

**- MODEL -**  
**Standard Operating Guideline (SOG)**  
**for Cone, Flare, or Sign Deployment at Traffic-related Incidents**

**OFFICE of the CHIEF**

**Attention:** Fire Officers  
Fire Rescue Specialists  
EMS crew members  
Technical Rescue Squad members

**Date:**

**Subject:**

Guidelines for Establishing Advance Warning and Transition Areas at Highway – related Incidents where members are working in or near moving traffic

Effectively immediately, the following guideline (SOG) may be utilized when establishing Advance Warning and Transition Areas at highway –related incidents.

per orders of: Chief XXXXXXXXX

Effective date: \_\_\_\_\_

**PURPOSE:**

It shall be the intent of this standard operating guideline that the safety of operating personnel working in or near moving traffic shall be assured. Balanced with concerns for member safety and the safety of those persons exposed to moving traffic, department personnel are encouraged to comply with applicable local, state, and MUTCD Temporary Traffic Control Zone criteria when operating in or near moving traffic at street, roadway, or highway-related incidents.

It is understood that a compliant MUTCD Temporary Traffic Control Zone includes an incident scene with clearly identifiable areas such as the Advance Warning, Transition, Buffer, Work, and Termination Areas.

When the determination has been made that fire department personnel are to use available portable traffic control equipment such as 28-inch or taller traffic cones, highway flares, retro-reflective pink deployable signs, or other signaling devices to establish the Advance Warning and/or Transition Area, it is understood by all that for the personnel involved, this is a high risk and potentially life-threatening activity. The member(s) performing this work is typically outside of the protected work area and may be working in close proximity to moving traffic.

**RESPONSIBILITY:**

The following conditions are assumed to be in place prior to the person or persons assigned to establish the Advance Warning or Transition Area beginning their assignment;

- ✓ A suitable responder vehicle is on location within the Temporary Traffic Control Zone and the vehicle is positioned in a blocking position so as to create a protected Work Area and Buffer Space,
- ✓ Portable traffic control equipment (cones, flares, deployable sign, etc) are available and readied for use,
- ✓ Fire Department member performing task has been assigned to specifically deploy portable devices to create an Advance Warning and/or Transition Area; Not a freelance effort, and
- ✓ Fire Department member is wearing proper PPE including high-visibility garment and helmet. During periods of low light level or reduced visibility weather conditions, member has operating hand light with them and it is turned ON during this activity.

**OPERATIONAL STEPS:**

The following operational steps can serve as a recommended guideline for performing this assigned function;

- ✓ Portable equipment is gathered while member is inside protected Work Area.
- ✓ Activity is coordinated with an assigned "Watch Out" or safety partner, if staffing permits.
- ✓ Member gathers equipment, faces on-coming traffic, and moves along a linear, safe pathway on the shoulder or median area of street, road, highway to furthest upstream location where first device is to be deployed.
- ✓ Member shall deploy first device along shoulder/edge of lane of street, road, or highway while standing in safe area.
  - This initial deployment point should be approximately 100-120 feet for deployment of five(5) devices
  - Deployment point should be up to 200-240 feet upstream for deployment of eight(8) devices
  - Initial deployment point should take into considerations environmental weather or poor lighting conditions and any visual obstructions for approaching motorists including hills, curves, or other visual

obstructions. Furthest traffic control device can be extended further upstream according to these sight-limiting conditions.

- ✓ Member shall move a distance of ten(10) paces back toward the incident scene along this safe pathway area. When determined safe to do so, member may enter into the nearest travel lane a distance of one(1) pace or approximately three(3) feet and deploy the second traffic control device.

NOTE: When deploying highway flares, ignition of the flare should take place while member is standing in the safe pathway area. Once lit, the member can move the appropriate distance into the nearest travel lane to actually deploy the flare.

- ✓ Member shall immediately return back to the shoulder or median safe area and move an additional ten(10) paces along the safe area back towards the incident scene.
- ✓ When determined safe to do so, member may enter into the travel lane being closed a distance of two(2) pace or approximately six (6) feet and deploy the third traffic control device.
- ✓ This pattern of 10 paces back towards the incident scene and a distance of an additional three(3) feet into the travel lane each time a cone or flare is deployed creates an effective diagonal line of cones or flares across a travel lane of the street, road, or highway. Ideally, the final device shall be near the rear of the responder vehicle that is in a blocking position at the incident scene.
- ✓ If a retro-reflective, pink deployable sign is used by the fire department to comply with NFPA 1500 Standard, this sign shall be carried in the folded condition upstream along the safe area (shoulder or median) and deployed along the shoulder or median at a location ten(10) additional paces further upstream of the initial cone or flare already deployed.



