

System Operations Advisory

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Operations Advisory
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Work Zone Speed Limits

The Bureau of Highways issued an Instructional Memorandum in 2005 titled “Guidelines to Establish Speed Limits in Work Zones” (BOHIM 2005-16). This advisory is being issued as there appears to be inconsistent use of speed limit reductions for shoulder closures and non-work periods across the state. These inconsistencies are causing driver confusion, complaints, and disregard for work zone speed reductions when they are truly needed – when workers are present and working. The following items are clarifications to the previously issued memorandum.

A. Inactive Work Periods:

When no workers are present and lane and/or shoulder closures are in place, the following criteria apply if the speed limit prior to construction is 50 mph or greater:

1. Work zone speed limits **may** continue to be reduced a maximum of 10 mph from the original posted speed limit only if geometric or physical conditions (i.e. edge drops, horizontal or vertical curves, etc.) mandate safety concerns for the motorist.
2. All temporary speed limit signs used during the active work period are to be removed or covered.
3. All “Where Workers Present 45” signs are to be removed or covered.
4. The inactive work period is defined as when workers are not planned to be present for two or more days or after two days and the work continues to be inactive (i.e. the planned two day inactivity was extended). The temporary speed limit and WWP 45 signs are to be removed or covered 1) at the end of the work shift, if it is planned to be inactive for two or more days, or 2) on the second day of non-planned inactivity, usually caused by scheduling changes, weather, etc.

B. Work zones on roadways with speed limits of 45 mph or less prior to construction:

1. Work zone speed reductions are not recommended for these roadways.

C. Temporary Traffic Control Orders:

1. A Temporary Traffic Control Order (TTCO) is required **prior** to starting work for all closed shoulder locations where speed reductions are posted and lane closures are not utilized.