

Kathleen C. Sims
Traffic Control Inspector

Federal Highway Administration
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave S.E.
Washington, DC 20590

Subject: MUTCD Proposed Figures - ID FHWA-2020-0001-0005

I reviewed the Chapter 6 Figures for Temporary Traffic Control, in most of the figures the Buffer Spaces states “*(optional)*”. A good example of this is Figure 6B-2. Types of Tapers and Buffer Spaces.

Each buffer space that is called out has the word “*(Optional)*” after it. This can miss lead the public and industry that uses the MUTCD to not have buffer spaces. With no buffer spaces the people and equipment that is within the work zone are put into danger. The buffer space, as you well know, is to give time for people to get out of the way of an errant vehicle that has entered the work zone.

Being an inspector working on the highway systems, I have witnessed errant vehicles entering the work zone with no buffer space due to the word “*(Optional)*”. Luckily no one was killed in these instances. It has made me realize that a written document that involves safety needs to be concise and to the point. If the word “*(Optional)*” is used in conjunction with buffer spaces, then personal that setup the temporary traffic control devices for the work zone will look at it as a pass to not have the buffer spaces.

I’ve asked Traffic Control Supervisors why they would not setup a buffer space (other than it being “*(Optional)*” *as stated in the MUTCD*) when creating the work zone. A majority of the TCS’s did not want to set out the extra traffic control devices to reduce the setup time for the work zone. On behalf of all the people that work on the highway system and with safety in mind, please remove the word “*(Optional)*” from the figures for Chapter 6.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter,

Kathleen C. Sims

Traffic Control Inspector