



Virginia Department
of Transportation

Motorcycle Safety Action Team

Dateline: Early Spring, 2003

VDOT – at the urging of several motorcycle advocate groups – recognized a need and called together a motorcycle safety action group.



That group focused on two missions:

- 1) Improving the conditions for motorcyclists using Virginia's streets and highways, and**
- 2) Improving the motorcyclist's understanding of VDOT and the local governments as operators of streets and highways.**

The action team included people representing varying interests in the objective at hand.

VDOT	Local, National and other State Agencies	Motorcyclist
Utility coordinators	Public Works Director, City of Richmond	Virginia Coalition of Motorcyclist
Traffic Engineers		
Maintenance Managers	Virginia Association Of Counties Representative	Motorcycle Safety League of Virginia
Work Zone Safety Engineer	Virginia Municipal League Representative	American Motorcyclist Association
Public Relations Manager	FHWA Region 3 Highway Safety Engineer	
	Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles	



“Accomplishments – Motorcycle Safety Action Team”

- Met with various utility providers regarding hazards for motorcyclists. (October 2003)
- Resident Engineers advised regarding heightened awareness of motorcyclists (December 2003)
- Instructional memorandum issued - signs for longitudinal joints (December 2003)
- Instructional memorandum issued - signs for certain transverse (expansion) joints (January 2004)
- Developed a informational flyer for distribution (May 2004)
- Language added to Va. Work Zone Protection Manual & classroom training (May 2005)

VDOT Resident Engineers (each responsible for handling one to three counties) statewide have been advised regarding heightened awareness of the needs of motorcyclists (including signing for conditions *awaiting* repair AND for conditions *during* repair of riding surfaces).

Motorcycle advocates were invited to a Resident Engineers meeting to address these subjects further. A sub-activity of this is the evaluation of current practice regarding pavement crack repair.



Freeze-Thaw: Hard on pavement...



**... Motorcyclists DESERVE help
when large cracks appear...**



... A temporary sign advising all motorists would be wise!



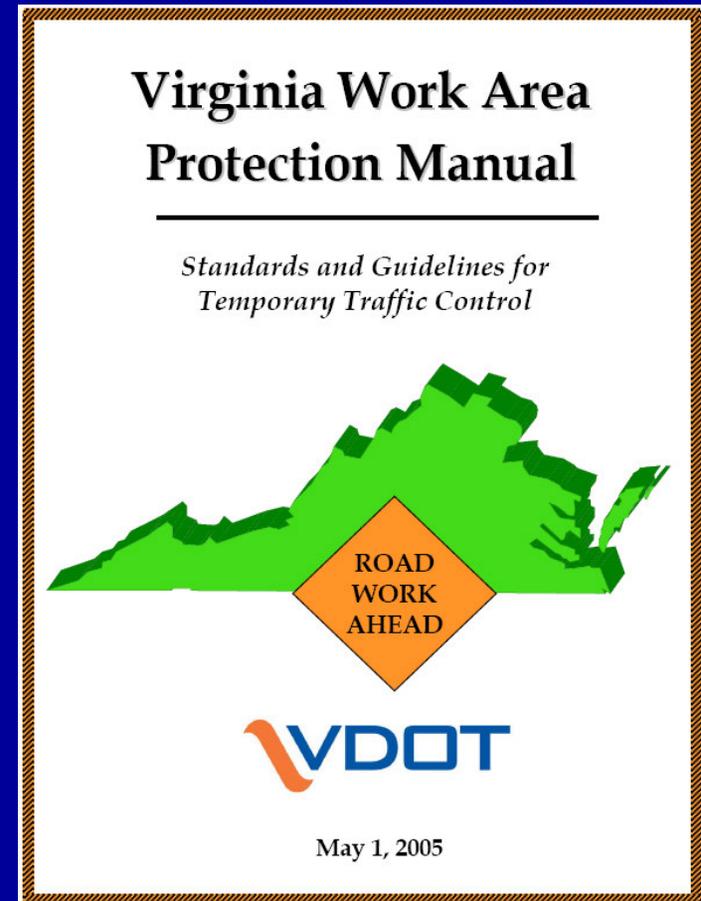
“Review the work zone through the motorists’ eyes – ALL motorists.”



