Flagger Certification
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q. How do I get my staff certified to be flaggers?

A. Individuals will need to take a training course that meets the training requirements shown in the Wisconsin Flagging Handbook.

Q. Are there training programs that WisDOT has approved?

A. No, WisDOT will not be approving training programs. It will be up to the individual county/company to determine if their training meets the requirements listed in the Wisconsin Flagging Handbook.

Q. Is WisDOT providing any flagger training?

A. WisDOT, in conjunction with the Local Transportation Assistance Program (LTAP), put on several flagger 'Train the Trainer' courses throughout the state in October 2019 that allowed a representative to obtain the necessary training to properly train their staff/personnel.

Q. What if I have already developed my own flagger training for my county/company?

A. Individual counties/companies may use their own training that they have already developed if it meets the training requirements listed in the Wisconsin Flagging Handbook.

Q. What does "demonstrate" mean for training?

A. We want the training programs to have the participants use the devices prior to going on the roadway and show the instructor the proper techniques for flagging. This is to build muscle memory of the various techniques and to have the training be interactive.

Q. Where should the participants demonstrate the flagging techniques?

A. Participants should demonstrate proper flagging techniques in a controlled environment prior to flagging traffic. The demonstration could be in the classroom or a parking lot if vehicles are going to be used.

Q. What if my training exceeds the requirements in the Wisconsin Flagging Handbook?

A. The Wisconsin Flagging Handbook sets the minimum standard for training, we encourage exceeding these standards.

Q. Will the participants need to take and pass a test?

A. Yes, test the participants prior to allowing them to flag live traffic. If the participant does not understand the concepts of flagging, do not allow them to direct live traffic. WisDOT developed classroom training provides a quiz where participants must get 7 out of 10 answers correct. Participants can use their notes and the Wisconsin Flagging Handbook during the quiz. Contact WisDOT if your agency/company would like a copy of the quiz.

Q. What if I have flaggers that are already certified with a training program that meets the requirements in the Wisconsin Flagging Handbook?

A. Any flagger who was certified in 2019 will be recognized as certified in 2020. Anyone who was certified in 2018 will need to take a refresher course. Anyone who was certified prior to 2018 will need to take the training to become certified.

For additional questions regarding WisDOT Flagger Certification, contact DOTDTSDFlaggerCertification@dot.wi.gov

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Q. What do the refresher courses contain?

A. The refresher courses are 2 hours and should be a review of the basic techniques and rules. They could also include updates on new devices for flagging and how new vehicle technology will impact flaggers.

Q. Why is WisDOT requiring flaggers to be certified?

A. WisDOT is requiring flaggers to be certified based on concerns documented in work zone field reviews and for the safety of the flagger and the traveling public.

Q. How will WisDOT know if a flagger is certified?

A. WisDOT staff and inspectors will be asking flaggers to show proof of flagger certification. The flagger may show them their certification card, either issued by the course or WisDOT (a sample is included in the Wisconsin Flagging Handbook). Failure to do so may result in the operation being shut down until a certified flagger can perform the duties.

Q. Is the flagger certification in the 2020 Standard Specifications?

A. Yes, see Section 104.6.1.2.2 Flagging of the 2020 Standard Specifications for more information.

Q. How can we buy the Wisconsin Flagging Handbook?

A. Wisconsin Flagging Handbooks can be purchased for $5.00 each at the following link: https://wisconsindot.gov/Documents/formdocs/dt2126.docx. (Scroll to the bottom of the page under Related Information and click 'Order manuals'.)

Q. Who will enforce the flagger certification?

A. WisDOT staff and hired state inspectors on state highway improvement projects and only WisDOT staff for maintenance and utility projects.

Q. What should we do with non-compliant drivers?

A. There was an issue paper developed by WCHA with regards to reporting non-compliant drivers. WCHA is proposing a law similar to the school bus driving law for reporting non-compliant drivers. Talk with your highway commissioner or supervisor to determine what currently needs to be documented for your county sheriff to track the vehicle down.

