CHAPTER 6C. TEMPORARY TRAFFIC CONTROL ELEMENTS

Section 6C.01 Temporary Traffic Control Plans

Support:

A temporary traffic control plan describes temporary traffic control measures to be used for facilitating road users (drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians, which includes people with disabilities) through a work zone or an incident area. Temporary traffic control plans play a vital role in providing continuity of safe and efficient road user flow when a work zone, incident, or other event temporarily disrupts normal road user flow. Important auxiliary provisions that cannot conveniently be specified on project plans can easily be incorporated into Special Provisions within the temporary traffic control plan.

Temporary traffic control plans range in scope from being very detailed to simply referencing typical drawings contained in this Manual, standard approved highway agency drawings and manuals, or specific drawings contained in the contract documents. The degree of detail in the temporary traffic control plan depends entirely on the nature and complexity of the situation.

Guidance:

Temporary traffic control plans should be prepared by persons knowledgeable (for example, trained and/or certified) about the fundamental principles of temporary traffic control and work activities to be performed. The design, selection and placement of temporary traffic control devices for a temporary traffic control plan should be based on engineering judgment.

Coordination should be made between adjacent or overlapping projects to check that duplicate signing is not used and to check compatibility of traffic control between adjacent or overlapping projects.

Traffic control planning should be completed for all highway construction, utility work, maintenance operations, and incident management including minor maintenance and utility projects prior to occupying the temporary traffic control zone. Planning for all road users (drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians, which includes people with disabilities) should be included in the process.

Provisions for effective continuity of accessible circulation paths for pedestrians should be incorporated into the temporary traffic control process. Where existing pedestrian routes are blocked or detoured, information should be provided about alternative routes that are usable by pedestrians with disabilities, particularly those who have visual disabilities. Access to temporary bus stops, safe travel across intersections with accessible pedestrian signals (see Section 4E.06), and other routing issues should be considered where temporary pedestrian routes are channelized. Detectability by people with visual disabilities should be provided.

Option:

Provisions may be incorporated into the project bid documents that enable contractors to develop an alternate temporary traffic control plan.

Modifications of temporary traffic control plans may be necessary because of changed conditions or a determination of better methods of safely and efficiently handling road users.

Guidance:

This alternate or modified plan should have the approval of the responsible highway agency prior to implementation.

Provisions for effective continuity of transit service should be incorporated into the temporary traffic control planning process because often public transit buses cannot efficiently be detoured in the same manner as other vehicles (particularly for short-term maintenance projects). Where applicable, the temporary traffic control plan should provide for features such as accessible temporary bus stops, pull-outs, and satisfactory waiting areas for transit patrons, including persons with disabilities, if applicable (see Section 10A.05 for additional light rail transit issues to consider for temporary traffic control).

Provisions for effective continuity of railroad service and acceptable access to abutting property owners and businesses should also be incorporated into the temporary traffic control planning process.

Reduced speed limits should be used only in the specific portion of the temporary traffic control zone where conditions or restrictive features are present. However, frequent changes in the speed limit should be avoided. A temporary traffic control plan should be designed so that vehicles can safely travel through the temporary traffic control zone with a speed limit reduction of no more than 16 km/h (10 mph).

A reduction of more than 16 km/h (10 mph) in the speed limit should be used only when required by restrictive features in the temporary traffic control zone. Where restrictive features justify a speed reduction of more than 16 km/h (10 mph), additional driver notification should be provided. The speed limit should be stepped down in advance of the location requiring the lowest speed, and additional temporary traffic control warning devices should be used.

Reduced speed zoning (lowering the regulatory speed limit) should be avoided as much as practical because drivers will reduce their speeds only if they clearly perceive a need to do so.

Support:

Research has demonstrated that large reductions in the speed limit, such as a 50 km/h (30 mph) reduction, increase speed variance and the potential for crashes. Smaller reductions in the speed limit of up to 16 km/h (10 mph) cause smaller changes in speed variance and lessen the potential for increased crashes. A reduction in the regulatory speed limit of only up to 16 km/h (10 mph) from the normal speed limit has been shown to be more effective.

Section 6C.02 Temporary Traffic Control Zones

Support:

A temporary traffic control zone is an area of a highway where road user conditions are changed because of a work zone or an incident through the use of temporary traffic control devices, police, or other authorized personnel.