Language Added to Work Area Protection Manual

Additional advisory language was added to the Virginia Work Area Protection Manual and to the classroom training materials to address the needs of motorcyclists regarding:

- Signing for undesirable/unexpected conditions;
- Providing riding surfaces appropriate for two wheeled vehicles.



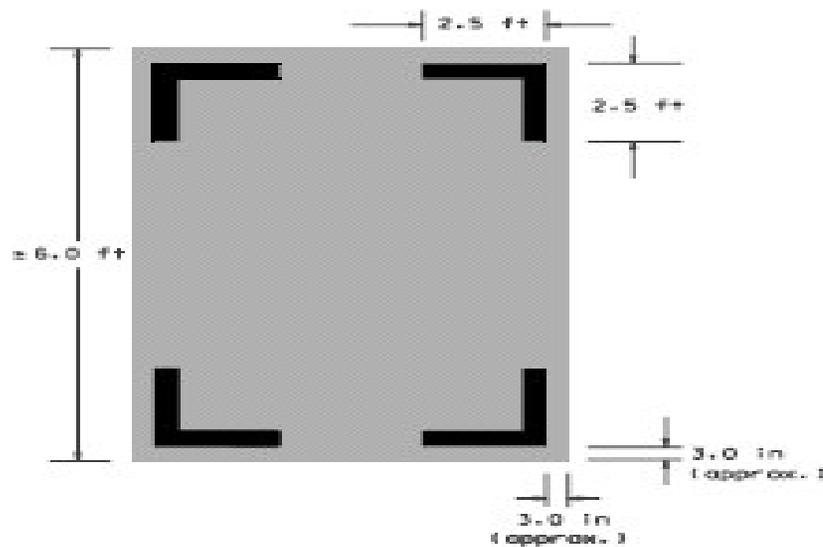
Instructional Memos

VDOT launched instructional memoranda regarding:

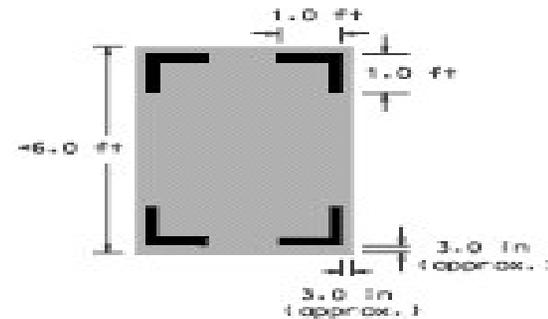
- Warning motorists of **open joints** in the travel lanes on bridges regardless of the roadway type, class, or posted speed
- Posting signs for **longitudinal joints on bridges** to assure that it is understood that these are posted for both construction and permanent joints, even where joint filler is used.
- Posting signs for certain **transverse (expansion) joints** on bridges.
- Posting signs warning motorists of **steel plates** and adding visibility treatment to be applied to steel plates.



Signs & Markings for Steel Plates



The standard set by VDOT requires highly reflective pavement marking tape in the corners of each steel plate



Left: Steel plates with any side greater than or equal to 6 feet in length

Right: Steel plates with all sides less than 6 feet in length

Based on the findings of the **Virginia Transportation Research Council**, VDOT developed a Specification for marking **steel plates** and a sign to be posted where ever steel plates are used in the travel way and included the requirement for these in its **Virginia Work Area Protection Manual**.

Signs In Action



VDOT met with various utility providers and distributed the Motorcycle Coalition's information regarding hazards for motorcyclists.

Verizon (telephone provider throughout the state) indicated that they would provide additional training directed to both foreman and field employees regarding this issue.

Utility providers are being encouraged to use less open trench excavation, which will eliminate many hazards.

The utility providers have indicated that they will use VDOT as a conduit to pass ideas to the Motorcycle Coalition.



Task Group for Developing a Brochure/Pamphlet

The Action Group established a task group to develop a flyer.

This flyer was delivered by VDOT to all new holders of Virginia motorcycle class operator's licenses.

This flyer has been made available to motorcyclists by the Virginia Coalition of Motorcyclists (Motorcycle Coalition) through informational trailers at events and through motorcycle shops. Its language has also been used by the Motorcycle Coalition in their newsletters, web site pages, motorcycle magazines, and training courses.

