

## Working on the highway

Due to the proximity of the travelling public and construction plant, carrying out construction activity on the highway can be disproportionately hazardous, as reflected in the rising number of accidents at roadwork sites.

Road users, including pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders, should not be put at risk, and should be able to see and be forewarned about the extent and nature of any risk before they reach it.



### Essential points to consider

All roadworks fall within the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015, and require a construction phase plan. Prior to work starting on the highway or footway, there are three categories of specific notice periods that must be followed for informing the highway or streets authority (the roads authority in Scotland) of when work is intended to commence.

- Minor: three days' advance notice, beginning within a duration of up to three days.
- Standard: 10 days' advance notice, beginning within four to 10 days.
- Major: three months' advance notice, beginning within 10 days or more.

To carry out work on the highway, it is important that workers (managers, designers and operatives) have the appropriate qualifications and competencies prior to bidding for work, and familiarisation with hazards and significant risks arising out of working on the highway, so that suitable and sufficient risk assessments can be developed and implemented.

The significant findings of the risk assessment and the associated method statement must be clearly communicated to the workforce and reviewed and updated as necessary, and any changes communicated. Workers must also be familiar with the requirements for signage and other traffic equipment, and the different standards of high-visibility clothing required.

### Significant hazards and risks to be controlled

- Safety considerations:
  - The proximity of moving road traffic, construction plant, pedestrians and people at work.
  - Other general hazards, such as excavations, manual handling and working at height.
- Health considerations:
  - The presence of noise, dust, fumes and vibration from adjacent traffic and construction plant must be identified and controlled.
  - The presence of hazardous substances that could contact the skin must be identified and controlled.
- Environmental considerations:
  - The risk of land or water contamination through the use of substances and waste disposal.
  - The creation of dust from groundworks, and cutting and drilling work activities.
- Safe system of work considerations:
  - The work must be planned and organised in accordance with the requirements of applicable regulations and guidance (e.g. Highways Agency guidance).

All road users, including pedestrians, must be adequately protected and kept safe through effective signage placement.

The health and safety of all workers must be protected by thorough planning and effective management controls.

Issues relating to nuisance (such as congestion, noise, dust, lighting or unsociable hours of working) need to be addressed for local neighbours, who are likely to be affected by the works.

### Relevant legislation and guidance to support highways work

Legislation:

- New Roads and Street Works Act 1991.
- Highways Act (England and Wales) 1980; the Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993; and the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984.
- Traffic Management Act 2004.

Guidance:

- *Traffic signs manual* (free HM Government guidance).
- *Safety at Street Works and Road Works – A Code of Practice* (free HM Government guidance).

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