KS LTAP Newsletter

Summer 2021

A Service of The University of Kansas Transportation Center for Road, Street, & Bridge Agencies

Inside

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Smart Work In Summer Heat

By Nikhila Gunda

The scorching hot temperatures of summer are hard on all of us, but especially for those working on roads. Summers in Kansas can reach to 100^{0}F and higher, with average high temperatures reaching a peak of 94^{0}F mostly in the month of July (Weather Atlas, 2021), creating a dangerous working environment for road workers. Summer is the peak road work and construction season, meaning there's usually no choice but to continue working as usual, even on the very hottest of days.

With a little extra time and care, there are many ways to prevent complications from heat-related illness. This article addresses some of the common heat-related illnesses and their symptoms along with some of the best practices and strategies that can help road workers to work more safely during this summer season.

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Flaggers Are Frontline Professionals

By Lisa Harris-Frydman

There are several good resources available to flaggers to learn how to properly do their jobs. We will mention a few of them here, for reference. This article, however, will focus on finer points of flagging that go beyond proper procedures and contribute to the public's confidence in the flagger.

What we are talking about here is: looking and acting professional on the job. This topic was suggested by Kansas LTAP Advisory Committee member David Hamby, who has observed what he considers some unprofessional behavior by flaggers and felt they could be better representatives for their employers.

What is a "professional?"

For some people, the word "professional" conjures up a person in a lab coat or business suit, but many professionals don't fit that mold. A quick Google search for the definition of professional found "[a person] engaged in a specified activity as one's main paid occupation rather than as a pastime." Other definitions refer to a consistent code of conduct across all the people who practice a given profession. Flaggers certainly fit the definition, and what's more, their profession is to ensure safety.

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Flaggers Are Frontline Professionals Continued from page 1

What does professionalism look like for flaggers? Why is it important?

Flaggers can help themselves look the part of a professional by wearing proper clothing for the job, along with behavior that communicates "I am working."

A flagging professional:

- Wears a hard hat
- Wears an ANSI-approved safety vest or attire
- Properly uses a stop/slow paddle (with the paddle in good condition)
- Has professional and courteous interactions with crew members and passers-by – no lengthy chitchat while flagging; no leaning into a vehicle to talk with an occupant
- Wears clean clothes that fit well (not too tight, not too loose)
- Looks alert and confident, and has eyes on the road, always
- Provides efficient and effective communication with other crew members
- Stays well-hydrated, to stay alert

The goal is for the flagger to be highly visible and clearly in charge of keeping the work zone safe. It's important that the public treat a flagger with respect and follow their directions to maintain safety.

Resources for flagging on local roads

See the links below for information on flagging procedures. The video titled Professional Flagging: Basic Principles, Procedures and Applications, is pretty dated, but provides excellent safety tips that are always relevant. Another video, When Luck Runs Out – Professional Flagging Techniques, is a more recent production.

ARTBA (a national association for road builders) has a detailed, 21-page guide titled "Guidance: Managing Flagging Operations on Low-Volume Roads," published in 2015 and consistent with the most recent (2009) Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). It has many photographs and illustrations and is a good training guide.

The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), Part 6, is the national standard for setting up temporary traffic control. It applies to every public road in the United States.

Conclusion

Flaggers are the professional face of a work zone and their road department. It's a critically important job, and one to be proud of! Let it show with your professionalism on the job.

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Heat-related illness and its symptoms

Under normal conditions the human body can regulate its temperature though sweating, but when exposed to more heat than it can handle the internal body temperature will continue to rise. As internal body temperature rises, workers may experience symptoms that include thirst, irritability, rash, cramping, heat exhaustion, or heat stroke. Some workers are more susceptible to heat-related illness than others. Certain medical conditions, lack of physical fitness, previous episodes of heat-related illness, alcohol consumption, and drug use may increase risk. No matter the employee, it's important to know the warning signs. The most common heat-related illnesses, their causes, and their symptoms are mentioned in the table below.

