



National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices

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National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (NCUTCD) Recommended Changes to Proposed Text for 11th Edition of the MUTCD Docket Number: FHWA-2020-0001

Federal Register Item Number: 515

NPA MUTCD Section Number: Sections 6O.01 to 6O.05

Legend: Base text shown in proposal is the NPA “clean” proposed text.

- [NCUTCD recommendation for text to be added in final rule.](#)
- ~~NCUTCD recommendation for text to be deleted in final rule.~~
- [NCUTCD recommendation for text to be moved/relocated in final rule.](#)
- NPA text that was not previously approved by NCUTCD but is now approved.
- Explanatory note: [\[Note that explains purpose of recommended change.\]](#)

The following pages present NCUTCD recommendations for changes to the MUTCD NPA proposed text, tables, and figures for Chapter 6O. Below is a short summary of the NCUTCD position for each section of this chapter. A more detailed summary is provided at the beginning of each section.

- NPA #515, Section 6O.01: Changes recommended based on Council action in spring 2021.
- NPA #N/A, Section 6O.02: NCUTCD agrees with NPA content
- NPA #N/A, Section 6O.03: NCUTCD agrees with NPA content
- NPA #N/A, Section 6O.04: NCUTCD agrees with NPA content
- NPA #N/A, Section 6O.05: NCUTCD agrees with NPA content

Chapter 6O Comments: NCUTCD recommends renumbering this Chapter. Chapter 6N, TYPE OF TEMPORARY TRAFFIC CONTROL ZONE ACTIVITIES and Chapter 6P, TYPICAL APPLICATIONS, should be consecutive since they are related. This is similar to how other materials have been grouped in other revised portions of the Manual. NCUTCD recommends that proposed Chapter 6P be renumbered Chapter 6O, and the proposed Chapter 6O be renumbered to the end of Part 6 as Chapter 6P.

CHAPTER 6O. CONTROL OF TRAFFIC THROUGH TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT AREAS

Section 6O.01 Comments: NCUTCD generally agrees with 6O.01, but recommends the following:

- Edit a long sentence in the Guidance section regarding notification and communication into two shorter sentences for clarity
- Delete a redundant sentence in the Guidance section

42 **Section 60.01 General**

43 Support:

44 The National Incident Management System (NIMS) requires the use of the Incident
45 Command System (ICS) at traffic incident management scenes.

46 A traffic incident is an emergency road user occurrence, a natural disaster, or other
47 unplanned event that affects or impedes the normal flow of traffic.

48 A traffic incident management area is an area of a highway where temporary traffic controls
49 are installed, as authorized by a public authority or the official having jurisdiction of the
50 roadway, in response to a road user incident, natural disaster, hazardous material spill, or other
51 unplanned incident. It is a type of TTC zone and extends from the first warning device (such as
52 a sign, light, or cone) to the last TTC device or to a point where vehicles return to the original
53 lane alignment and are clear of the incident.

54 Traffic incidents can be divided into three general classes of duration, each of which has
55 unique traffic control characteristics and needs. These classes are:

- 56 A. Major—expected duration of more than 2 hours,
- 57 B. Intermediate—expected duration of 30 minutes to 2 hours, and
- 58 C. Minor—expected duration under 30 minutes.

59 The primary functions of TTC at a traffic incident management area are to inform road users
60 of the incident and to provide guidance information on the path to follow through the incident
61 area. Alerting road users and establishing a well-defined path to guide road users through the
62 incident area will serve to protect the incident responders and those involved in working at the
63 incident scene and will aid in moving road users expeditiously past or around the traffic incident,
64 will reduce the likelihood of secondary traffic crashes, and will preclude unnecessary use of the
65 surrounding local road system. Examples include a stalled vehicle blocking a lane, a traffic
66 crash blocking the traveled way, a hazardous material spill along a highway, and natural disasters
67 such as floods and severe storm damage.

68 *Guidance:*

69 *In order to reduce response time for traffic incidents, highway agencies, appropriate public*
70 *safety agencies (law enforcement, fire and rescue, emergency communications, emergency*
71 *medical, and other emergency management), and private sector responders (towing and*
72 *recovery and hazardous materials contractors) should mutually plan for occurrences of traffic*
73 *incidents along the major and heavily traveled highway and street system.*

74 *On-scene responder organizations should train their personnel in TTC practices for*
75 *accomplishing their tasks in and near traffic and in the requirements for traffic incident*
76 *management contained in this Manual. On-scene responders should take measures to move the*
77 *incident off the traveled roadway or to provide for appropriate warning. All on-scene*
78 *responders and news media personnel should constantly be aware of their visibility to oncoming*
79 *traffic and wear high-visibility apparel. Planning and training should include incorporation of*
80 *estimated time durations to clear the event as part of their initial incident estimate. When events*
81 *are deemed as probable Major Traffic Incidents that may or will generate prolonged lane or*
82 *road closures, notification of all affected agencies should be initiated and may be included as*
83 *part of the initial incident report that is provided to the emergency communications center. The*
84 *emergency communications center ~~who~~ would then be responsible for making notifications to*
85 *appropriate state, regional and local agencies and resources for the purpose of ramping up and*
86 *responding as quickly as possible thus facilitating a more rapid transition from emergency TTC*