Q. What is meant by the 8-hour training?

A. We understand some of your flaggers have been doing this job for a long time, so we are trying to make sure the flagger is aware of the new requirements. We do not want flaggers alone on their first day. The supervisor should periodically check in with them, provide them guidance and monitor them throughout the day.

Q. Do we have to send in anything with regards to the flagger having their 8 hours of on the job training?

A. No, this is the honor system. Hours will not be reported to WisDOT or documented by WisDOT. WisDOT will issue certification cards for completion of the 4-hour training course and passing score on the quiz at the end.

Q. Can the Wisconsin State Patrol ask a flagger to provide proof of their certification?

A. Yes, they are technically under the WisDOT umbrella.

Q. Do municipal and utility flaggers need to be certified?

A. Yes, if they are working on the state highway system.

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Flagger Certification FAQs

Q. How do we order more books?
A. Additional flagging handbooks may be purchased for $5.00 per book at the following link: https://wisconsindot.gov/Documents/formdocs/dt2126.docx

Q. Where can trainers find the actual link to the video about worker safety?
A. The link to the video is on the WCHA website (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4_zyqGn-OY8&feature=youtu.be) and all commissioners should have access if you don't want to use what is embedded in the presentation slides.

Q. What Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) do you have to wear?
A. WisDOT is requiring vest and pants, regardless of class type.

Q. Can gators be used instead of the pants?
A. No, they may not.

Q. If we have a vehicle parked on the shoulder during a flagging operation do we need to leave the beacons on or turn them off?
A. Beacons should be on per state law if parked in the WisDOT ROW.

Q. Are sign stands Manual for Assessing Safety Hardware (MASH) Compliant?
A. You can continue to use National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) 350 devices until their useful life or until WisDOT sets a sunset date. Stay tuned for additional information as we hear from FHWA.

Q. Where do you recommend parking your vehicle during a flagging operation?
A. Park your vehicle so that the flagger is the first one to be seen entering the work zone.

Q. Are temporary portable rumble strips (TPRS) required for moving operations?
A. TPRS are required for all flagging operations on roadways with a posted speed of 40 mph or more. Only one set on each end is required to be set-up and as you move down the roadway, place additional flagger ahead signs.

Q. Do I have to use this training, or can I use the one my county already has developed? (Ex. American Traffic Safety Services Association [ATSSA])
A. If your county or organization already has a training in place, that training may be used as long as it meets the requirements identified on page 29 of the Wisconsin Flagging Handbook.

Q. What if my flagger is not certified?

A. If your flagger is not certified you risk your job being shut down until a certified flagger can be obtained.

Q. How do you flag an intersection?
A. From the exercises, there can be multiple scenarios, depending on volume, number of flaggers you have, turn lanes in the vicinity, etc. As long as the advanced warning signs are in place and set-up to standards, the driver will see consistency across the state.

Q. Do I need the road work ahead sign for equipment crossings?
A. Yes, you should have signs on both sides of roadway.

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Q. Can beacons be added to the stop/slow paddle?
A. Yes, as long as it is Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) compliant.

Q. Can the flagger certificate be mobile or a picture of the card?
A. Yes.

Q. Will the cards be laminated?
A. We are emailing the cards, so you may print and laminate them if you choose.

Q. Can the project supervisor have the cards if the flaggers are not allowed to carry anything such as phone?
A. Yes, as long as the supervisor can provide the certification and are on the job site. One person may also hold them for the staff.

Q. Can "Utility Work Ahead" signs be used instead of "Road Work Ahead" for utility companies?
A. Yes.

Q. Do we need to have advance warning signs if we are flagging for equipment unloading on the roadway? (Ex. Loading/unloading from a semi-trailer)
A. Yes.

Q. What about TPRS on a chip seal project?
A. A chip seal is similar to gravel so do not use them on the chip seal area.

Q. What happens if they don't want to use the TPRS?
A. They can be shut down until TPRS can be acquired.

Q. What about a project that goes into a speed zone, township? (Ex. 45 mph to 35 mph)
A. Use TPRS because the signs will be in the advanced warning area on a 45 mph zone.

Q. Are TPRS required for pothole patching?
A. Yes.

Q. What about a tree down in the lane of traffic?
A. This would fall under an emergency closure.