

Work Zone Safety Task Force Kick-Off Meeting Summary
Thursday, June 22, 2023
9:00 AM to 12:00 PM

Attendees (66 total): Rebecca Burkel, Erin Schwark, Matt Rauch, Bill McNary, Becky Smudde, David Benish, Tom Boyke, Bryan Olson, Chris Urech, Dean Steingraber, Elise Nelson, Erik Emerson, Josh Falk, Bob Fasick, Jason Geurts, Brandon Gray, Chue Hang, Chad Hines, David Hunt, Andrew Jacobs, James Griesbach, Jean Rogers-Wedel, Kathy Jennings, David Jolicoeur, Josh Skarsten, Brandon Lamers, Stephanie Leranthe, Luke Haun, Daniel Malicki, Matt Grove, Mike Aders, Mitch Marohl, Erik Nilson, Bradley Ocain, Richard Olson, Varlie Payne, Philip Reynolds, Rockie Reuter, Ryan Klopff, Deborah Sassen, Joe Schneider, Jillian Schwab, Michael Schwendau, Spencer Schultz, Andi Bill, Steven Parker, Matthew Ternes, Lucas Beckwith, Steven Theisen, Roy Tilleman, Van Walling, Edward Witkiewicz, Yang Li, Marquis Young, David Ohnstad, Michael Hoefs, Michael Greiner, Tammy Buss

1. Opening Remarks 5 minutes
 - a. Rebecca Burkel gave some opening remarks in regard to the Work Zone Safety Task Force and what it means to Wisconsin DOT.

2. Introductions 25 minutes

3. Background on the Work Zone Safety Task Force 25 minutes
 - a. Provided overview of work zone crashes and trends.
 - i. Question: How do Wisconsin's work zone crashes compare to other states?
Action: Will research this question for next meeting.
 - ii. What is currently being done with training, enforcement, technology, etc.
Action: Provide a report out on what Wisconsin is currently doing.
 - b. Provided purpose and structure of WZ Safety Task Force.
 - i. Review current standards and polices
 - ii. Research and pilot new innovative technologies
 - iii. Promote work zone safety statewide

4. Roundtable Discussion on Work Zone Safety Topics 90 minutes
 - a. Group Break Out Discussions identified what issues seeing in work zones, what might be helpful for keeping work zones safe. Breakout groups reported out findings.
 - i. Key highlights: Speed, law enforcement, look at policies/standards for traffic control, training, driver behavior, driver education, public awareness, WZ setup, proper crash documentation, safety culture, new technologies
 - ii. Action: The breakout group items will be summarized and Wisconsin DOT will prioritize to start looking at and it will be reported out at next task force meeting

5. Possible Sub Task Force Groups 15 minutes
 - a. Will need volunteers to chair, schedule meetings, develop documents, facilitate, etc.
 - b. Examples: Technology, CMV, Capability Maturity Model, Education, Enforcement, TIM Training
 - c. Other Ideas: Data and technology, Pedestrians, Assessment and GAP analysis

6. Open Discussion 15 minutes
 - a. Dave Ohnstad comment: During the discussions there were themes of "uniformity" and "training" were mentioned. In over half the states, certification as a Traffic Control Supervisor is required. This can be certification from the American Traffic Safety Services Association (ATSSA) or equivalent. In some states, all DOT highway projects require the contractor to have a TCS on-site, and also require

certification of their project engineers / managers. This goes a long way in ensuring that work zones are established and maintained properly, and are consistent from one project to another. In Monroe County, we have 5 members of our leadership team ATSSA certified as Traffic Control Supervisors and all of our field employees are required to attend ATSSA Traffic Control Technician (TCT). In some states, utility owners / contractors are also required to have a TCS on-site when working on state highways.

