

Professionalism 101

By Sheldon Morgan
Public Works Director, Town of Gilford

"I can't believe it! I was pulling the ditch on Madbury Road. I was backing up for another pass when this lady cut me off," said Tom.

Bob, Tom's supervisor, had heard this before. With Tom, it was always someone else's fault. "Did you have your signs out warning her you were in the road?" Bob sighed.

"Well no, I got there late. And anyway, I forgot to bring the signs," Tom replied defensively.

"So, you were working in the road with no warning signs, and because they didn't know what you were doing, you got mad! Is that it? I don't suppose you happened to have your warning lights on, Tom?"

"I thought you knew the mechanic hasn't gotten around to fixing them yet. Besides, why are you picking on me? It was the lady's fault, not mine. I'm big enough she should have seen me and stopped," he snapped.

"Yeah, guess you're right Tom. From now on I'll telephone everyone in town before I send you out on a job and let them know where you'll be and to use a different road. Then you won't have to remember to run your lights or put out signs. That'll solve the problem," Bob responded sarcastically.

Does this sound familiar? We've all been guilty at one time or another of not following the rules. Unfortunately, it has led to a general disrespect by the traveling public. By doing this we have unknowingly created an atmosphere of public confusion and indifference. How many times have we left signs up over the weekend or after a job has been completed? How often have we used the wrong signs for the job? How many times have we not used warning lights while working within the limits of the roadway? How many times have we directed traffic from behind a truck, or worse, from the seat of a truck. All the while we are griping about the *idiots* on the road? You can bet those *idiots* are calling you an idiot as they are trying to get around you (an unpredictable obstacle in their way).

If we are to improve the public's perception of us and improve the relationship we have with them, we must first learn and follow some basic rules. While some road managers properly manage the work zones many of us need to rethink how we work with the public. We should all follow the MUTCD for work zone safety and use our safety lights. This way the traveling public will know what to expect of us. We are professionals and we must look and act accordingly. Remember, professionalism is that by which the public judges us against what they expect. We must keep the public informed, and then, only then, will they give us the respect that we expect and deserve.

Editor's note: For information on how to properly set up a work zone or any other questions, contact the UNH T² Center.

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Until January 1, 1998

ROADNET

Correction: In the last Road Business, the address to subscribe to ROADNET was incorrectly published. To subscribe to ROADNET send a message to:

request@lists.unh.edu In the body of message type: add T2.NHROADS Your name. For instance:

add T2.NHROADS John Doe.

Sorry for an inconvenience this may have caused.

Milestones:

Master Road Scholar *John Starkey*, formerly in Merrimack, is the new the Public Works Director in Amherst

Thomas Woodley has left Plourde Sand & Gravel and is the Highways and Utilities Superintendent in Concord