A work zone is an area of a highway with construction, maintenance, or utility work activities. A work zone is typically marked by signs, channelizing devices, barriers, pavement markings, and/or work vehicles. It extends from the first warning sign or rotating/strobe lights on a vehicle to the END ROAD WORK sign or the last temporary traffic control device.

An incident area is an area of a highway where temporary traffic controls are imposed by authorized officials in response to a traffic incident, natural disaster, or special event. It extends from the first warning sign or rotating/strobe lights on a vehicle to the last temporary traffic control device or to a point where road users return to the original lane alignment and are clear of the incident.

Section 6C.03 Components of Temporary Traffic Control Zones

Support:

Most temporary traffic control zones are divided into four areas: the advance warning area, the transition area, the activity area, and the termination area. Figure 6C-1 illustrates these four areas. These four areas are described in Sections 6C.04 through 6C.07.

Section 6C.04 Advance Warning Area

Support:

The advance warning area is the section of highway where road users are informed about the upcoming work zone or incident area.

Option:

The advance warning area may vary from a single sign or rotating/strobe lights on a vehicle to a series of signs in advance of the temporary traffic control zone activity area.

Guidance:

Figure 6C-1. Component Parts of a Temporary Traffic Control Zone

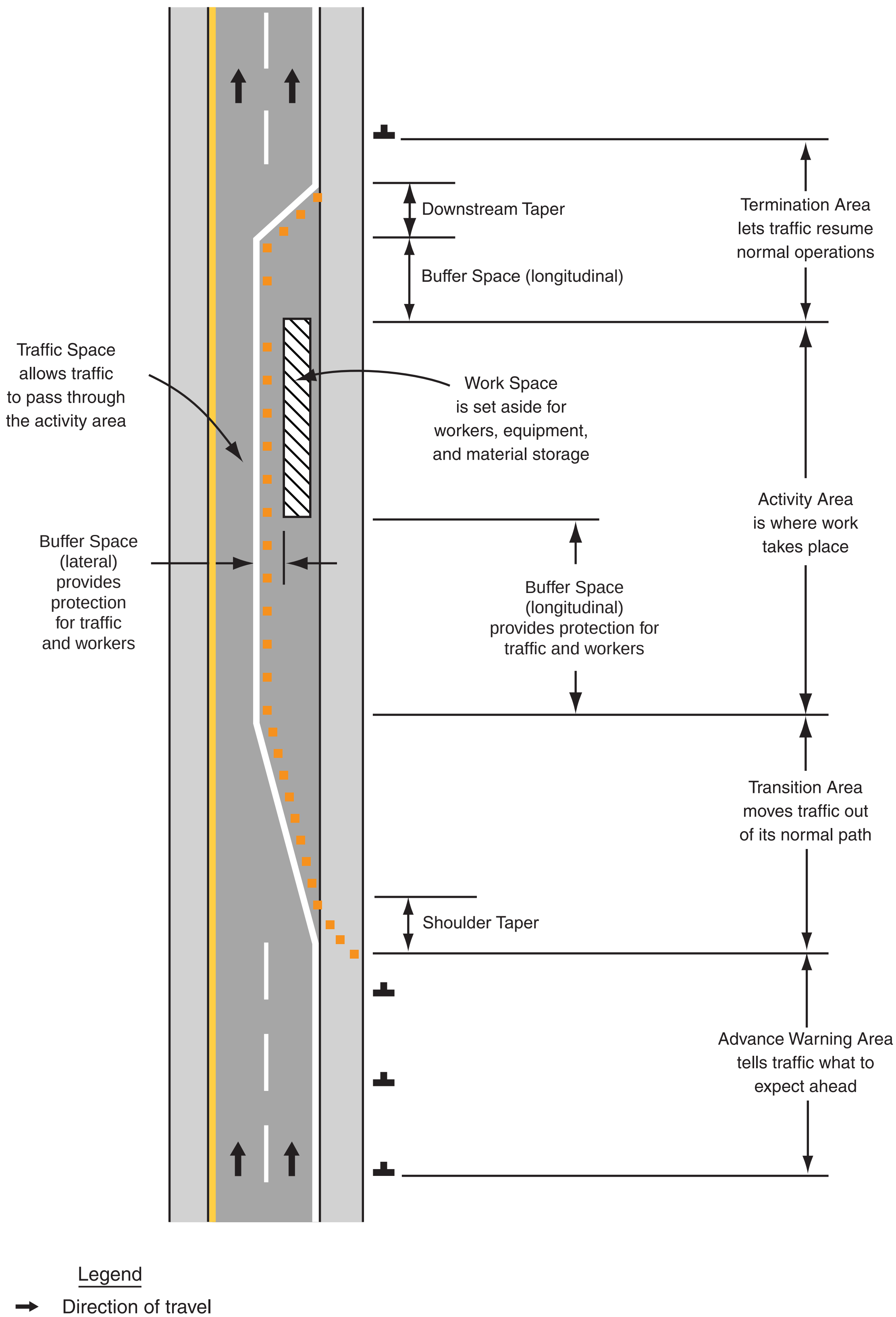


Table 6C-1. Suggested Advance Warning Sign Spacing

Road Type	Distance Between Signs**		
	A	B	C
Urban (low speed)*	30 (100)	30 (100)	30 (100)
Urban (high speed)*	100 (350)	100 (350)	100 (350)
Rural	150 (500)	150 (500)	150 (500)
Expressway / Freeway	300 (1,000)	450 (1,500)	800 (2,640)

***** Speed category to be determined by highway agency

****** Distances are shown in meters (feet). The column headings A, B, and C are the dimensions shown in Figures 6H-1 through 6H-46. The A dimension is the distance from the transition or point of restriction to the first sign. The B dimension is the distance between the first and second signs. The C dimension is the distance between the second and third signs. (The third sign is the first one in a three-sign series encountered by a driver approaching a temporary traffic control zone.)

Typical distances for placement of advance warning signs on expressways and freeways should be longer because drivers are conditioned to uninterrupted flow. Therefore, the advance warning sign placement should extend on these facilities as far as 800 m (0.5 mi) or more.

