INDOT ROAD CONSTRUCTION GUIDE

INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
INDOT

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This Road Construction Guide includes techniques and tips that have been successfully used in communities throughout Indiana to help maintain customer and employee access during road construction. The Indiana Department of Transportation offers this guide as an idea source as you prepare for construction in your area.

SUSTAINING OPERATIONS DURING ROAD CONSTRUCTION

The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) recognizes that your business is profitable because you chose to locate along a road that provides convenient access for a large number of customers.

However, roads, bridges and sidewalks do not last forever, and construction is necessary to maintain, repair, and rebuild these vital transportation facilities.

The long-term results of road construction are increased safety, smoother traffic flow, enhanced access and improved image for your customers.

In the short term, however, road construction can disrupt traffic flow, increase congestion, and temporarily alter customer access to businesses. Construction may make it more difficult for customers to visit your business. Road construction is often preceded by separate projects to install new utility lines, which may briefly interrupt electric, water, sewer or telecommunications services.

Road closures and restrictions are specially designed to ensure the safety of road users and construction workers, while enabling construction to be completed as quickly as possible. It's also important that your customers have access to your business.

Through communication and cooperation, your business will not only succeed during road construction, but emerge better equipped to capitalize on opportunities the improved road provides. The keys to success are planning, cooperation, communication and engagement.

PLANNING

Large road construction projects typically require several months or years of planning prior to the actual start of construction. During this time, INDOT will start the process of reaching out to businesses and homeowners within the impacted project corridor.

This communication will likely include mailings to business owners inviting them to planning and informational meetings for the project. Your concerns, questions and suggestions are very important at this stage of the planning process. The greatest opportunity to suggest changes to a project is early in the planning process.

Once a contractor has been hired to complete the work, additional meetings will be held between planners, engineers, project managers, the contractor, and affected businesses and residents. The goal of these meetings is to ensure that everyone is aware of the upcoming construction schedule and pertinent construction contracts.

Disruption from construction can be lessened if there is proper coordination between property owners, construction officials, contractors, and businesses.

Planning for Construction

Businesses should begin planning early to mitigate the short-term impact and inconvenience of road construction. The following tips can help businesses better plan for construction:

- ✓ Attend public information meetings to learn about the project and to ask questions or raise concerns.
- ✓ Meet with project managers and contractors to establish lines of communication, learn about specific project details, schedules, and any expected traffic impact.
- ✓ Pay close attention to planned changes to driveways or on-street parking and understand how these changes may affect your business.
- ✓ Begin planning for road construction and traffic disruptions. Consider the impact construction will have on customers, employees and suppliers.
- ✓ Examine your overhead and employee staffing levels to make sure they are appropriate for the construction period.
- ✓ Consider remodeling or redecorating during construction.
- ✓ Begin planning to keep customers informed during construction. Gather customer contact information so you can keep them informed once construction begins.
- ✓ Begin to work on marketing efforts to implement once construction has begun.

COOPERATION

Businesses and other affected parties should work together to prepare for the impact of road construction. Businesses that work cooperatively to address their concerns have great advantages. They can share resources and ideas for maximum benefit, saving time and money, and more effectively prepare for the impact caused by road construction.

A local chamber of commerce or downtown business or retail group is commonly the organization that brings affected businesses together.

Improving Cooperation

The following tips can help businesses cooperatively prepare for and deal with road construction:

- ✓ Meet with other nearby businesses to discuss collaborative solutions to concerns and issues raised by construction.
- ✓ Meet with local business organizations, such as a chamber of commerce, to identify and plan for construction.
- ✓ Share construction coping strategies with other nearby businesses.
- ✓ Brainstorm ideas to promote affected businesses and creatively communicate with customers via printed materials, e-mail, advertising and social media.
- ✓ Cooperatively plan special events or promotions prior to construction to raise customer awareness.
- ✓ Collectively pool marketing, advertising or website resources.
- ✓ Install signage directing customers to alternative entrances or places to park for affected businesses.
- ✓ Encourage affected employees to carpool, telecommute, and work from home to reduce employee vehicular traffic and parking requirements.
- ✓ Coordinate supplier deliveries for non-construction or off-peak hours to reduce vehicle traffic and congestion.

COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Customers who are well informed about road construction are generally tolerant of traffic disruption. They know about the construction before leaving home, so they are better prepared for delays, construction equipment, or Road Closed signs.

Informed customers also may have allotted extra time for navigating construction zones or have given thought to alternative routes and additional parking restrictions.

Keeping Customers Informed

- ✓ Communicate with customers via your business website, e-mail, brochures, flyers, advertising and social media channels.
- ✓ Emphasize “Open for Business” in advertisements and customer communications.
- ✓ Design a special logo to use during construction and incorporate it in your business website, e-mail and advertising.
- ✓ Incorporate maps in your business website, e-mail and advertising to show customers how to reach your business during construction.
- ✓ Install signs directing customers to alternative entrances and parking.
- ✓ Add directions to your outgoing voicemail or keep a script with directions to your business next to the phone. Make sure all employees know what to say.

Loyal customers who patronize your business during nearby construction deserve to be recognized and rewarded. There are many ways to make it easier for them to access your business and to reward and encourage their continued patronage.

Keeping Customers Engaged

- ✓ Hold special promotions to raise customer awareness.
- ✓ Adjust or extend business hours to avoid the most disruptive construction activities.
- ✓ Take your product to your customers by starting a delivery service during construction.
- ✓ Plan special promotional events around construction milestones, such as groundbreaking, mid-point and ribbon cuttings.
- ✓ Once construction is complete, celebrate the new image and convenience of the finished project through advertising and promotions.
- ✓ Stay positive! Customers do notice.

Ultimately, only you can decide which ideas are best for your business. The key to success is to focus your efforts on long-term planning and short-term strategies to maintain your core customer base, attract new customers through unique and rewarding promotions, and minimize the impact of construction.

Through planning, cooperation, communication and engagement, your business will not only succeed during construction, but emerge prepared to capitalize on economic opportunities the new road provides.

The material contained in this booklet, entitled "INDOT Road Construction Guide" is published by the Indiana Department of Transportation, 100 North Senate Avenue, Room N755, Indianapolis, Indiana 46204 — www.in.gov/indot. The information and opinions expressed herein are provided for general guidance purposes only and are not intended, and should not be construed, as furnishing legal advice to any individual or group as the ideas in this guide are typically not reimbursable.

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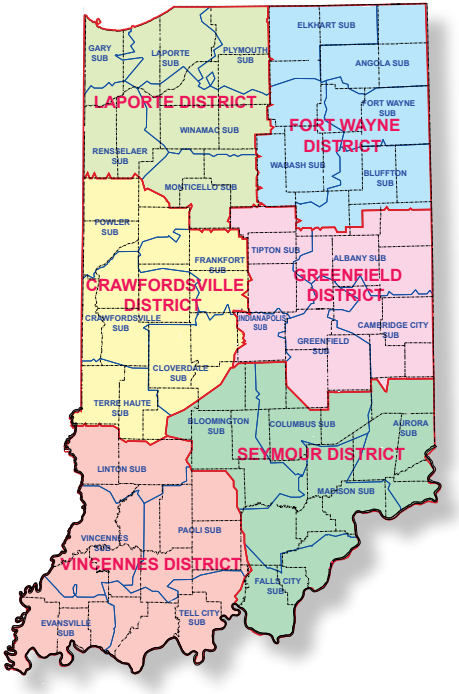

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