

**POLICY IMPLEMENT**  
**STATE OF DELAWARE**  
**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**P.I. Number C-09**

**Time Restrictions for Lane and Road Closures on Delaware Roadways**

**INDEX FILING CODES**

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**I. Purpose**

To establish a uniform approach to minimizing the traffic impacts resulting from construction and maintenance work occurring on the State’s roadways.

**II. Policy**

Project time restrictions for lane and road closures will be developed for all contract, maintenance and permit work within State rights of way.

**III. Procedures**

Except in emergency situations, advanced planning of all lane restrictions and road closures is required. A key goal of our advanced planning efforts is identification of work that will likely result in traffic congestion and minimization of those conditions. Work that will likely generate those conditions will be coordinated with Traffic Safety and Community Relations in advance to warn road users before the work takes place; advise why it is necessary, and why the proposed alternative is the better of the available options.

**A. For DeIDOT Capital and Maintenance Projects in Design Phase**

Because these types of projects typically have many months or years of planning and development, a formal coordination effort shall be employed to develop a strategy for entering the roadway to complete the project. The strategy shall endeavor to do the following things:

1. Establish reasonable and realistic lane and road closure time restrictions necessary to complete the work;
2. Predict the traffic delays which may result from the proposed work;
3. Implement lane and road closure restrictions, temporary traffic control strategies, and contractual obligations to minimize traffic queuing, delays, and inconvenience to the traveling public;
4. Assign an overall project duration with a goal to reach completion of the work as efficiently as possible;
5. Establish and document the various stakeholder commitments necessary for the success of the project;
6. Devise and implement a public outreach strategy in advance of the project to effectively communicate the purpose of the project, its schedule, and why the chosen option is the better of the available options to complete the work.
7. The roles and responsibilities of the project team members are as follows:
  - a. The DeIDOT Project Manager shall ensure the project plans clearly identify the type and character of the proposed work together with any stakeholder commitments made regarding lane and road closure restrictions.
  - b. The Construction staff shall review the proposed work and offer input regarding realistic timeframes needed to complete the work inclusive of setup and removal of temporary traffic control (TTC).
  - c. The DeIDOT Project Manager, in consultation with Traffic Safety staff, shall review available traffic data and recommend appropriate time restrictions for lane and road closures for inclusion in the Contract.
  - d. The DeIDOT Project Manager, Construction staff, and Traffic Safety staff shall collaborate to minimize traffic impacts both in terms of daily inconvenience as well as the overall duration of the project while maintaining the highest quality in the finished product and at the lowest possible cost to taxpayers.
  - e. Meetings shall be held to determine a construction phasing and timing strategy;
  - f. Decisions shall be reached via consensus;
  - g. Once the construction phasing and timing strategy has been determined, the DeIDOT Project Manager together with Construction staff and Traffic Safety staff shall collaborate with Community Relations to formulate a public outreach strategy for the project. The public outreach strategy shall address issues that would likely generate public concern and complaints.
  - h. Coordination shall conclude by documenting the consensus reached and the mutual commitments made in the Contract Work Hour Restrictions Checklist (see attached template, Exhibit 1, and attached example, Exhibit 3), which shall be signed by the representative of each Section participating in the coordination effort;

- i. When consensus is not reached, disagreements over the final contract work hour restrictions shall be resolved through each Section's chain of command and ultimately resolved by the Chief Engineer if necessary.

**B. Open-End Projects**

For open-ended projects in the design phase, work hour time restrictions will only be provided by DeIDOT Traffic Safety if known locations are provided in the Contract documents. For open-ended Contracts executed without known locations, the DeIDOT Project Manager shall follow the guidance provided in Appendix A to arrive at appropriate lane closure and work hour time restrictions for each location once locations are known. No work that would disrupt traffic shall be initiated until the procedures in Appendix A have been completed.

**C. Private Projects in the State Rights of Way via DeIDOT Permit**

Third parties, such as developers or utility companies, working in the right of way shall adhere to time restrictions for lane and road closures imposed via department permits for such work. All proposed project time restrictions shall be reviewed by the District Traffic Safety Officer and/or Chief Traffic Safety Officer in the DOTS Traffic Safety Section and approved by the Traffic Safety Programs Manager prior to being provided to the permittee. The DeIDOT permitting agent shall list the requirements for lane and road closures in the permit. This process shall occur for all third party work in the State rights of way. Subdivision streets are exempt from this process.

For projects in the design or permitting phase, the following exceptions will apply:

1. Project time restrictions on roadways classified as **minor arterials or higher** will be reviewed by the District Traffic Safety Officer who will provide a recommendation to the Traffic Safety Programs Manager along with any supporting documentation such as traffic volumes. The Traffic Safety Programs manager will review and provide appropriate time restrictions to the permitting section. Disagreements over the final time restrictions to be included in the Permit shall be resolved in accordance with Section III.A.7.i. of this policy.
2. Utility permits reviewed by New Castle County (Canal District) Public Works are exempt from these requirements due to the volume of permits reviewed annually. New Castle County Public Works is advised to flag any permits needing to be reviewed by DOTS Traffic Safety and coordinate accordingly.