87 *to MUTCD compliant work zone when warranted.* [edit the long sentence into two shorter
88 sentences for clarity]

89 *Emergency vehicles arriving at an incident should be positioned in a manner that attempts to*
90 *protect both the responders performing their duties and road users traveling through the*
91 *incident scene, while minimizing, to the extent practical, disruption of the adjacent traffic flow.*
92 ~~*Emergency vehicle positions should optimize traffic flow through the incident scene.*~~ *All*
93 *emergency vehicles that subsequently arrive should be positioned in a manner that does not*
94 *interfere with the established temporary traffic flow.* [delete text that is redundant with the
95 previous sentence]

96 *Responders arriving at a traffic incident should estimate the magnitude of the traffic incident,*
97 *the expected time duration of the traffic incident, and the expected vehicle queue length, and then*
98 *should set up the appropriate temporary traffic controls for these estimates.*

99 Option:

100 Warning and guide signs used for TTC traffic incident management situations may have a
101 black legend and border on a fluorescent pink background (see Figure 6O-1).

102 Support:

103 While some traffic incidents might be anticipated and planned for, emergencies and disasters
104 might pose more severe and unpredictable problems. The ability to quickly install proper
105 temporary traffic controls might greatly reduce the effects of an incident, such as secondary
106 crashes or excessive traffic delays. An essential part of fire, rescue, spill clean-up, highway
107 agency, and enforcement activities is the proper control of road users through the traffic incident
108 management area in order to protect responders, victims, and other personnel at the site. These
109 operations might need corroborating legislative authority for the implementation and
110 enforcement of appropriate road user regulations, parking controls, and speed zoning. It is
111 desirable for these statutes to provide sufficient flexibility in the authority for, and
112 implementation of, TTC to respond to the needs of changing conditions found in traffic incident
113 management areas.

114 Option:

115 For traffic incidents, particularly those of an emergency nature, TTC devices on hand may be
116 used for the initial response as long as they do not themselves create unnecessary additional
117 hazards.

118 Support:

119 The establishment, maintenance, and prompt removal of lane diversions can be effectively
120 managed by interagency planning that includes representatives of highway and public safety
121 agencies.

122 Guidance:

123 *All traffic control devices needed to set up the TTC at a traffic incident should be available*
124 *so that they can be readily deployed for all major traffic incidents. The TTC should include the*
125 *proper traffic diversions, tapered lane closures, and upstream warning devices to alert traffic*
126 *approaching the queue and to encourage early diversion to an appropriate alternative route.*

127 *Attention should be paid to the upstream end of the traffic queue such that warning is given*
128 *to road users approaching the back of the queue.*

129 *If manual traffic control is needed, it should be provided by qualified flaggers or uniformed*
130 *law enforcement officers.*

131 Option:

132 If flaggers are used to provide traffic control for an incident management situation, the
133 flaggers may use appropriate traffic control devices that are readily available or that can be
134 brought to the traffic incident scene on short notice.

135 *Guidance:*

136 *When light sticks or flares are used to establish the initial traffic control at incident scenes,*
137 *channelizing devices (see Section 6K.01) should be installed as soon thereafter as practical.*

138 *Option:*

139 The light sticks or flares may remain in place if they are being used to supplement the
140 channelizing devices.

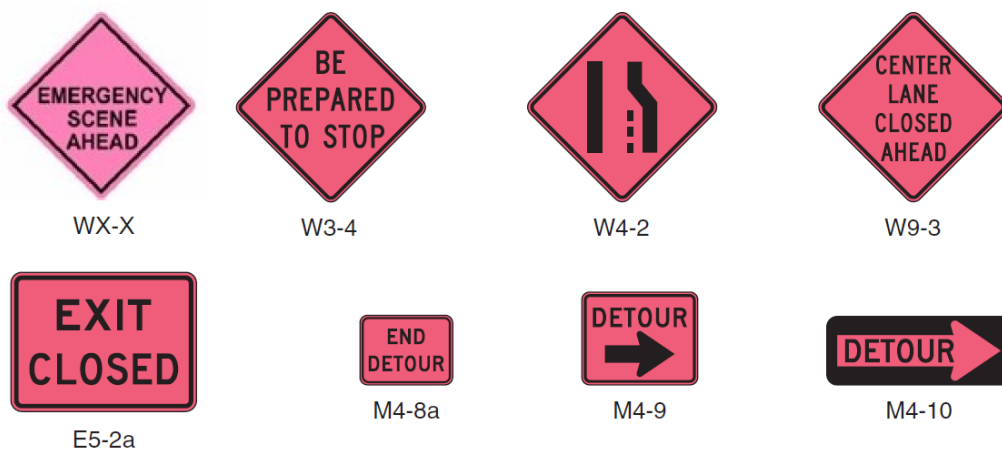
141 *Guidance:*

142 *The light sticks, flares, and channelizing devices should be removed after the incident is*
143 *terminated.*

144

145 **Figure 6O-1 Comments:** NCUTCD generally agrees with Figure 6O-01, but recommends that
146 the commonly used “EMERGENCY SCENE AHEAD” sign be added to the figure.
147

Figure 6O-1. Examples of Traffic Incident Management Area Signs



148

149

150

151 **Section 6O.02 Comments:** NCUTCD agrees with 6O.02 as presented in the NPA.

