



STATEMENT OF POLICY

by the International Road Federation

“Using Properly Tested Passive Safety Devices On Road Work Zones”

December 19, 2019

The International Road Federation (IRF Global) asks that road authorities accept the responsibility to set stringent safety requirements for contractors involved in maintenance works on roads open to traffic, and independently verify that these requirements are met.

Work zones represent a very serious safety concern for motorists, vulnerable road users and as well as for workers who build, repair, and maintain the roads, bridges, and highways. Based on figures available, IRF estimates¹ that at the global level, hundreds of thousands of injuries and thousands of fatalities occur every year in work zones. International Financing Institutions are also increasingly recognizing the increased risks posed by temporary road works².

Road Authorities must accept the responsibility to set stringent safety requirements for contractors involved in maintenance works on roads open to traffic, and independently verify that these requirements are met.

1. They must ensure that the required traffic control devices are installed properly and maintained during the life of the work zone. Typically designs of traffic control plans and devices are described in Federal documents often referred to as the “Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices” (MUTCD). These plans may also be called a “Guide to Temporary Traffic Management” (AGTTM), “Temporary Traffic Management Plans (TTM)” or a “Work Zone Traffic Management Guide.”

¹ STATEMENT OF POLICY by the International Road Federation “Mandating Safer Work Zones Globally”, April 2018 (<https://www.irf.global/policy-statements/>)

² World Bank Good Practice Note “Environment & Social Framework for IPF Operations - Road Safety”, October 2019

2. If the length of time for the work zone, the proximity of the work to the travelled way and the volume of traffic as specified in the MUTCD or local guidelines justify the use of passive safety devices to provide positive protection, such as barriers, terminal ends and truck mounted attenuators (TMA), then these devices shall be crashworthy, successfully tested to the current US or European testing standards (MASH or EN1317.) Smaller devices not designed to provide positive protection, such as drums, cones or road tubes should be self-certified as crashworthy.
3. Where road authorities decide to use non-proprietary, state funded systems, these products must be properly tested to the current US or European testing criteria. Experience has shown that many of these low initial priced systems either have cut corners in testing, or in the manufacturing process when they are allowed to be locally produced with limited quality control. If systems currently being used do not currently meet these standards then a road authority should adopt, where best practicable, a phasing out approach over a reasonably define period of time whereby the existing hardware is replaced when it is damaged, reached the end of its useable life, or the initial purchase/production cost has been depreciated.
4. Road authorities should maintain a “Qualified Products List” (QPL) and only products on that list should be used. The QPL will make it easier for the contractor to know which products can be used and it will help the road authority ensure that properly tested products are used in their work zones.
5. Road authorities must enlist the use of qualified Road Safety Auditors through all three Stages of the Construction Phase, Work Zone, Construction and Pre-Opening³. Qualified Road Safety Auditors will help to ensure that contractors do not use replace properly tested and specified passive safety devices with products that may or may not provide adequate protection for motorists, pedestrians as well as road workers.

³ An example of a Work Zone Road Safety Audit Guidelines and Prompt Lists may be found at https://www.workzonesafety.org/files/documents/training/fhwa_wz_grant/atssa_wz_RSA_guide.pdf