

FAQ regarding Temporary Traffic Control

Why is the lane closure so long when the work zone is so short?

There are various reasons why a given length of roadway is closed, but the main reason is that work is being conducted to maximize productivity. Roadway work is dynamic with several ongoing operations scheduled during a lane closure event. In some cases, like lane striping, painting, landscaping or median improvements, crews may start on one end of the work zone and finish on the other end. For efficiency and safety purposes the entire work area is closed, but it may appear the workers are only in a small area when the driver passes.

It should be noted that the length of the closure has a minimal impact on the traffic delay. The delay typically occurs during the merging/tapering process. Whether a lane closure is a quarter mile or five miles in length, the main impact occurs during the merging transition.

Why are lanes closed when no one is working?

In some cases, it may look like no one is working and the lane closure is not necessary, however not all work is visible. There can be work such as surveying, preparation work, utility relocation or other functions that may not be observed, but still require a lane closure. In addition, crews may have poured concrete or asphalt and a specific time is needed for the product to cure/dry before the roadway is reopened to vehicular traffic.

Why are multiple lanes closed when work is only being done in one lane?

In many cases it is not feasible or safe to conduct operations within the limits of a single lane. Maintaining traffic directly adjacent to a work operation, separated only by a lane stripe is extremely hazardous for both drivers and workers. Longer term projects may use temporary concrete barrier to separate traffic from the work zone. HDOT practice is to close the minimum number of lanes possible, but not at the expense of safety for the public and workers.

Why do you start merging the lane closure so far away from the work zone?

The tapering process is a series of traffic control devices, such as cones, that merges vehicular traffic from one lane into another in a safe and efficient manner. The primary consideration is traffic speed. The higher the speed limit the longer the taper. A freeway lane closure with a 55-mph speed limit would use a 700-foot taper. A highway with a 40-mph speed limit requires a 350-foot taper, or longer than the length of a football field. It may be longer if there are curves or hills in the roadway.

Where can I find more information?

Temporary traffic control measures are designed with safety in mind. For additional information on the regulations that guide traffic control decisions please click on the following Federal Highways Administration link:

<https://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/pdfs/2009r1r2/part6.pdf>

To view the Hawaii Standard Specifications for work zone traffic control, visit the following link:

http://hidot.hawaii.gov/highways/files/2013/01/645C_Traffic_Control_Work_Zone_Print.pdf