

February 19, 2003

Refer to: HOTO-1

Ms. Diane Jackson
P. O. Box 281
Helper, UT 84526

Dear Ms. Jackson

Thank you for your letter requesting an interpretation on certification requirements for persons responsible for traffic control devices in temporary traffic control zones. We have entitled your request for interpretation 6-190(I) for recordkeeping purposes, so please refer to this number in future correspondence.

First, let me congratulate you for becoming certified in your employment with ABC Builders. The fact that you are also familiar with NCHRP 350 traffic control devices crashworthiness is a double bonus for the citizens of Utah and visitors to your State who may at some time travel through a temporary traffic control zone. Temporary traffic control zones, while a necessary part of the highway environment, may sometimes violate motorist's expectancies. Temporary traffic control that is properly installed, operated and maintained during the life of a project is essential to ensure the highest level of safety for the highway workers and passing motorists. Certified workers responsible for those functions help to make that happen.

Although the Federal Highway Administration encourages certification, the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) does not require certification for persons responsible for the placement, operation, and maintenance of temporary traffic control devices. There are several reasons that certification is not required including the recognition that many local agencies do not have the resources, nor the breadth of need to mandate certification. The specific MUTCD language is as follows:

Section 6B.01

"To provide acceptable levels of operations, routine day and night inspections of temporary traffic control elements should be performed as follows:

- A. Individuals who are knowledgeable (for example, trained and/or certified) in the principles of proper temporary traffic control should be assigned responsibility for safety in temporary traffic control zones. "**

The MUTCD further states in **Section 6B.01** that:

Each person whose actions affect temporary traffic control zone safety, from the upper-level management through the field workers, should receive training appropriate to the job decisions each individual is required to make. Only those individuals who are trained in proper temporary traffic control practices and have a basic understanding of the principles (established by applicable standards and guidelines, including those of this Manual) should supervise the selection, placement, and maintenance of temporary traffic control devices used for temporary traffic control zones and for incident management.

The "should" statements above in Section 6B.01 are "guidance," or recommended, but not mandated practice for users of the MUTCD. In any event, there are many States, local agencies, utility companies, and contractors throughout the country who have recognized the value of assigning certified workers to handle these important safety responsibilities. As a result, they require certified workers and have done so in their State specific MUTCD's , standard specifications, or work rules applicable to temporary traffic control. That is the case in Utah. If you wish to obtain further detail on Utah's requirements, please contact Mr. Roland Stanger of the Federal Highway Administration Division Office in Salt Lake City. Mr. Stanger's address and email are as follows: Federal Highway Administration (**HOP-UT.5**), 2520 West 4700 South, Suite 9A, Salt Lake City, UT 84118-1847 and Roland.Stanger@fhwa.dot.gov. His telephone is: 801-963-0078 ext. 254. His fax is also: 801-963-0093.

Again, thank you for your letter and your interest in certification. We need more safety conscious highway workers like yourself and perhaps your company who recognize the importance and safety value of certification.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Shelley Row

Shelley J. Row, P.E.
Director, Office of Transportation
Operations