It is essential for employers and workers to be familiar with heat-related illnesses and symptoms. When any of these illnesses or symptoms occur, it is important to promptly provide first aid, these conditions can worsen quickly and may result in death. In 2019, 83 people died in the U.S. from exposure to excessive heat ("Weather-Related Deaths

Table 1 - Heat-related illnesses and its causes, symptoms and signs; Source - OSHA

Heat-related Illness	Causes	Symptoms and Signs
Heat stroke	Occurs when body is overheated and is not able to cool itself down like it normally would	▪ Core temperature of 104 F or more ▪ Confusion ▪ Slurred speech ▪ Unconsciousness ▪ Seizures ▪ Heavy sweating or hot, dry skin ▪ Very high body temperature ▪ Rapid heart rate
Heat exhaustion	Milder version of the same condition as heat stroke	▪ Fatigue ▪ Irritability ▪ Thirst ▪ Nausea or vomiting ▪ Dizziness or lightheadedness ▪ Heavy sweating ▪ Elevated body temperature or fast heart rate
Heat cramps	Sudden development of cramps in skeletal muscles from a prolonged works in a hot environment	▪ Muscle spasms or pain ▪ Usually in legs, arms, or trunk
Heat syncope	Refers to a fainting (syncope) or dizziness experience due to work in high temperatures	▪ Fainting ▪ Dizziness
Heat rash	Skin irritation caused due to excessive sweating during hot and humid weather	▪ Clusters of red bumps on skin ▪ Often appears on neck, upper chest, and skin folds
Sunburns	Sun exposure for too long can lead to sunburns. Repeated sunburns increase the risk of developing skin cancer or related conditions	▪ Skin Redness and bumps
Dehydration	Not getting enough water in extreme heat temperatures	▪ Confusion ▪ Mood variations

and Injuries - Injury Facts", 2020). Quick first aid steps are mentioned below.

First aid steps

According to OSHA's Medical Services and First aid standard, every agency or company under its jurisdiction is required to have first aid personnel and equipment readily available. Following are some of the first aid principles recommended by OSHA. (While local governments are not required to comply with OSHA, we recommend following OSHA guidelines as a best practice.)

Take the affected worker to a cooler area (e.g., shade or air conditioning).

Cool the worker immediately. Use active cooling techniques such as:

Immerse the worker in cold water or an ice bath. Create the ice bath by placing all of the available ice into a large container with water, standard practice in sports. This is the best method to cool workers rapidly in an emergency.

Remove outer layers of clothing, especially heavy protective clothing.

Place ice or cold wet towels on the head, neck, trunk, armpits, and groin.

Use fans to circulate air around the worker.

Never leave a worker with heat-related illness alone. The illness can rapidly become worse. Stay with the worker.

When in doubt, call 911!

Confusion, slurred speech, or unconsciousness are signs of heat stroke. When these types of symptoms are present, call 911 immediately and cool the worker with ice or cold water until help arrives.

Workers who are new to working in warm environments are at increased risk of heat-related illness. See the Protecting New Workers section on OSHA website for more details.

Heat-related illness is preventable. Below are some of the best practices to prevent heat-related illness from occurring on the work site.

Best practices to avoid heat-related illness

Drink plenty of water and stay hydrated: Drinking water frequently can help the body stay hydrated and reduce complications related to heat illness (Ali, 2021). For maximum hydration, drink water or electrolyte infused water instead of other beverages while working in hot conditions.

Maintain a healthy lifestyle: Maintaining physical fitness, eating healthy, and getting quality sleep will help the body be prepared to deal with the stress of extreme temperatures. Opt for a lighter meal to keep from feeling hungry without weighing you down, especially during the hottest days. For example, eat a sandwich and fruits instead of a burger and french fries.

Take plenty of breaks and stay cool: Taking frequent breaks, especially in the shade, can help the body maintain a safe internal temperature. Relaxing in the shade is better than moving in and out of an air-conditioned building frequently. Moving from one extreme temperature (hot) to the opposite extreme (cold) and vice versa can cause strain to the body (Huizen, 2017).

Dress and layer to beat the heat: Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is vital for the safety of road workers and can help beat the heat. Wear lightweight, brightly colored garments made of breathable fabric. When possible, choose safety apparel with built-in SPF 50+ and always apply sunscreen of SPF 30+ to exposed skin.