**D. Projects in construction phase**

All projects in construction shall adhere to the terms of their Contract Work Hour Restrictions Checklist, which will designate contract time restrictions for lane and road closures and public outreach during the course of construction. Requests for deviation of the approved time restrictions will be reviewed in accordance with the following process:

**1. Planned Changes**

Any construction phasing and/or maintenance of traffic (MOT) changes proposed by the Contractor or DeIDOT staff shall be coordinated with DeIDOT Traffic Safety staff. Every effort

should be made to identify such changes as early as possible by discussing potential changes at construction progress meetings and as part of regular construction schedule updates. The District Safety Officer will review with the Chief Safety Officer and Safety Programs Manager prior to responding to the administering section. Requests for changes to the construction phasing and/or MOT should be made in writing from the Contractor such as via email. The District Safety Officer will review and respond within 14 calendar days to the request as follows:

- a. **Roadways classified as a collector or below** – the District Traffic Safety Officer will review and provide approval/disapproval to the administering section with a copy to the Chief Traffic Safety Officer and Traffic Safety Programs Manager. Should the District Traffic Safety Officer have concerns regarding the proposed deviation, the Traffic Safety Programs Manager will review and provide approval/disapproval.
- b. **Roadways classified as a minor arterial or higher** – the District Traffic Safety Officer will review and provide a recommendation to the Traffic Safety Programs Manager along with any supporting documentation such as traffic volumes. The Traffic Safety Programs Manager will review and provide approval/disapproval to the administering section. A final response (approval or denial) will be forwarded to the District Traffic Safety Officer for dissemination to the administering section.
- c. **Resolution of disagreements** –Disagreements over planned changes to the Contract time restrictions shall be resolved in accordance with Section III.A.7.i. of this policy.

## 2. **Unplanned Changes**

Unplanned changes are changes that occur during the workday. This policy recognizes situations arise which are beyond the control of the Contractor or could not have been reasonably anticipated by the Contractor or DelDOT at the start of the workday. When this occurs, a verbal request for deviation from the approved time restrictions may be permitted in order to expedite approval of changes required in order to satisfactorily complete the day's work. In these instances, the Construction staff shall contact the District Traffic Safety Officer and obtain concurrence for extending work hours beyond the time restrictions in the Contract. Should there be a disagreement as to whether the work day should be extended, Construction and Traffic Safety staff shall elevate the issue to the Chief Engineer for review and approval. If and when approval is granted, the Construction staff shall convey the details of the extended work day (e.g., which lanes will be closed, how many additional hours are needed, why it occurred) to the TMC for dissemination to appropriate authorities and the traveling public. Construction's notification to the TMC shall occur as early in the work day as possible to ensure the traveling public has been given as much time as possible to react to such notifications.

## E. **Construction and maintenance of subdivision streets**

Work on subdivision streets is exempt from this policy.

F. **Daily maintenance activities:**

Because maintenance work is often short duration and/or a moving operation, staff working for the Division of Maintenance & Operations (M&O) may establish appropriate work times on the State's roadways for routine daily maintenance activities such as mowing, street sweeping, bump grinding, pothole patching, drain clearing, etc. with informal coordination, using Appendix A as a guideline. Informal coordination includes communications in person, telephone, emails and similar means. However, M&O staff shall consider the potential traffic impacts from their work. DelDOT Traffic Safety shall provide assistance to M&O staff upon request to verify work times that will tend to minimize queuing due to proposed work on congested corridors.

In addition to the steps described above, daily maintenance activities shall be coordinated with active construction contracts to avoid conflicts that might be created by overlapping detours and work zone signing. M&O staff shall thoroughly investigate the vicinity of proposed maintenance work for active projects and coordinate their lane closures with those of the neighboring projects. Consideration should be given to the time restrictions imposed on the neighboring project when determining their own time restrictions. If an activity can reasonably be expected to cause traffic congestion and will likely generate complaints, M&O staff shall coordinate with Community Relations to conduct a public notification campaign in advance of the work.

G. **Data gathering, sampling, bridge inspection and land surveying:**

Department staff and their consultants engaged in data gathering activities such as bridge inspection, sign structure inspection, land surveying, asphalt coring, pipe video inspection, etc., may complete such activities with informal coordination because their work is short duration and often a moving operation. Informal coordination includes communications in person, telephone, emails and similar means. However, such work shall be planned in advance and consideration shall be given to the potential traffic impacts from their work when selecting appropriate times to close lanes on Delaware's roadways, using Appendix A as a guideline. DelDOT Traffic Safety shall provide assistance upon request to each DelDOT Section responsible for planning such work to verify work times that will tend to minimize queuing due to proposed work on congested corridors. If an activity can reasonably be expected to cause traffic congestion and will likely generate complaints, the DelDOT Program Manager in responsible charge of the planned work shall coordinate with Community Relations to conduct a public notification campaign in advance of the work.