7. Follow-Up Survey

5 minutes

Emily's Break Out Notes

- Drivers not paying attention. Distracted driving
- High speeds have increased - Try to reduce speed in work zones
- Drivers ignoring road closed signs, especially in rural situations
- Drivers ignoring flaggers.
 - WE has implemented robotic arms for flaggers recently
 - Temp Portable rumble strips have been helpful, but difficult to use in moving ops
- If no workers present, drivers increase speed and disregard WZ speed limit
- Drivers only slow down when they see enforcement, then speed up.
- Law enforcement is too busy/staff limited to provide WZ enforcement
- Difficult for law enforcement to safely pull over in WZ due to space
- Pavement markings, especially in lane shifts/weather, not clear for drivers
- Temporary barrier not installed correctly; end treatments not properly used
- Utility subcontractors not properly installing WZ for utility work (need proper training)
- Contractors forget to remove WZ signs when work complete; drivers start to ignore all signs then.
- Sign covering not done properly (possibly use orange covering)
- Storm damage recovery efforts (WE) have very low ability to plan traffic control
- When to allow lane closures (day vs night), especially maintenance. WisDOT trying to find a good balance for getting work done with minimal impacts
- Continue to use media & socials to notify public of work. Good on freeways, not as good on rural highway work
- More ability to ticket (via video) within work zones (change of law would be needed)

Mike's Break Out Room

- High rates of speed/reckless driving/distracted driving
- Driver lack of understanding temporary traffic control (ex. "Closed to thru traffic")
- Median work zone(finding locations, getting area for construction vehicles to enter the work zone or back into traffic)
- Consistency of TTC and training
- Temporary accommodations of peds and bicyclist especially the WZ
- Locals unaware of WZAW (communication)
- Communication throughout duration of project
- Lack of ability to complete enforcement within a work zone (ex. video enforcement)
- Vehicle types
- Disconnect between after crash follow up (project doesn't know about all of them unless there is damage), better use of work zone crash data
- Alt routes and when to use(where message boards are located)
- Ensure signs are only in place for when condition is present
- Safety culture being priority

Matt's Break Out Room

- Education, reaching out to drivers ed groups on work zone safety. Past legislation attempt for mandatory 1 hour work zone safety as part of driver's ed. Snowplowing operations are considered a moving work zone operation. Look at these areas for increased education.
- Education very important for young drivers. A better effort needs to be made here.
- Need for increased inspections for permit jobs (any work where a traffic control plan is needed), perhaps master consultant contract consultants. This is especially needed for the more complex permit jobs. More training of our own maintenance staff in reviewing traffic control plans for permit jobs. Make sure to utilize the expertise of the Region work zone staff.
- Oversight/field reviews of utility work zones can be tricky, due to timing. Perhaps better coordination between Maintenance and Traffic. Consultants processing utility permits in some regions. Better training may be needed.
- Better training and outreach for navigating new configurations (for permanent installations and workzones). Training on when to use flashing lights. Overuse of vehicle lights is a concern. Are towing numbers included in the crash statistics? Green lights have already been approved in Wisconsin for municipal plows.
- Should be a public informational piece as to what the lights mean versus yellow lights. David Hunt will bring this up to OPA.
- Safety of workers near the lane line. The need to separate Traffic from the workers is very important. Need for wider shoulders, where temporary barrier wall cannot be installed. This is especially the case for freeways/expressways. An effective technology here would be the MBT-1 trailers. WCHA hopes to pilot some this year yet.
- Training for employees, especially newer employees needed.

Andy's Break Out Room

- Driver speeds
- Wreck less driving
- Distracted inattentive driving
- Driving by GPS, not following the real conditions
- Road rage
- Work Zone set up/signs
- Personal Protect Equipment
- Lack of space for enforcement activities
- Apathy for who is supposed to check on the activities on the roadway
- Who is checking on each other
- Accountability
- Inconsistency across regions (different interpretations of something similar)
- Removing lane closures in Reverse gear
- Not adequate worker training, lots of new employees
- Counties, flagger training, move to road closures, to interstate work and closures, Classroom, work experience, 1-3 years
- Lack of ATTSA training and presence that could help with worker training
- A lot of emphasis on traveling public maintaining access to businesses, requests to close ramps denied
- Lack of willingness to close roads to get the work done and get out of the area
- Lagging behind drivers attention spans and distracted driving, automated flaggers, enforcement, stopping the traffic even if the TC is correct can be problematic
- Limited respect for the people controlling traffic on the road, flaggers. A law similar to the school bus
- Drivers moving barricades on closed roads, truckers wanted to use the road
- Work Zone drop-off looking at set ups
- Automated enforcement is occurring in other states, does have some challenges in starting up
- Video analytics, using a camera for a location, look for near misses with the cameras
- Telematic information such as hard braking, information from connected vehicles, see if there is a reason for the hard braking events