Watch out for symptoms/signs of heat illness: Stay alert for the warning signs of heat exhaustion, which includes heavy sweating, increased heartbeat, muscle cramps, headache and dizziness.

Conclusion

It is important for public agency employers and workers, especially road workers, operators, and field supervisors,

> "If you sense that you or someone else is suffering from heat exhaustion, get them out of the sun and into a cooler setting. If you believe it has moved on to the more serious heat stroke, seek medical attention immediately. Remember to always err on the side of caution when working outside in the heat; your health is too important to do anything else."

to be aware and informed about heat-related illness, their symptoms, first aid methods, and prevention practices. We have provided some tips here that we hope you will find useful. Stay safe out there!

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to Mike Perkins who provided valuable insights on current practices that can help road workers find some relief from the sun during work times.

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New Learning Management System Now Live

By Emily Wilder

On June 17th KUTC hosted a webinar to introduce the new learning management system (LMS) and walk users through the system's key functions. If you missed the webinar, you're in luck! The webinar was recorded and is available to view here.

The webinar covers:

- Limitations of the old system
- Upgrades in the new LMS
- How to view courses
- Search & filtering options
- How to create an account
- How to create an account for others
- How to register multiple people for multiple classes
- How to view enrollments

The LMS is now live and registration for all KS LTAP Fall 2021 classes is open. Although the LMS is live and operable, there is still room for improvement and final adjustments. I encourage you to watch the webinar, test the new system and send all comments, questions, or ideas for improvement to Emily Wilder at ewilder@ku.edu or to KUTC training at kutc_training@ku.edu. We are excited about the new LMS and want to make sure it is tailored to meet your training needs!

Asset Management and Condition Ratings

By Jason Peek, Senior Project Manager, JEO Consulting Inc.

Asset management practices continue to evolve within our public works organizations. Whether you are new to asset management or an ISO 55000 expert, we all strive to learn and improve our asset management practices. For this article, I would like to discuss some observations regarding condition score development. Before I do, a little background on asset management.

Asset management is more than projects and plans. The Institute of Asset Management (IAM) and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) define asset management as "the coordinated activity of an organization to realize value from assets" where "realization of value will normally involve a balancing of costs, risks, opportunities and performance benefits". IAM further stresses that asset management is "more than doing things to assets - it's about using assets to deliver value and achieve the organizations business objectives". Using the example of an agency that manages roads, asset management within the agency would be alignment of agency activities to realize value from the agency's assets (item, thing, or entity that has potential or actual value).

Most road agencies focus on pavement condition and associate their pavement management program as an asset management program. While this is a core part of asset management, a comprehensive program would focus on coordination of all agency activities.

So what does all this background have to do with my original subject of condition scores? Over my twenty-five year career, I have witnessed much gnashing of teeth related to infrastructure condition scores (scales) and their interpretation. In my early career, my agency used a 0-60 scale for pavement ratings based on distresses with 60 being the worst and zero brand new. We then transitioned to a 100-point scale with 100 being new and zero being the worst. Much later, we added a combination of roughness index and pavement distresses to determine a composite score for asset condition.

My experience is not unique. A 2009 Technical Report for the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) (FHWA/TX-09/0-6386-1) provides an overview of differences in state DOT programs pavement management process including condition scores (scales). The report illustrates a high degree of variation among states in scales and evaluation processes. The scales range from 0-100, 1-5, and many other ranges including one that ends at a magical eleven (11) for excellent – reminds me of Nigel's amp in Spinal Tap.

Condition scores (scales) are critical to asset management programs to understand what type of treatment is likely most cost effective to yield best value for the agency. For such a critical component, why do we have so many different scales? You can find several academic articles about the evolution of pavement conditions scores on google scholar. In short, we do not have a standard metric such as a foot or meter, infrastructure condition scores are numerical interpretations of qualitative terms. The scores simply correspond to spectrums of good, fair, and poor.