DMV plans to use this language in their future motorcycle operator training manual.



Get Your Motor Running Motorcycle Safety



Even the best motorcyclist can have problems traveling across certain bridge joints, milled pavement, loose gravel or open trenches. Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and utility provider employees are trained to recognize that these conditions can cause hazardous situations for motorcyclists.

As a result, VDOT and utility employees are working hard to provide riding surfaces that are appropriate for two-wheeled vehicles in work zones and under normal conditions. Also, motorcyclists will see more signs alerting them to potentially difficult conditions so they can adjust the way they operate their motorcycle to cross those areas safely. In general, motorcyclists should slow down, be alert and adjust their positions when approaching these signs:



OPEN JOINTS ON BRIDGE

Used in advance of open longitudinal joints large enough that a motorcyclist could lose control, typically when the joint is parallel or no more than 30 degrees from parallel to the traffic lane and the joint is at least 1 1/2 inches wide.



EXPANSION JOINTS

Used when a joint across lanes creates a significant bump or is wide enough to cause a traction loss in wet weather so that a motorcyclist could lose control.



ROUGH ROAD, BUMP, or UNEVEN LANES

Used when certain road conditions, such as gravel or milled pavement, affect the roadway surface and create potentially difficult conditions for motorists, especially motorcyclists.

OTHER HELPFUL INFORMATION:

Traffic lights that sometimes do not detect smaller vehicles can present another challenge for motorcyclists.

If a traffic light does not turn green within a reasonable time period, and there is no approaching traffic coming from behind, the motorcyclist should roll the throttle on and off a few times, revving the engine. The added power may be sufficient to disrupt the electrical field. If not, turn the motorcycle off and restart it. The electrical field created by the starter should disrupt the sensor field and trigger the sensor.

If there seems to be a frequent problem at a specific light, the motorcyclist may ask that a detector be examined.

To report a traffic light problem or a road hazard, call the Highway Helpline at 1-800-367-ROAD (7623) (TTY users, call 1-800-432-1843), or complete a Highway Helpline request at www.virginiadot.org/comtravel/eoc/citizen.asp.

This information is provided in a cooperative effort of the Virginia Coalition of Motorcyclists, Motorcycle Safety League of Virginia, American Motorcyclist Association, Virginia Department of Transportation, Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles, Virginia local governments and others that support motorcyclists' safety.

For more information, go to these web sites or call these organizations (TTY users, call 711):

Virginia Coalition of Motorcyclists
www.vcomonline.org 1-800-437-9434

Virginia Rider Training Program
www.dmvnow.com/webdoc/citizen/drivers/m_course.asp
For information about a course near you, contact the Motorcycle Safety Foundation at 1-800-446-9227 or the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles at 1-866-DMV-LINE, 1-800-435-5173, or online at www.dmvNOW.com.

Motorcycle Safety League of Virginia, Inc.
www.learn2ride.com 1-888-826-7584

The Observe and Reverse sides of a single sheet flyer

Click [HERE](#) for a printable copy

Current Status

To continue its efforts, VDOT is represented by an active member on the **Governor's Motorcycle Advisory Council**, initially established by Governor Warner in January of 2006 and continued under the Kaine Administration. That Council's mission includes tourism, economic development, and safety as its chief objectives



In Conclusion

- Virginians saw a need for enhanced motorcycle safety and VDOT responded by forming an action team
- The action team worked with localities, VDOT field staff, and utility providers to increase awareness of motorcyclist needs
- VDOT launched several memoranda implementing signs to warn motorists of joints and steel plates in the roadway
- VDOT and DMV included language in training documents and manuals regarding motorcycle safety
- The action team released a flyer informing motorcyclists of recent safety-improving measures

VDOT Welcomes Your Thoughts!

If you have an idea that you feel would enhance motorcycle safety on the streets and highways of Virginia, we welcome you to submit it to us!

Use this link to submit an idea now!

**E-mail
VDOT**

Use this link for more info on the Virginia Department of Transportation!



Use this link to Order a VDOT State Highway and/or Scenic Roads Map!

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Maps**





Virginia Department
of Transportation

***Wishing You:
Happy Motoring...
Safe Motoring.***