On urban streets, the effective placement of the first warning sign in meters (feet) should range from 0.75 to 1.5 times the speed limit in km/h (4 to 8 times the speed limit in mph), with the high end of the range being used when speeds are relatively high. When a single advance warning sign is used (in cases such as low-speed residential streets), the advance warning area can be as short as 30 m (100 ft). When two or more advance warning signs are used on higher-speed streets, such as major arterials, the advance warning area should extend a greater distance (see Table 6C-1).

Since rural highways are normally characterized by higher speeds, the effective placement of the first warning sign in meters (feet) should be substantially longer—from 1.5 to 2.25 times the speed limit in km/h (8 to 12 times the speed limit in mph). Since two or more advance warning signs are normally used for these conditions, the advance warning area should extend 450 m (1,500 ft) or more for open highway conditions (see Table 6C-1).

Option:

Advance warning may be eliminated when the activity area is sufficiently removed from the road users' path so that it does not interfere with the normal flow.

Section 6C.05 Transition Area

Support:

The transition area is that section of highway where road users are redirected out of their normal path.

Standard:

When redirection of the road users' normal path is required, they shall be channelized from the normal path to a new path.

Support:

In mobile operations, the transition area moves with the work space. Transition areas usually involve strategic use of tapers, which because of their importance are discussed separately in detail.

Section 6C.06 Activity Area

Support:

The activity area is the section of the highway where the work activity takes place. It is comprised of the work space, the traffic space, and the buffer space.

The work space is that portion of the highway closed to road users and set aside for workers, equipment, and material, and a shadow vehicle if one is used upstream. Work spaces are usually delineated for road users by channelizing devices or, to exclude vehicles and pedestrians, by temporary barriers.

Option:

The work space may be stationary or may move as work progresses.

Guidance:

Since there may be several work spaces (some even separated by several kilometers or miles) within the project limits, each work space should be adequately signed to inform road users and reduce confusion.

Support:

The traffic space is the portion of the highway in which road users are routed through the activity area.

The buffer space is a lateral and/or longitudinal area that separates road user flow from the work space or an unsafe area, and might provide some recovery space for an errant vehicle.

Guidance:

Neither work activity nor storage of equipment, vehicles, or material should occur within a buffer space.

Option:

Buffer spaces may be positioned either longitudinally or laterally with respect to the direction of road user flow. The activity area may contain one or more lateral or longitudinal buffer spaces.

A longitudinal buffer space may be placed in advance of a work space.

