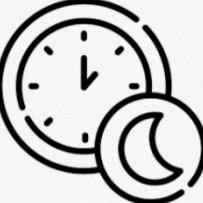# SEVERE WEATHER EVENT

Work Planning and Toolbox Card - Harmful Interactions

Recently there has been an increase in harmful interactions between road workers and the public and under emergency situations the increase in the number of negative interactions associated with the stress of the situation can have the potential for an increase in harmful interactions and significant escalation of harm. While there are some factors that are difficult to mitigate (individual behaviours, natural conditions, personal circumstances) there are things that we can do to reduce the potential for these types of interactions and minimise the severity. **Abuse of road workers is not OK!**

Control	Considerations

Communication	Communication plays a critical role in the prevention of the number of unintended interactions at our worksites and elevated frustrations of some road users.
	
	• Provide accurate and update information on the status of the network:
	   o Detailed information on condition not just opened or closed (i.e. traversable for specialised emergency vehicles, restricted to emergency response access only, essential travel, light vehicles only etc.)
	   o Clear external communications to promote desired traffic behaviours
	• Minimise personnel interactions at point of disruption where possible
	   o Provide instruction on where up to date information can be found
	   o Clear communication of detour routes
	   o Use of VMS and other methods to provide advanced information
	   o Where to seek additional information (i.e. traffic controllers should not be presumed to act as communication for detours and road status information)
	   o Use of various platforms and technologies to reach different areas
	• Clear communication that abuse of road workers is serious and offenders will be held to account for actions (seek input from police on communications).
	• Communications to gain support and empathy for road workers Easy Way to Avoid Hurting People
	• Communicate any intelligence to operations and police of elevated threats such as gang movements, previous harmful interactions and threats made.

Night Works	Working at night can have the benefit of minimising disruptions and speeding up the response, however there are risk management impacts to consider: • Likely less interactions but higher potential for harmful interactions • Severity and escalation at night is more likely • Ability to access assistance and support is limited by availability of resources • Works is often isolated from other people at night • General risks around shift work and night work (fatigue, poor lighting etc.) At this time, it is advised to only use **passive/non-personised TTM controls during night in areas where the threat of harmful interactions is high** and where additional police support has not been provided. The risk of patrols or cyclic operations to maintain these

controls needs to balance the risk of not maintaining these controls with the threat of harmful interactions.

[Shift Work](#) [Working in Reduced Visibility](#)

Temporary Traffic Management (TTM)	Much of the frontline in-person harmful interactions involve our TTM crews and road workers. Triggers for harmful interactions can come from frustrations related to disrupted travel. Heightened levels of frustration results when weather events impact travel routes unexpectedly and prevent road users getting to where they perceive their support is needed. This is the time additional control measures are implemented to ensure the safety of roadworkers and TTM workers. In the planning and implementation of our TTM consider the following:

- Where it is assessed as high risk of harmful interactions (severity and frequency) engage with police to provide adequate advice and support.

- Clear and considerate messaging to roadworkers and TTM workers that they may inform others of associated risks at work sites but **should not attempt to stop road users that fail to comply with directions.**

- Consider specific short engagement or conflict management training to all roadworkers and TTM workers to assist in managing inherent road user risk.

- Undertake a risk-based approach to develop the TMP to achieve the lowest total risk

    o What are the risks requiring treatment for the work area and to road users (washouts, uneven and slippery surfaces, loss of safety features such as guardrails, unstable slopes, narrow passageway, workspace requirements/impacts)?

    o What are the risks of traffic disruptions of the route (harmful interactions, restricted access of emergency and support vehicles, disrupted personal movements and disconnection of people and communities)?

    o What are the risks to road workers including TTM workers?

- Based on the above, control options should be reviewed and selected based on the best reasonably practicable in order of the hierarchy of controls

- Where road closures are adopted the plan needs to include how the set-up will mitigate the risk of harmful interactions of our workers. Where there is not a significant risk in physically isolating the closure, appropriate barriers should be installed to confidently prevent breach of these closures. Turn around areas and information to be available at the closure and monitoring plan in place.

- Where physical isolation closures are not an option, appropriate signage, barriers and information of risk and conditions should be posted. Works within a "soft closure" should be undertaken in assumption vehicles may enter the area and work site **controls in place and workers informed of the live lanes**. Controls should also be in place throughout the route to mitigate risk to unauthorised road users and for harmful interactions.

- Where periodic closures and lane closure are deployed (stop/go), this should be undertaken to avoid direct engagement with road users (e.g. pilot vehicles, barrier arms, e-stops etc.). Where this is not reasonably practicable, a plan must be in place to provide personnel with training, refuge, duress alarm and support.

[NZGTTM, COPTTM, Keeping healthy and safe while working on the road or roadside](#) |

Support Actions			
No.	Description	Responsible Persons	Status / Update
1	Communication plan for works in place – journey planner updates, detour routes clearly communicated, expected delays clear, details where information and complaints can be lodged, threat assessment		
2	Works information displayed – VMS, signage, detours marked,		
3	Night works plan – threat assessment undertaken, lighting in place, emergency response plan include for night response		
4	Traffic Management Planning – risk assessment includes for harmful interactions, best reasonably practical controls to eliminate the potential for interactions,		
5	All personed closures/stops have plan to mitigate interactions and harm		
6	Controls in place to mitigate risk of closure / TTM instructions		
7	Workers trained and understand response to harmful interactions and breaches of closure and TTM instructions		
8	Support program in place for workers exposed to harmful interactions		
9	Incident and intelligence pertaining to harmful interactions reported, recorded and shared.		
10	Improvements and actions implemented and monitored.		

This guide has been prepared to address the impact on this risk related to the emergency response. It should be used to supplement health and safety work plans and not considered to provide comprehensive risk management advice.