

ARE THE STANDARD TRAFFIC CONTROL METHODS SAFE ENOUGH IN 2019?

How can we improve safety for Traffic Controllers?

With the current transport and infrastructure development levels around Australia, demand for Traffic Management services is high. That means, every day (and night) countless Traffic Controllers are working on our local, state and national roads providing traffic management services to support these worksites. But, in 2019, are the standard stop/slow methods of traffic control safe enough to protect Traffic Controllers or do they pose unacceptable risks? And if so, how can safety be improved?

Up until 2016, the only traffic control option was to use the standard stop/slow method. This method involves a traffic controller who is tasked with the job of stopping traffic when required at the work zone by holding a stop/slow bat and standing on the road at the stopping point to halt traffic. Under the standard stop/slow method, the traffic controllers themselves are the only obstacle stopping traffic. That is, there's no barrier to protect the traffic controller nor the worksite, there is also no ability for the traffic controller to move about and stay active to avoid fatigue and to be more useful on a worksite. They are restricted to standing at the stopping point, simply hoping that cars will stop in front of them.

This standard procedure poses potentially severe risks for several reasons, many of which centre around the fact that motorists behaviour cannot be controlled, predicted or trusted.



The standard stop/slow method creates adverse circumstances across a range of issues:

- It puts Traffic Controllers in a vulnerable position of standing in the direct line of traffic without any protection between them and the oncoming traffic.
- It relies on motorists to obey the work zone warning signs to slow down in the lead up to the work zone and provides no protection against motorists who are distracted, impatient, aggressive or in a hurry. Motorists colliding with Traffic Controllers is a constant threat.
- Motorists who run the stop points not only put the Traffic Controller at risk. They also put all contractors, site workers, plant and equipment at risk as the workzone is breached. There is simply no protection barrier with this method.
- When Traffic Controllers stand at the stopping point post for long periods of time, fatigue sets in which affects alertness and concentration of the Traffic Controller. Fatigue leaves Traffic Controllers susceptible to making errors of judgement putting their safety and the safety of those around them at risk.
- Traffic Controllers are also exposed to weather elements. The dangers of heat exhaustion pose a real threat in the Summer months. Traffic Controllers endure standing on the hot bitumen, more often than not, in direct scorching sunlight.
- From a financial standpoint, Traffic Control is an undervalued service on a worksite. It's viewed as necessary service, but an expense none-the-less. There is pressure from clients to keep Traffic Control costs to a minimum which may result in understaff sites as Traffic Controller numbers are stripped back to bare minimum. These practices present hazards and limits entitled breaks for Traffic Controllers.

The practice of standard stop/slow methods of traffic control, and the inherent risks associated with this method, is an unsatisfactory and out-dated work practice.



How does using the PORTABOOM® system of work overcome the critical risks of standard stop/slow Traffic Control?

PORTABOOM® is designed to move traffic controllers from the direct line of traffic into a safe zone. There are two inherent differences between the two methods, they are;

1 . PORTABOOM® provides a physical barrier, protecting the worksite. This provides;

- A deterrent for errant and distracted drivers that are unaware they have run a stop point, however know immediately when they have hit PORTABOOM® and stop immediately potentially saving collision with personnel and plant;
- enhanced safety for Traffic Controllers and all workers within the workzone;
- the ability for Traffic Controllers to secure the worksite and complete other tasks knowing that the site is secured;
- and the added benefit of being able to rapidly secure a site.



2. PORTABOOM® allows Traffic Controllers to be mobile rather than remain stationary at the traffic stopping point. This allows Traffic Controllers to:

- Stand in a safer more comfortable position such as the grass verge or in a shaded area and experience less fatigue and heat stroke issues;
- Operate up to four PORTABOOM® units, thereby reducing the number of Traffic Controllers required;
- Provide greater value onsite as they are able to regularly review the site set-up, attend to knocked over cones, check signage, assist pedestrians and local residents and spotting trucks.

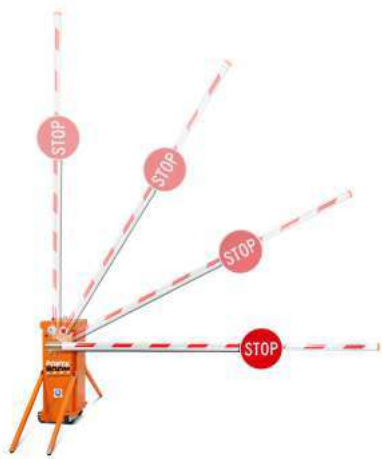
In 2016, PORTABOOM® was Tipes certified by the Australian Roads Research Board (ARRB). Since then, progressive Traffic Control companies who seek out new work methods to improve traffic controller, and general safety are turning to the PORTABOOM® system of work to replace the standard stop/slow method and are experiencing the benefits.



Why it makes good financial sense for Traffic Control Companies to upgrade to the PORTABOOM® system of work.

The reduction in incidences on worksites, due to the enhanced safety that PORTABOOM® provides, results in a reduction of injuries and the costs associated with lost work time, expensive insurance claims and unavoidable administration time.

Upgrading to the PORTABOOM® system of work doesn't mean downgrading profit margins. In fact, using PORTABOOM® can result in greater financial efficiencies than the standard stop/slow method as labour costs are optimised more efficiently. Some traffic control companies who have upgraded to the PORTABOOM® system of work have enjoyed up to 30% cost savings per crew to clients.



In 2019, a safer more cost-effective traffic control method is available. Tenders regularly specify the mandatory use of the PORTABOOM® system of work as client's value improved safety and the financials efficiencies that using PORTABOOM® provides. There is no better time for Traffic Control companies to choose to upgrade to the PORTABOOM® system of work and experience the same benefits other progressive traffic management companies have enjoyed since PORTABOOM's introduction in 2016.

Want to trial PORTABOOM®?

Hire it now from Coates Hire or Kennards Hire

Want to purchase PORTABOOM®?

- In NSW, VIC, ACT and NT contact Jaybro
- In QLD, WA, SA and TAS contact Artcraft

What's involved in upgrading to the PORTABOOM® system of work?

Upgrading to the new PORTABOOM® system of work requires three fundamental changes on the part of the Traffic Control Company. With the support provide by Traffic & Access Solutions and it's hire and distributor partners the following changes are easy to adopt and implement:

1. Certified Traffic Controllers operate the PORTABOOM® units, therefore existing Traffic Controllers will need training on how to assemble, operate and disassemble the PORTABOOM® units, as well as the best practice use of PORTABOOM®. Comprehensive training videos and materials are available complimentary, to assist.
2. Traffic Plans are slightly different in that it needs to show the PORTABOOM® units in place of a person and the advance warning PORTABOOM® approved sign.
3. PORTABOOM units will usually be set up daily with company specific transport solutions providing transport to and from the worksite. Transport solutions include the JIB Pod, Tailgate loaders, Jib Cranes, Tow Bar Solutions and company specific custom solutions.

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