The longitudinal buffer space may also be used to separate opposing road user flows that use portions of the same traffic lane, as shown in Figure 6C-2.

If a longitudinal buffer space is used, the values shown in Table 6C-2 may be used.

Support:

Typically, the buffer space is formed as a traffic island and defined by channelizing devices.

When a shadow vehicle is placed in advance of work space, only the space upstream of the vehicle constitutes the buffer space.

Option:

The lateral buffer space may be used to separate the traffic space from the work space, as shown in Figures 6C-1 and 6C-2, or such areas as excavations or pavement-edge drop-offs. A lateral buffer space also may be used between two travel lanes, especially those carrying opposing flows.

Guidance:

The width of a lateral buffer space should be determined by engineering judgment.

Option:

When work occurs on a high-volume, highly congested facility, a vehicle storage or staging space may be provided for incident response and emergency vehicles (for example, tow trucks and fire apparatus) so that these vehicles can respond quickly to road user incidents.

Guidance:

If used, an incident response and emergency-vehicle storage area should not extend into any portion of the buffer space.

Figure 6C-2. Types of Tapers and Buffer Spaces

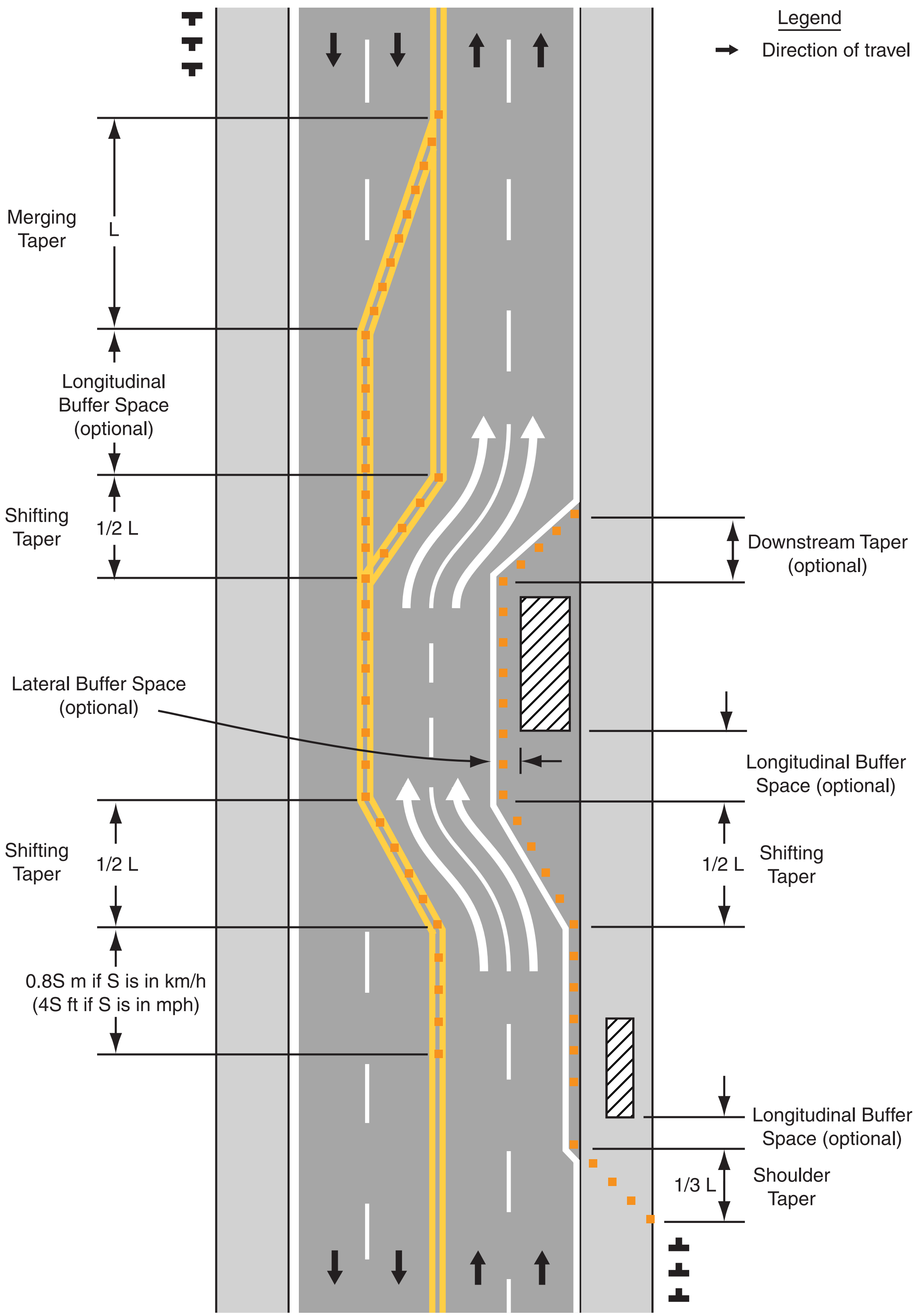


Table 6C-2. Stopping Sight Distance as a Function of Speed

Speed* (km/h)	**Distance (m)**
30	35
40	50
50	65
60	85
70	105
80	130
90	160
100	185
110	220
120	250

Speed* (mph)	**Distance (ft)**
20	115
25	155
30	200
35	250
40	305
45	360
50	425
55	495
60	570
65	645
70	730
75	820

***** Posted speed, off-peak 85th-percentile speed prior to work starting, or the anticipated operating speed

Section 6C.07 Termination Area

Standard:

The termination area shall be used to return road users to their normal path. The termination area shall extend from the downstream end of the work area to the last temporary traffic control device such as END ROAD WORK signs, if posted.

Option:

An END ROAD WORK sign, a Speed Limit sign, or other signs may be used to inform road users that they can resume normal operations.

A longitudinal buffer space may be used between the work space and the beginning of the downstream taper.

Section 6C.08 Tapers

Option:

Tapers may be used in both the transition and termination areas. Whenever tapers are to be used in close proximity to an interchange ramp, crossroads, curves, or other influencing factors, the length of the tapers may be adjusted.

Support:

Tapers are created by using a series of channelizing devices and/or pavement markings to move traffic out of or into the normal path. Types of tapers are shown in Figure 6C-2.

Longer tapers are not necessarily better than shorter tapers (particularly in urban areas with characteristics such as short block lengths or driveways) because extended tapers tend to encourage sluggish operation and to encourage drivers to delay lane changes unnecessarily. The test concerning adequate lengths of tapers involves observation of driver performance after temporary traffic control plans are put into effect.

Guidance:

The criteria for determining the taper length (L) is shown in Table 6C-3 and should be the minimum used.

The maximum distance in meters (feet) between devices in a taper should not exceed 0.2 times the speed limit in km/h (1.0 times the speed limit in mph).

Support:

A merging taper requires the longest distance because drivers are required to merge into common road space.

Table 6C-3. Taper Length Criteria for Temporary Traffic Control Zones

Type of Taper	Taper Length (L)*
Merging Taper	at least L
Shifting Taper	at least 0.5L
Shoulder Taper	at least 0.33L
One-Lane, Two-Way Traffic Taper	30 m (100 ft) maximum
Downstream Taper	30 m (100 ft) per lane

***** Formulas for L are as follows:

For speed limits of 60 km/h (40 mph) or less:

$$L = \frac{WS^2}{155} \qquad \left(L = \frac{WS^2}{60}\right)$$

For speed limits of 70 km/h (45 mph) or greater:

$$L = \frac{WS}{1.6} \qquad (L = WS)$$

Where: L = taper length in meters (feet)
W = width of offset in meters (feet)
S = posted speed limit, or off-peak 85th-percentile speed prior to work starting, or the anticipated operating speed in km/h (mph)

Guidance:

A merging taper should be long enough to enable merging drivers to have adequate advance warning and sufficient length to adjust their speeds and merge into a single lane before the end of the transition.

Support:

A shifting taper is used when a lateral shift is needed. When more space is available, a longer than minimum taper distance can be beneficial. Changes in alignment can also be accomplished by using horizontal curves designed for normal highway speeds.

Guidance:

A shifting taper should have a length of approximately 0.5 L (see Table 6C-3).

Support:

A shoulder taper may be beneficial on a high-speed roadway where shoulders are part of the activity area and are closed, or when improved shoulders might be mistaken as a driving lane. In these instances, the same type, but abbreviated, closure procedures used on a normal portion of the roadway can be used.