So, what is an appropriate choice for condition scores/scale for your agency? I would suggest it's a score or scale that you will use regularly and repeatedly. The condition score is one aspect of an asset management program that helps your agency reach goals and objectives for maximizing the value of your agency's assets. Feel free to send me your thoughts at jpeek@jeo.com.

Don't Say Goodbye To Virtual Training

By Emily Wilder

In-person classes are a great way to get hands-on experience and really engage with the material. Unfortunately, time, travel, limited topics, and cost can all be barriers to getting the training you need. If you can't attend a class in person, consider virtual training. This short guide will explain the benefits of virtual training and ways that you can train your staff virtually.

Maximizing the Virtual Setting

Virtual training can be done either individually or as a group. In some cases, such as certification, it may need to be completed individually. However, there are many ways to use virtual training to train a group. This section will focus on how to train a group of employees at one time.

It likely goes without saying that virtual training will require a computer. In most cases, reliable internet access is also required but some classes may be downloaded and viewed offline depending on their platform.

Once you have a computer, and access to the content, you need a way to share it with your employees. This can be done by using a large screen tv or a projector, connected to a computer or laptop. Projectors can be bought for less than $100, are easily portable, and often have built-in speakers.

Conclusion

Virtual training pays for itself. The cost of purchasing a projector, and even a laptop, will be quickly recuperated by the money saved on travel and class fees. It's a great way to train efficiently and it offers access to hundreds of training topics. Don't say goodbye to virtual training just because we're heading back to in-person!

Benefits

Efficient use of Time: Virtual training can be an excellent way to use employee time efficiently. As most virtual trainings are self-paced, learners can move through the material when it best fits the schedule. Virtual training can be split up across multiple days rather than losing employees for a day long in-person training and there s no travel time involved.

Cost Saving: Not only will you save on travel expenses and time spent traveling, but many virtual courses are available for free! The Kansas LTAP online training resources spreadsheet has over 950 training opportunities and over 700 are free of charge to local public agencies. Additionally, Kansas LTAP is currently offering free virtual training of select Roads Scholar classes.

Wide Variety of Topics: As mentioned above, there are over 950 virtual training opportunities out there on a wide variety of topics. Virtual training is a great way to quickly find training on a topic of interest. As a side note, if there is a training topic that you re looking for as an in-person class please contact us at **kutc_training@ku.edu**

Kansas LTAP's Gravel Roads Maintenance Class Highly Recommended by Attendees

By Megan Hazelwood

Have you ever found yourself driving on a gravel road with loose gravel where traction has been difficult to obtain? Have you ever experienced a rather bumpy ride while driving on a gravel road? If so, your town's gravel roads most likely need maintenance. Kansas LTAP offers a Gravel Road Maintenance class that covers topics ranging from safety to gravel road profiling and preventative machine maintenance and operation as well as an optional day of hands-on training with field equipment.

The course is taught by Dale Dorsch, he has 39 years of industry experience. He started working for the Pawnee County Road and Bridge Department in Nebraska in 1982. Dorsch came to Kansas in 1998 and joined the Kansas Association of Counties while working on his Roads Scholar Program certification. He became an instructor for Kansas LTAP in 2009. Dorsch recognizes the need for the Gravel Road Maintenance course and is known as someone who can go out and maintain a good road.

Dorsch explains the importance of his class by stating, "it seems to me that in this fast-paced world today, we are called on to do more with less: quicker, safer, stay within budget and safety guidelines. Public works employees have to be on top of their game and need all the education they can obtain from training, sharing experiences and practical usage of machines needed to accomplish this and I think I can help them."

Kimberly Glover, with Atchison County Road and Bridge, shares how Dorsch helped her crew by saying, "Dale was very knowledgeable and a great instructor. He was very detailed about the things he was explaining and answered questions very thoroughly. The in-person training was invaluable. Having our crew get to watch and mimic the things they were being taught is the absolute best way for them to learn. Being on their roads in their machinery and being taught how to use their machine to properly maintain the road was exactly what we needed."

The Gravel Road Maintenance class can be a one or two-day course. The first day, or a one-day, class will run through a PowerPoint presentation that touches on blade fundamentals, how to establish and maintain the crown as well as what destroys it, the types of ditches used and how to construct and maintain them, as well as other topics. The second day of class, the hands-on portion, covers, "which machine settings to use, and operation basics, pulling shoulders, reclaiming, and reusing materials to help reshape the road, and the back-slope," says Dorsch.

