

MOBILE WORK ZONES

Providing protection and efficiency on the job

By Kevin Groeneweg



Above: Ken Maestas, supervisor, (on the left) and crew from the Colorado Dept of Transportation after setting up the first Mobile Barriers MBT-1 for CDOT's work zone safety event held at CDOT headquarters in Denver, Colorado, in June 2008.

No one needs to tell a night crew it's dangerous out there. Short-term work zones, especially at night, pose significant challenges and are becoming the norm rather than the exception. Incentives and disincentives to improve traffic flows, reduce the number and duration of lane closures, and reopen roads before morning traffic are increasingly being incorporated into contracts. A new tool called Mobile Barriers MBT-1 is helping, and is proving to be beneficial for users and passing traffic alike.

ALL IN ONE

Designed for safety, the Mobile Barriers MBT-1 is providing impressive returns for savvy users. Instead of deploying multiple pieces of equipment, such as generator/light carts, flatbeds with supplies, utility trucks with power, air and tools, multiple TMA, and other trucks, which constitutes significant capital equipment and drivers; everything is carried on the barrier and simply pulled into place.

Lights, power, and air tools run right off the barrier. Materials and supplies are carried on the decks. As a practical matter, it provides mobility and protection not otherwise possible—front, back, and sideways—with the functionality of a utility truck, flatbed semi, light/gen cart, and multiple blocker/TMA trucks all in one.

Short-term jobs, such as road, bridge, and guardrail/median barrier repair, become as simple as pulling forward. One doesn't have multiple vehicles to relocate.

TIME IS ON THE LINE

In some cases, crews have done a week's worth of work in one night (e.g., replacing 42 sticks of guardrail in the time it normally takes to do 6 to 8). Typically, it takes longer to position and reposition everything than to do the work. For many functions, temporary concrete barrier is impractical to truck in and deploy and allows too much deflection unless pinned. With the mobile barrier, an operator simply pulls in and stops, allows virtually no deflection into the work zone, and again quickly pulls away when finished.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kevin Groeneweg is CEO of Mobile Barriers LLC. For additional information, visit www.mobilebarriers.com.

BARRIER BENEFITS

For passing traffic affected by the work, a mobile barrier helps reduce distraction, reduce glare, keep more lanes open, and maintain higher, more uniform speeds through the work zone. Mobile Barrier's MBT-1's 5-foot-high walls prevent cars, and even pickups and SUVs, from seeing into the work zone, while at the same time help prevent work debris from inadvertently scattering into passing lanes. 90-degree lighting avoids issues of upstream and downstream glare, allowing traffic to pass with less sudden change (particularly important for many aging drivers). Lanes otherwise used for buffer can remain open. These factors help reduce complaints, problems, and accidents that can

otherwise cripple work zones and traffic grids. In this case, it's particularly nice when what's good for the crew is also good for the public.



For passing traffic, there's no better day than if they don't even realize there was a disruption. Minimizing the duration of the work zone (whether getting in and out quickly, or coming in and doing what otherwise would have taken all week in one night), directly helps reduce exposure, incidents, and public complaints.

Bottom line: Bundle applicable work to leverage the inherent efficiencies. Make work quicker, easier, and more efficient. Save on capital equipment and time, and pocket the change. ■

Mobile Barriers MBT-1

Improving safety, efficiency and traffic flows in and around work zones. Available with rear steer, onboard air, 120/240 power, lighting and other options.

The MBT-1 was recently hit by two semi trucks, visit www.mobilebarriers.com to see the photos!



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