Guidance:

If used, shoulder tapers should have a length of approximately 0.33 L (see Table 6C-3). If a shoulder is used as a travel lane, either through practice or during a temporary traffic control activity, a normal merging or shifting taper should be used.

Option:

A downstream taper may be useful in termination areas to provide a visual cue to the driver that access is available back into the original lane or path that was closed.

Guidance:

When used, a downstream taper should have a minimum length of approximately 30 m (100 ft) per lane with devices placed at a spacing of approximately 6.1 m (20 ft).

Support:

The one-lane, two-way taper is used in advance of an activity area that occupies part of a two-way roadway in such a way that a portion of the road is used alternately by traffic in each direction.

Guidance:

Traffic should be controlled by a flagger or temporary traffic signal (if sight distance is limited), or a STOP or YIELD sign. A short taper having a maximum length of 30 m (100 ft) with channelizing devices at approximately 6.1 m (20 ft) spacings should be used to guide traffic into the one-way section.

Support:

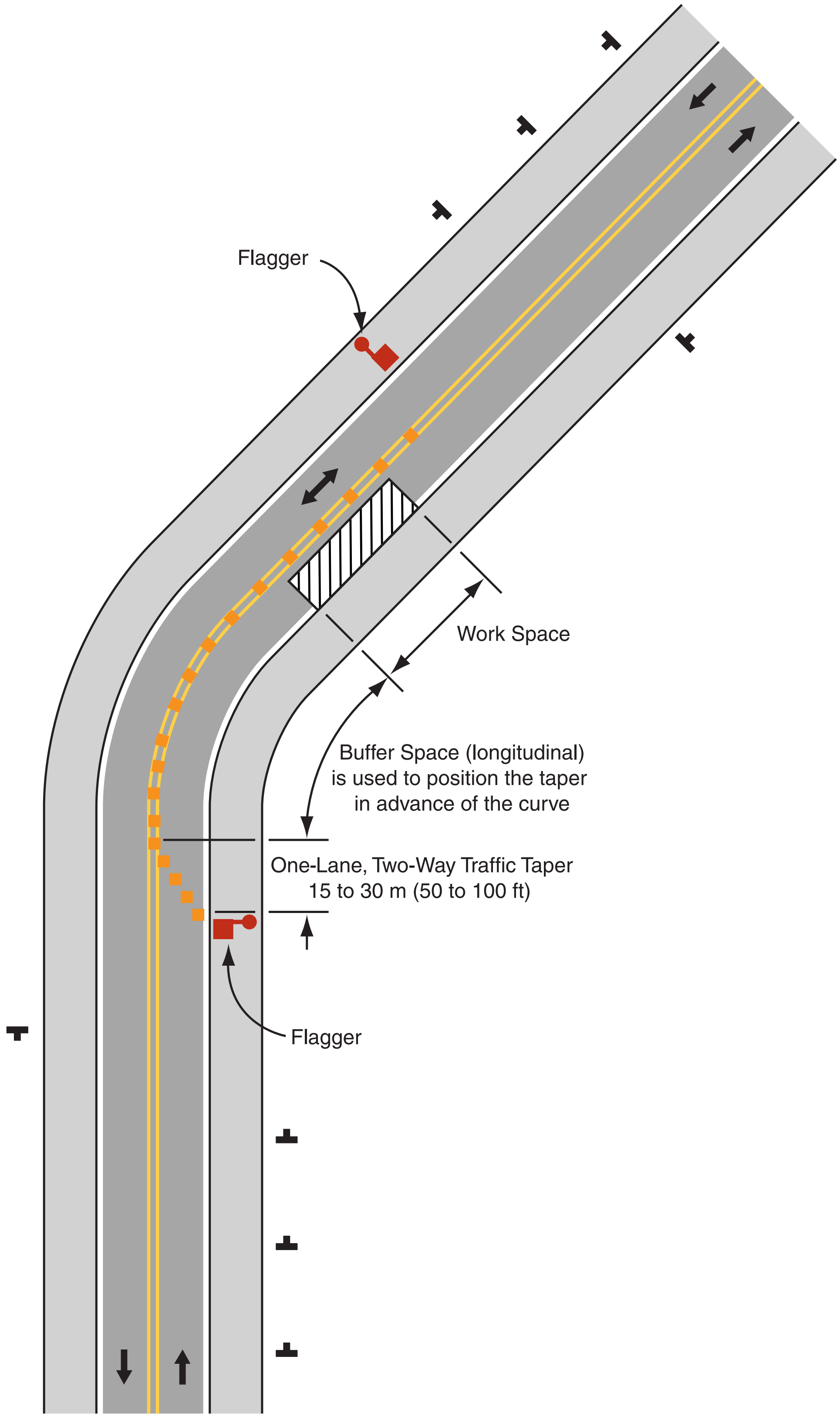
An example of a one-lane, two-way traffic taper is shown in Figure 6C-3.

