limit, and other factors. A truck-mounted attenuator (TMA) may be used on the shadow vehicle and work vehicle.
3. Work and shadow vehicles shall display rotating or strobe lights, both forward and to the rear. **If a vehicle is equipped with an arrow panel, it shall ONLY be used in the CAUTION mode on two-lane operations.**
4. Vehicle-mounted signs shall be mounted with the bottom of the sign at a minimum height of 4 feet above the pavement. Sign shall be covered or turned from view when work is not in progress.
5. Where practical and when needed the work and shadow vehicles should pull over to allow traffic to pass. If this can not be done, a "DO NOT PASS" sign may be placed on the rear of the vehicle blocking the lane.
6. If a shadow vehicle is not used then ground-mounted signs should be used to provide advance warning for the mobile operation. Where speed and/or volumes are high, these signs should be considered.

As JIF Safety Directors, we ask that Public Work and Utility Authority managers seek efficient ways to protect their employees operating on or near roadways, beyond the minimum.