152

153 **Section 6O.02 Major Traffic Incidents**

154 *Support:*

155 Major traffic incidents are typically traffic incidents involving hazardous materials, fatal
156 traffic crashes involving numerous vehicles, and other natural or man-made disasters. These
157 traffic incidents typically involve closing all or part of a roadway facility for a period exceeding
158 2 hours.

159 *Guidance:*

160 *If the traffic incident is anticipated to last more than 24 hours, applicable procedures and*
161 *devices set forth in other Chapters of Part 6 should be used.*

162 *Support:*

163 A road closure can be caused by a traffic incident such as a road user crash that blocks the
164 traveled way. Road users are usually diverted through lane shifts or detoured around the traffic
165 incident and back to the original roadway. A combination of traffic engineering and
166 enforcement preparations is needed to determine the detour route, and to install, maintain or
167 operate, and then to remove the necessary traffic control devices when the detour is terminated.
168 Large trucks are a significant concern in such a detour, especially when detouring them from a
169 controlled-access roadway onto local or arterial streets.

170 During traffic incidents, large trucks might need to follow a route separate from that of
171 automobiles because of bridge, weight, clearance, or geometric restrictions. Also, vehicles
172 carrying hazardous material might need to follow a different route from other vehicles.

173 Some traffic incidents such as hazardous material spills might require closure of an entire
174 highway. Through road users must have adequate guidance around the traffic incident.
175 Maintaining good public relations is desirable. The cooperation of the news media in publicizing
176 the existence of, and reasons for, traffic incident management areas and their TTC can be of
177 great assistance in keeping road users and the general public well informed.
178

179 **Section 60.03 Comments:** NCUTCD agrees with 60.03 as presented in the NPA.

182 **Section 60.03 Intermediate Traffic Incidents**

183 Support:

184 Intermediate traffic incidents typically affect travel lanes for a time period of 30 minutes to 2
185 hours, and usually require traffic control on the scene to divert road users past the blockage. Full
186 roadway closures might be needed for short periods during traffic incident clearance to allow
187 traffic incident responders to accomplish their tasks.
188

189 **Section 60.04 Comments:** NCUTCD agrees with 60.04 as presented in the NPA.

192 **Section 60.04 Minor Traffic Incidents**

193 Support:

194 Minor traffic incidents are typically disabled vehicles and minor crashes that result in lane
195 closures of less than 30 minutes. On-scene responders are typically law enforcement and towing
196 companies, and occasionally highway agency service patrol vehicles.

197 Diversion of traffic into other lanes is often not needed or is needed only briefly. It is not
198 generally possible or practical to set up a lane closure with traffic control devices for a minor
199 traffic incident. Traffic control is the responsibility of on-scene responders.

200 *Guidance:*

201 *When a minor traffic incident blocks a travel lane, it should be removed from that lane to the*
202 *shoulder as quickly as possible.*
203

204 **Section 60.05 Comments:** NCUTCD agrees with 60.05 as presented in the NPA.

207 **Section 60.05 Use of Emergency-Vehicle Lighting**

208 Support:

209 The use of emergency-vehicle lighting (such as high-intensity rotating, flashing, oscillating,
210 or strobe lights) is essential, especially in the initial stages of a traffic incident, for the safety of
211 emergency responders and persons involved in the traffic incident, as well as road users
212 approaching the traffic incident. Emergency-vehicle lighting, however, provides warning only
213 and provides no effective traffic control. The use of too many lights at an incident scene can be
214 distracting and can create confusion for approaching road users, especially at night. Road users
215 approaching the traffic incident from the opposite direction on a divided facility are often
216 distracted by emergency-vehicle lighting and slow their vehicles to look at the traffic incident
217 posing a hazard to themselves and others traveling in their direction.

218 The use of emergency-vehicle lighting can be reduced if good traffic control has been
219 established at a traffic incident scene. This is especially true for major traffic incidents that
220 might involve a number of emergency vehicles. If good traffic control is established through
221 placement of advance warning signs and traffic control devices to divert or detour traffic, then
222 public safety agencies can perform their tasks on scene with minimal emergency-vehicle
223 lighting.

224 *Guidance:*

225 *Public safety agencies should examine their policies on the use of emergency-vehicle*
226 *lighting, especially after a traffic incident scene is secured, with the intent of reducing the use of*
227 *this lighting as much as possible while not endangering those at the scene. Special*
228 *consideration should be given to reducing or extinguishing forward facing emergency-vehicle*
229 *lighting, especially on divided roadways, to reduce distractions to oncoming road users.*

230 *Because the glare from floodlights or vehicle headlights can impair the nighttime vision of*
231 *approaching road users, any floodlights or vehicle headlights that are not needed for*
232 *illumination, or to provide notice to other road users of an incident response vehicle being in an*
233 *unexpected location, should be turned off at night.*

234