Section 6C.09 Detours and Diversions

Support:

A detour is a temporary rerouting of road users onto an existing highway in order to avoid a temporary traffic control zone.

Figure 6C-3. Example of a One-Lane, Two-Way Traffic Taper



Guidance:

Detours should be clearly signed over their entire length so that road users can easily use existing highways to return to the original highway.

Support:

A diversion is a temporary rerouting of road users onto a temporary highway or alignment placed around the work area.

Section 6C.10 One-Lane, Two-Way Traffic Control

Standard:

When traffic in both directions must use a single lane for a limited distance, movements from each end shall be coordinated.

Guidance:

Provisions should be made for alternate one-way movement through the constricted section via methods such as flagger control, a flag transfer, a pilot car, traffic control signals, or stop or yield control.

Control points at each end should be chosen to permit easy passing of opposing lanes of vehicles.

If traffic on the affected one-lane roadway is not visible from one end to the other, then flagging procedures, a pilot car, or a traffic control signal should be used to control opposing traffic flows.

Support:

At a spot constriction, such as an isolated pavement patch on highways with lower speeds and adequate sight distance, the movement of traffic through one-lane, two-way constrictions tends to be self-regulating.

Section 6C.11 Flagger Method of One-Lane, Two-Way Traffic Control

Option:

When a one-lane, two-way temporary traffic control zone is short enough to allow a flagger to see from one end of the zone to the other, traffic may be controlled by either a single flagger or by a flagger at each end of the section.

Guidance:

When a single flagger is used, the flagger should be stationed on the shoulder opposite the constriction or work space, or in a position where good visibility and traffic control can be maintained at all times. When good visibility and traffic control cannot be maintained by one flagger station, traffic should be controlled by a flagger at each end of the section. One of the flaggers should be designated as the coordinator. Flaggers should be able to communicate with each other orally, electronically, or with manual signals. These manual signals should not be mistaken for flagging signals.

Section 6C.12 <u>Flag Transfer Method of One-Lane, Two-Way Traffic Control</u>

Support:

The driver of the last vehicle proceeding into the one-lane section is given a red flag (or other token) and instructed to deliver it to the flagger at the other end. The opposite flagger, upon receipt of the flag, then knows that it is safe to allow traffic to move in the other direction. A variation of this method is to replace the use of a flag with an official pilot car that always follows the last road user vehicle proceeding through the section.

Guidance:

The flag transfer method should be employed only where the one-way traffic is confined to a relatively short length of a road, usually not more than 1.6 km (1 mi) in length.

Section 6C.13 <u>Pilot Car Method of One-Lane, Two-Way Traffic Control</u>

Option:

A pilot car may be used to guide a queue of vehicles through the temporary traffic control zone or detour.

Guidance:

The operation of the pilot vehicle should be coordinated with flagging operations or other controls at each end of the one-lane section. The pilot car should have the name of the contractor or contracting authority prominently displayed.

Standard:

The PILOT CAR FOLLOW ME (G20-4) sign (see Figure 6F-11) shall be mounted at a conspicuous location on the rear of the vehicle.

Section 6C.14 **Temporary Traffic Control Signal Method of One-Lane, Two-Way Traffic Control**

Option:

Traffic control signals may be used to control vehicular traffic movements in one-lane, two-way temporary traffic control zones (see Figure 6H-12 and Chapter 4G).

Section 6C.15 **Stop or Yield Control Method of One-Lane, Two-Way Traffic Control**

Option:

STOP or YIELD signs may be used to control traffic on low-volume roads at a one-lane, two-way temporary traffic control zone when drivers are able to see the other end of the one-lane, two-way operation and have sufficient visibility of approaching vehicles.

Guidance:

If the STOP or YIELD sign is installed for only one direction, then the STOP or YIELD sign should face road users who are driving on the side of the roadway that is closed for the work activity area.