

Flagging Traffic

About 9 minutes to deliver

Standing in a live road holding a sign, with an escape route picked out before the first car arrives.

A flagger is a person standing in a live traffic lane, protected by nothing but being seen. 1926.201(a) requires flagging, and the warning garments flaggers wear, to conform to Part 6 of the MUTCD — which is why the paddle, the signs and the cone taper are not a matter of preference.

BEFORE YOU STEP OUT

- Be trained. Flagging is not a job you hand to whoever is spare.
- High-visibility garment, and at night it must be retroreflective and lit. A vest that is grey with dust reflects nothing.
- Paddle, not a flag, as the primary device — a STOP/SLOW paddle on a staff, held still and high, not waved.
- The signs and the taper go up first. Drivers need warning before they need instruction. A flagger with no advance signs is an ambush.

WHERE YOU STAND

- Alone, and only you. Nobody talks to the flagger. Two people at the station means drivers cannot tell who is signalling.
- Never in the lane you are letting move, and never with your back to traffic.
- Far enough ahead of the crew that a driver who ignores you still has room to stop before reaching them.
- Pick your escape route before the first vehicle arrives and keep it clear. A ditch, a verge, behind a barrier — somewhere to go that is not into the work zone. Know it without looking.

WHILE YOU WORK

- Watch the vehicles, not the work. Your job is entirely upstream.
- Face traffic. Stay visible. Stay still. Sudden movement reads as ambiguity.
- No phone, no headphones, no sitting, no leaning on anything.
- Have a plan for the driver who is not stopping — sound, movement, get clear, and warn the crew. Some of them will not stop.
- Never turn your back to set something down.

THE CREW'S PART

Everyone in the zone wears high-vis, stays inside the cones, and never assumes a lane is closed just because it should be. And when the flagger says move, everyone moves — that is the whole point of having one.

ASK THE CREW

- Who is flagging today, and are they trained for it?
- Where is the flagger's escape route on this setup?
- Are the advance signs and the taper in before anyone steps into the road?

29 CFR 1926.200 · 29 CFR 1926.201

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ATTENDANCE RECORD

Flagging Traffic

About 9 minutes to deliver · 29 CFR 1926.200 · 29 CFR 1926.201

Date

Job / site

Delivered by

Company

#	Print name	Signature	Date
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I delivered this talk and determined it was suitable for this crew and this work.

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