

# Design Standards Letter

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**Section/Plan No.: None**

**Subject: Timely Construction in Work Zones**

## Body

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It is important to address timely construction in work zones. Goal C-3 contained in our business plan for FY2001 and FY2002 states:

Structure the contract and timing of award to facilitate the earliest completion and least disruption to the public.

Three strategies must be pursued to accomplish this goal. They are:

- Shorten the time allowed to complete a project
- Reduce traffic backups in work zones
- Let jobs at right time of year with appropriate contract time and contract provisions

Let me take this opportunity to stress the importance of these strategies in the development of projects for road and bridge improvements. Core teams must look for ways in the construction phasing of their projects to shorten the time in which the motorist is inconvenienced. While this is to be done on all projects, it is even more important on routes with heavy volumes of traffic in which restriction of travel lanes can result in significant traffic backup resulting in delays.

Two main contract provisions can be used to encourage the contractor to perform work as quickly as possible. They are:

- Incentive/disincentive (acceleration of work clause)
- Intermediate completion dates (construction milestones or liquidated damages specified clause)

These strategies should be used to facilitate the "get in and get out" philosophy. An interstate project, which provides resurfacing the existing pavement, together with bridge rail improvements, serves as a typical example. We can require the contractor to work on the

resurfacing at night and require the work be completed before October 1. However, significant delays to the motorist can occur during daylight hours if work on the bridges is not pursued in an efficient manner, thus causing traffic backups due to lane restrictions over an extended number of days. Traffic backups will occur and will generate frustration for the motorists. In this example, an intermediate completion date for all bridge work could be established and through the use of incentive/disincentive provisions, encourage the contractor to reduce motorist inconvenience. Quite possibly, the immediate completion time could be within thirty days, once bridge construction has been started.

It is important to note that the motorist expects and demands efficient roadway improvement activities. They become disenchanted with passing through work zones incurring time delays to see no work is taking place. Through the project development process, the team must ensure contract requirements are established to minimize this motorist inconvenience. A key element in the proper determination of "contract time" is the working day study (see Section 4.03.16 of the Project Development Manual). This is also true for bridge replacement projects. Consider closing the road, detouring the traffic, and completing the bridge construction as quickly as possible (through the use of an incentive/disincentive clause) can satisfy the motorist's demands. Restoration of traffic through the improvement is then accomplished in a timely manner. This method is many times preferred over the construction of a bridge improvement with the use of temporary bypasses or construction of the bridge one half at a time.

These methods often require longer periods of time to complete the work and the traffic is restored.

Please focus your attention in these efforts. Use these strategies to reduce motorist delay during construction of MoDOT improvement projects. Work continually to reduce motorist delays on a daily basis through our work zones.

I encourage you to contact your Project Development Liaison Engineer to help you structure your contracts to get the contractor in and out as quickly and efficiently as possible.

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