Sedgwick County Public Works filmed both classroom and hands-on training segments from their Gravel Road Maintenance class that can be seen in a YouTube video here. Mark Borst, with Sedgwick County Public Works, shares that, "the course is worth every penny it costs, especially the field days. Dale Dorsch is an excellent presenter as he is an operator. This brings credence to what he presents – not just a talking head from academia."

The Kansas LTAP Gravel Road Maintenance class has proven to be an advantageous training experience for Kansas counties. "I would absolutely recommend this course to any facility that operates motor graders and maintains roads," states Daniel Smith with Greeley County Road and Bridge. The class currently costs $50 for the classroom education portion, which is a pre-requisite for the hands-on portion, and $50 for the hands-on training portion; $100 per person for the entire course training experience. If you are interested in booking this training for your employees or have any questions about the class, please email kutc_training@ku.edu.

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OSHA Requirements for Public Works Agencies in Kansas

By Connor Mountford

As managers or employees at public agencies, you deal with a litany of state and federal regulations in your day-to-day operations. With so many regulations out there, it can be difficult to know what regulation to follow, and when. Plus, you have an agency to run. This article is intended to give you the basics on some of the most common workplace regulations enforced by OSHA, whether you need to follow them, and where to go for more information.

OSHA Background

OSHA INDUSTRY SECTORS

Agriculture
Construction
Maritime
General Industry

The Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSH Act) was signed into law by Ricard Nixon in 1970, establishing the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) within the United Stated Department of Labor (Occupational Safety and Health Administration). OSHA's mission is to reduce the number of workplace injuries and deaths through the enactment of health and safety regulations. The administration uses the federal government's regulatory process to set industry standards for workplace health and safety by industry sector. Since OSHA was established, workplace safety has improved dramatically. In 1972, approximately 14,000 workers were killed on the job every year. By 2019, that number had dropped nearly 38 percent to 5,333 (Occupational Safety and Health Administration).

Who is Required to Follow OSHA Regulations?

OSHA establishes the baseline health and safety regulations in the United States and its territories. All private businesses and federal agencies are required to maintain compliance with OSHA regulations. However, state and local agencies are not required to maintain compliance with OSHA regulations (Occupational Safety and Health Administration). Instead, they can either submit a state plan to OSHA, which must be at least as strict as OSHA, or regulate health and safety through their state department of labor. Kansas has opted not to adopt a state plan and instead have workplace health and safety regulated by the Kansas Department of Labor (Cruz, 2021).

Kansas Department of Labor Requirements

Am I requried to comply with OSHA standards?

Technically, no. Public agency workplace health and safety is regulated by the Kansas department of Labor, not OSHA. However, most of the standards enforced by department of labor are part of OSHA's general industry regulations.

The Kansas Department of Labor is the main regulatory body for public sector health and safety in the State of Kansas. Public workplace inspections are handled by the Public Sector Unit within the Office of Industrial Safety and Health. This unit conducts periodic inspections of public state and local agencies including public works and road and bridge departments to ensure that safety standards are being met. Tim Cruz, Public Sector Coordinator for the Kansas Department of Labor, said that his unit enforces federal standards for public health and safety and that the standard enforced depends on the type of work being done (Cruz, 2021). When a violation has occurred, the Kansas Department of Labor gives the agency 60 days to fix the issue and regain compliance. However, extensions may be granted depending on the circumstances. In most cases, this involves the enforcement of OSHA's general industry and construction regulations contained in section 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations (Cruz, 2021). The following are a few examples of commonly cited regulations contained in these sections:

General Industry

Employers must have emergency action and fire plans that meets CFR 29 1910.38 and 1910.39 minimum requirements

Employers are required to have portable fire extinguishers and training (CFR 29 1910.157)

The operation, maintenance, and modification of machinery and machine guarding is regulated by CFR 29 1910.215