H. **Emergency Work Activities**

Emergency situations are exempt from this policy. Emergency work activities are those work activities that require immediate lane or roadway closures. In the case of emergency work, the section responsible for the work shall contact the Transportation Management Center (TMC) once it is determined that emergency traffic control must be utilized. The TMC will notify the Traffic Safety Section. Traffic Safety will coordinate with the administering section and the TMC

to disseminate information to the public regarding the expected impacts. The TMC Manager is expected to notify the Secretary, Chief Engineer, and Director of Community Relations directly regarding ongoing emergency work that will impact public travel on the State's key routes such as minor arterial or higher classification roadways.

**IV. Justification**

To minimize unplanned lane closures, which can lead to unpredicted traffic congestion, complaints, and community criticism of the Department.

**V. Effective Date**

This policy shall become effective 15 days after signature by the Secretary, or, if applicable, upon compliance with the regulatory process required by the Administrative Procedures Act (29 Del.C. Ch. 101).

## APPENDIX A – TYPICAL TIME RESTRICTIONS

The following are pre-approved time restrictions for planned lane closures on state-maintained roadways in Delaware. These time restrictions are applicable only to the following types of work:

- Open-ended projects as defined in 29 Del.C. §6970 (See paragraph III.B. of this policy);
- Daily maintenance activities (See paragraph III.F. of this policy);
- Data gathering, sampling, bridge inspection and land surveying (See paragraph III.G. of this policy).

**Table A-1: Pre-Approved Lane Closure Time Restrictions**

Traffic Volume	Work Hour Restrictions	Conditions
AADT < 1,000 vpd	8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.	1. Weekdays only (M-F). 2. No conflicts with nearby projects. 3. Standard public outreach issued. 3. Can extend hours with District Traffic Safety Officer approval and notification to TMC.
1,000 vpd < AADT < 7,500 vpd	8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.	1. Weekdays only (M-F). 2. No conflicts with nearby projects. 3. Standard public outreach issued. 4. Adjust lane closure hours for directional traffic by coordinating with District Traffic Safety Officer. 5. Can extend hours using process in Guidance Note 8 below.
AADT > 7,500 vpd	9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.	1. Weekdays only (M-F). 2. No conflicts with nearby projects. 3. Standard public outreach issued. 4. Remove closures prior to start of rush hour. 5. Monitor delays, adjust closures to reduce queuing. 6. Adjust lane closure hours for directional traffic by coordinating with District Traffic Safety Officer. 7. Can extend hours using process in Guidance Note 8 below.

**Guidance Notes:**

1. Use judgment in implementing lane closures based on the knowledge of traffic volumes, roadway characteristics and network conditions. When in doubt request assistance from DeIDOT Traffic Safety.
2. Utilize AADT information on the DeIDOT Gateway website or the latest Vehicle Volume Summary posted on DeIDOT’s website.
3. Give consideration to the duration of the closure, the number of lanes on the roadway, number of lanes affected by the work, the conditions created by the closure and nearby restrictions from other projects.
4. Give consideration to altering lane closure hours based on directional traffic distribution (i.e., if the majority of traffic is traveling northbound in the morning and southbound in the afternoon, lane closures could occur from 9AM – 5PM northbound and 7AM – 3PM southbound).

5. Monitor traffic queuing and delays during the work and make adjustments to keep the disruption to traffic minimized.
6. Coordinate all lane closures with Community Relations so that a press release is issued informing the public of the pending lane closures.
7. Questions regarding the timing of lane closures on a particular roadway should be directed to the District Traffic Safety Officer.
8. If the constraints imposed by Table A-1 above cannot be met for the type of work being planned, the DeIDOT Project Manager is responsible for pursuing approval of extended lane closure hours through the following procedures:
  - a. Identify the type of work involved and how long each shift takes to complete a reasonable amount of work; and
  - b. Present that information to the District Safety Officer who will get guidance from the DeIDOT Traffic Chief Safety Officer and Traffic Safety Programs Manager and provide work times to the DeIDOT Project Manager; and
  - c. Contact the District Community Relations Officer to explain the work and formulate appropriate public outreach such as press release, placement of portable changeable message signs, etc.; and
  - d. Complete the Location Work Hour Restrictions Checklist for Open-End Projects, Exhibit 2.
  - e. If consensus is not reached using the procedures above follow the procedures in Section III.A. of this policy.

**Holiday and Event Restrictions:**

1. Regardless of the type of work activity or location, lane closures are not permitted for various holidays or planned special events. Please refer to Section 801 of the DeIDOT Standard Specifications for specific statewide holiday and/or planned special event restrictions.
2. For location specific planned special event restrictions, contact the District Safety Officer for information prior to issuing the work order or advertising the project. Notes regarding specific planned special event restrictions shall be included in the Contract Documents or work order.
3. Exceptions to the holiday and event restrictions may be considered on a case by case basis with prior written approval from the Chief Engineer. The decision to grant an exemption will be based on potential benefits and impacts to the public due to the type of work, duration of work, roadway characteristics, and anticipated traffic conditions.