



Flagger Certification Requirement - 2020

Wisconsin Department of Transportation / Bureau of Traffic Operations

Effective January 1, 2020, all flaggers working on Wisconsin State Highways are required to be certified. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) conducts yearly field reviews on work zones and flagging has been identified as an area that needs improvement. A number of flagging operations were acceptable, but below are a few major concerns WisDOT has identified from these reviews:

- Flagger's sitting in or leaning on vehicles without an escape route
- Flagger's not holding paddles, rather using drums/cones to hold paddles
- Inattentive Flagger (cell phone use, talking, etc)
- Improper Flagger Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Flagger's back to traffic

Pictures of some of these concerns are located on page 2.

Based on the yearly field reviews and a review of other state policies, WisDOT is now requiring flaggers to be certified. The requirement is to ensure flaggers get the proper training in order to keep themselves safe as well as the traveling public while performing their duties.

Flagger requirements are identified in the recently updated Wisconsin Flagging Handbook that will be published in October. Flaggers will need to show proof of certification if asked by WisDOT or other state inspectors. Failure to show proof may result in a shutdown of the operation until a certified flagger can take over the duties. Some of the main flagger requirements are identified below:

- 4 hours in classroom training
- 8 hours in the field/on the job training
- Refresher course every 2 years

WisDOT has developed a Flagger 'Train the Trainer' Course in conjunction with the Local Transportation Assistance Program (LTAP) to teach a county/agency representative to learn flagging operations to properly train their co-workers/personnel. ~~Several courses will be offered to the counties, utilities and contractors throughout the state during the month of October.~~ These courses are already full.

Flaggers do not need to be certified through the WisDOT 'Train the Trainer' program. If any training the flagger attends meets the requirements identified in the Wisconsin Flagging Handbook, the flagger may become certified to meet the WisDOT requirements.

Any questions can be directed to DOTDTSDFlaggerCertification@dot.wi.gov.

Concerned Flagging Pictures:



Flagger leaning on car without an escape route



Flagger with back to traffic



Flagger without a paddle



Inattentive Flagger



Paddle laying down on drum

FAQ Sheet

Q. How do I get my staff certified to be flaggers?

A. Individuals will need to take a training course that meets the training requirements shown in the Wisconsin Flagging Handbook.

Q. Are there training programs that WisDOT approved?

A. No, WisDOT will not be approving training programs. It will be up to the individual county/company to determine if their training meets the requirements listed in the Wisconsin Flagging Handbook.

Q. Is WisDOT providing any flagger training?

A. WisDOT, in conjunction with LTAP, is putting on several Flagger 'Train the Trainer' courses throughout the state in October that will train a representative to allow them to properly train their staff/personnel.

Q. What if I have already developed my own flagger training for my county/company?

A. Individual counties/companies may use their own training that they have already developed if it meets the training requirements listed in the Wisconsin Flagging Handbook.

Q. What does "demonstrate" mean for training?

A. We want the training programs to have the participants use the devices prior to going on the roadway and show the instructor the proper techniques for flagging. This is to build muscle memory of the various techniques and to have the training be interactive.

Q. Where should the participants demonstrate the flagging techniques?

A. Participants should demonstrate proper flagging techniques in a controlled environment prior to flagging traffic. The demonstration could be in the classroom or a parking lot if vehicles are going to be used.

Q. What if my training exceeds the requirements in the Wisconsin Flagging Handbook?

A. The Wisconsin Flagging Handbook sets the minimum standard for training, we encourage exceeding these standards.

Q. Will the participants need to take and pass a test?

A. Yes, test the participants prior to allowing them to flag live traffic. If the participant does not understand the concepts of flagging do not allow them to direct live traffic. The WisDOT developed classroom training provides a quiz where participants must get 7 out of 10 answers correct. Participants can use their notes and the Wisconsin Flagging Handbook during the quiz. Contact WisDOT if your agency/company would like a copy of the quiz.

Q. What if I have flaggers that are already certified with a training program that meets the requirements in the Wisconsin Flagging Handbook?

A. Any flagger who was certified in 2019 will be recognized as certified. Anyone who was certified in 2018 will need to take a refresher course. Anyone who was certified prior to 2018 will need to take the training to become certified.

FAQ Sheet

Q. What do the refresher courses contain?

A. The refresher courses are 2 hours and should be a review of the basic techniques and rules. They could also include updates on new devices for flagging and how new vehicle technology will impact flaggers.

Q. Why is WisDOT requiring flaggers to be certified?

A. WisDOT is requiring flaggers to be certified based on concerns documented in work zone field reviews and for the safety of the flagger and the traveling public.

Q. How will WisDOT know if a flagger is certified?

A. WisDOT staff and inspectors will be asking flaggers to show proof of flagger certification. The flagger may show them their certification card, either issued by the course or WisDOT (a sample is included in the Wisconsin Flagging Handbook). Failure to do so may result in the operation being shut down until a certified flagger can perform the duties.

Q. Is the flagger certification in the 2020 Standard Specifications?

A. Yes, see Section 104.6.1.2.2 Flagging of the 2020 Standard Specifications for more information.

Q. How can we buy the Wisconsin Flagging Handbook?

A. Wisconsin Flagging Handbooks can be purchased for a small fee at the following link: <https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/local-gov/traffic-ops/manuals-and-standards/manuals.aspx>. (Scroll to the bottom of the page under Related Information and click 'Order manuals'.)

For additional questions regarding WisDOT Flagger Certification, contact DOTDTSDFlaggerCertification@dot.wi.gov