Construction Industry

Employees are required to be trained in the use of power tools and must use personal protective equipment at all

times (CFR 29 1926.300 & 1926.302)

Employers must train employees in fall protection (CFR 1926.503)

How to Learn More About OSHA

Hopefully this brief overview has given you a grasp of what is required of your agency to maintain compliance with workplace health and safety standards in Kansas. Kansas LTAP encourages you to review the general industry and construction regulations in depth using the Code of Federal Regulations and the Training Requirements in OSHA standards. This is the best way to make sure you have a firm understanding of what the Department of Labor requires from your agency. Additionally, if you have any questions about enforcement or regulatory requirements, we encourage you to contact Tim Cruz, Public Sector Coordinator for the Kansas Department of Labor. A list of resources can be found below:

- Training Requirements in OSHA Standards
- General Industry Standards
- Construction Standards
- 71st Annual Safety and Health Conference
- Contact the Public Sector Unit at the Kansas Department of Labor

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Traffic Data Collection in Cherokee County

By: Hemin Mohammed, Ph.D., P.E., RPIC.

Cherokee County submitted an online application to our Equipment Loan Program (ELP) to borrow a Law Enforcement radar traffic counter that records traffic counts, speed, direction, and more. They used it on a paved local road on SE 73rd Terrace, Riverton, KS.

Cherokee County Sheriff's Office had received complaints about speeding traffic from residents in a populated, unincorporated area of the county. The area is highly residential and includes a daycare center and several children's activities. The County wanted to get a better idea of traffic speed and how much traffic is traveling on the roadway where they are receiving complaints. A power pole on the right-of-way, about 25 feet off centerline, was used to mount the radar unit. The unit was installed on May 7th, 2021, for a week to collect traffic data. Afterward, the collected data were reviewed and analyzed by Kansas LTAP and sent to

Continued on next page

the Cherokee County Sheriff's Office for their use.

Many of our staff have direct contact with our local agencies in a variety of capacities in the field and workplaces. Hearing from our agencies about our provided services is helpful. Sheriff David Groves from Cherokee County Sheriff's Office commented about our equipment loan program: "I couldn't be happier with the program. You were very easy to work with and helpful in assisting our community. The data was provided quickly and more than what I anticipated. Thank you, again!" This type of feedback is very encouraging as we take immense pride in our capacity to develop, train, and provide services that meet our local agencies' demands.

Director's Update

By Emily Wilder

After a long year of remote work, virtual training, and zoom calls in sweatpants it's time to return to the office. The Kansas LTAP team will begin transitioning back to the office on July 1 with a full return to the office by Monday, August 23rd. We look forward to in-person training, conferences, and seeing all your smiling faces again!

Unfortunately, not all Kansas LTAP staff will be making the transition back to the field. Mike Perkins and Clark Rusco, Kansas LTAP's local field liaisons, have both decided to retire and will end their work in early July. While we are certainly sad to see them go, we thank them for all the hard work they did this year to meet the needs of agencies across the state. It's a well-earned retirement!

We are taking this opportunity to re-evaluate our local field liaison program but rest assured that you won't be without a local field liaison for long. If you have ideas on ways to improve the program, or what you'd like to see from the next local field liaisons, please contact me at ewilder@ku.edu.

SHARE!

If you know individuals who would like to receive our newsletter, please have them go to: www.kutc.ku.edu/ltap and sign up for the Kansas LTAP email list. There is a box to check to request electronic notification of each new issue of the LTAP Newsletter. Back issues are available at our website in the newsletter archives section.

Kansas
LTAP *Newsletter*

The Kansas Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) is an educational, technology transfer and service program of the University of Kansas Transportation Center (KUTC). Its purpose is to provide information to local government highway departments and their personnel and contractors by translating into understandable terms the latest technologies in the areas of roads, highways and bridges.

The *Kansas LTAP Newsletter* is published quarterly and is free to counties, cities, townships, tribal governments, road districts and others with transportation responsibilities. Editorial decisions are made by Kansas LTAP. Engineering practices and procedures set forth in this newsletter shall be implemented by or under the supervision of a licensed professional engineer in accordance with Kansas state statutes dealing with the technical professions.