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FLASHING CONES AND ESCORTS - HELPING DRIVERS

SAFELY THROUGH ROADWORKS

Flashing cones and new types of convoys to escort drivers safely as they approach roadworks are being introduced by the Highways Agency as part of a wider initiative to make roads safer for workers and drivers.

The flashing cones, which have just been authorised by the Department for Transport for use on the Highways Agency roads, and the new convoys, known as controlled convoy working, currently under trial, are major parts of the Traffic Signs Manual, Chapter 8. The manual, which gives guidance on which equipment to use on the roads, has just been passed to the road industry for consultation.

The new equipment and guidance for the Agency and its contractors is designed to make works safer and easy for drivers to navigate through. So far this year four road workers have died and five have been seriously injured whilst working on England's motorways and major 'A' roads.

The new cones, which have synchronised flashing lamps attached, help to direct traffic through works, the lights leading the way through new lane layouts. They are authorised to be used on all roads including those controlled by the Highways Agency and will mainly be used on coning at the start of roadworks.

The controlled convoy working will use specialist trucks, with signs lit up on the back, to escort traffic slowly through works, whilst workers implement maintenance and removal of traffic management. It is being presented to the industry as part of the Chapter 8 consultation and will hopefully be finalised for use in the new year.

Ginny Clarke, Chief Highways Engineer, said;

“Chapter 8 is an essential guide for safe traffic management and its revisions will mean improved safety guidance for drivers and people involved in road management.

“Recently there have been many advances in modernising traffic management – not least in the way that we help drivers navigate through roadworks whilst maintaining the safety of those working on the carriageway.”

“Roads can be a hazardous workplace. We want to ensure that we are doing everything we can to cut down the risk to roadworkers and to make roadworks less stressful for drivers.”

The Highways Agency has worked closely with the Department for Transport, the Health and Safety Executive, CSS, the AA, the RAC and members of the road traffic industry in revising Chapter eight of the Traffic Signs Manual. The new version has just been released to the road industry as part of a three-month consultation period that will end on 31 December.

Drivers approaching roadworks are advised to:

- Keep within the speed limit - it is there for your safety.
- Get into the correct lane in good time - don't keep switching.
- Concentrate on the road ahead, not the roadworks.
- Be alert for works traffic leaving or entering roadworks.
- Keep a safe distance - there could be queues in front.
- Observe all signs - they are there to help you.

Notes to editors:

1. The Highways Agency is an executive agency of the Department for Transport. It manages, maintains and improves the network of trunk roads and motorways in England on behalf of the Secretary of State.
2. Pictures of equipment and contact details for better resolution images to be put here.
3. Highways Agency Construction Casualties 2000 – 2005 – (all construction workers) source: Highways Agency.)

Year	Fatal	Serious
2000	3	13
2001	3	18
2002	3	27
2003	2	10
2004	1	17
2005	4	5

4. Further information is available on the Highways Agency website: www.highways.gov.uk, by following the link from the story on the home page called: 'Safety at Roadworks'.
5. The Highways Agency has published a safety advice leaflet called: 'Driving Through Roadworks'. Copies are available to the public from Highways Agency Publications. Telephone: 0870 1226 236, quoting reference number HA113/04. advice leaflet are available to will be distributed by the Agency at exhibitions and events.
6. Link to the revised version of Chapter eight of the traffic signs manual <http://www.trl.co.uk/content/main.asp?pid=219>
7. This is a photograph of controlled convoy working. If you would like this at a higher resolution please call Elizabeth Shenton on 0207 153 4849



8. This is a photograph of the cone with synchronised lighting, courtesy of Dorman Ltd. If you would like this at a higher resolution please call Elizabeth Shenton on 0207 453 4849



9. A vehicle travelling at 70mph on a motorway will enter roadworks only 51 seconds after seeing the 'roadworks 1 mile ahead' sign.

10. Safe driving at roadworks

During 2003 and 2004, three road workers were killed and 27 seriously injured in the course of their work on Highways Agency roads.

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Issued by the Highways Agency Press Office. For further information please contact 020 7081 7443. Out of hours the Highways Agency Duty Press Officer can be contacted by phoning 020 7081 7443.