

Telephone Etiquette

by Beth Terney, Project Assistant

Many residents contact their highway department only by telephone. The first contact for many others is by phone. Their opinion, therefore, will depend on how department employees answer the phone and talk on it.

Answering the Phone

Although difficult, one should stay calm and respectful when dealing with irritated callers. The best course is to acknowledge the caller's frustration, and try to solve the problem. The employee should never attack in return.

Taking and Leaving Messages

Employees should answer phones promptly and politely. They should slowly and clearly identify themselves and the office. They should be positive, helpful, and give the caller their full attention. If background noise cannot be stopped, they should take the call in a quiet location.

Inaccurate messages, or calls not returned, reflect badly on a department. A pad of paper and pencil should be near the phone. Employees should know where to leave messages. Messages should contain the caller's name, company, phone number, and other important information. Reading back the information ensures accuracy. Initialing the message tells the recipient who took it.

continued from page 4

Invest the Time

In the end, the municipality and the engineer must commit to each other. For long term arrangements, it can take a year to establish a good relationship, and to define mutual expectations. If these do not occur after a year, the city/town should seek a new firm. Ideally, a long-term relationship leads to better communication, increased trust, and a better knowledge of what each party needs.

When leaving messages, one should speak clearly, slowly, and leave a brief but complete message. It is best to decide what to say before calling, including one's name, company, phone number, and the date, time, and purpose of the call. Leaving the best time to call back makes returning calls less inconvenient. Slowly repeating one's name and number at the end ensures accuracy.

Answering Machines

Recorded answering machine messages should be brief and clear beginning with the name of the person or organization who owns the machine. Instructions for leaving messages should be clear. If applicable, the message should tell where to call in case of an emergency.

Conclusions

People can be challenging. Common courtesy can give them a positive impression of a highway department.

Sources:

"The Ps and Qs of Etiquette." *Saskatoon*, 16 July 2001.

<http://www.mysask.com/community/saskatoon/lifestyle/selfimprovement/etiquette.shtml>, July 2001.

Levy, Karen. "Telephone Manners." *Proper Business Telephone Etiquette*. http://schs.esu7.org/pages/HOME/PAGE/Telephone_Manners.html, July 2001.

A municipality must define its needs clearly, pick the firm that best meets them, and invest time. A well managed partnership results in better roads and bridges, and lower costs, for residents.

Source

Minster, James J. "Engineers and Municipalities." *Public Works Magazine*, July 2001

Master Road Scholars



Master Road Scholar Frank Hoye

Frank Hoye is the Highway Foreman in Keene. Before joining Keene he was a foreman for a concrete business and owned his own construction company. In 1989 he started working as a Sidewalk Construction Foreman in Keene, a position that quickly expanded into Highway Foreman.

Frank says that workshops have helped him gain a diverse number of skills that he can apply to his work. He uses them to keep up-to-date with new developments in transportation. Frank has found many of the skills to be extremely useful when applied to his town.

Selectmen in Keene are proud of Frank's Master Road Scholar status. They illustrated their appreciation by publicly thanking him and offering him a round of applause.

Frank and Cindy have been happily married for 25 years. They have three daughters and a son. Their eldest daughter is graduating from Duke this December. Another attends college in Ohio. They also have a 10 year old son and a 5 year old daughter. Frank once enjoyed a number of hobbies, including flying RC Aircraft and spending time outdoors. He now prefers to spend his free time with his family. Their quality time together keeps Frank very happy and optimistic.

Congratulations to Master Road Scholar Frank Hoye!



Master Road Scholar Ron Lavoie

Ron Lavoie is the Supervisor of Athletic Facilities at UNH. He has been at this position for two years, after being the Manager of Grounds and Roads at UNH for 17 years. Before working at UNH, Ron was in the air force at Pease Air Force Base for 11 years as the pavement maintenance specialist. He continued to work at Pease for two years after leaving the service.

Ron takes classes for the unique experiences and opportunities they offer. He feels that, of everything offered at the University, these classes pertain best to his job and department. He likes how much takes away from just one day in a course, and finds that he benefits most from talking and sharing ideas with his peers. He found the snow removal courses especially helpful because he presented the information to his supervisors to help improve and benefit the University.

Ron's supervisors are thrilled that he has achieved Master Road Scholar status. He is the first to do so at the University and is very proud of how hard he has worked to get to the top level. He has enjoyed taking classes that have kept him current in a field that is constantly changing.

Ron has been married to Terri for 22 years. They live in Dover and have two sons. In his free time, Ron likes to do work around his house and attend sporting events and concerts. He also loves to go camping frequently with his family.



**Master Road Scholar
Dennis McCarthy**

Dennis McCarthy is the Public Works Director in Raymond. He has worked for twenty years as the head of Construction Services at Dufrenne-Henry and with other engineering companies, including CLD and CDM. He has been the Public Works Director in Raymond for ten years.

Dennis enjoys taking classes because they allow him to stay current with new advances. He's found the courses to be very helpful by allowing him to network and share ideas with his peers. Dennis "previews" classes to see if he should send his employees to them. He has learned a lot from the courses and has found the RSMS program to be particularly useful.

The selectman in Raymond have been very supportive of Dennis's work in the Road Scholar program. The Town of Raymond also two other Master Road Scholars and two employees on their way to becoming Master Road Scholars. The selectmen like the level of involvement of the department in this program and how much they've been able to learn from the classes.

Dennis and Calista have been married for 27 years. They live in Auburn, where he is the deputy fire chief. They have two children. Erin is an English teacher and John is a graphic artist. Dennis and Calista enjoy traveling, particularly out west, to the Caribbean, and soon to Europe.

Congratulations to Master Road Scholar Dennis McCarthy



Master Road Scholar Glen Tuttle

Glen Tuttle is the Supervisor of the Public Works Department at the University of New Hampshire. Glen has been at UNH for 28 years. Before working at UNH he worked for a paving company.

Glen takes classes to stay abreast of all of the new information and technology that is continuously being generated. He likes to learn different approaches to doing things. He has found that all of the workshops have offered him new and helpful approaches to his work. He also likes to take the opportunity to say 'hi' to his colleagues.

His supervisors think that it's a good thing that Glen has worked so hard to achieve Master Road Scholar status. His continuously expanding knowledge allows him to do his job better.

Glen has been married to Dawn for 28 years. They have two sons, John and Adam. Glen enjoys spending time outdoors and especially enjoys the summer. He uses his free time to ride his motorcycle, and to go camping, canoeing, and hunting.

Congratulations to Master Road Scholar Glen Tuttle!



Where to Place Marked Crosswalks? It Depends!

Crossing roads is dangerous. Motorists must slow or stop to enable safe pedestrian traffic. Marked crosswalks are one way to provide pedestrians the right of way. Improperly placed, however, they can put pedestrians at great risk.

MUTCD Section 3B.17 has specific standards and recommendations for marking crosswalks. (See page 11 to obtain a copy of the MUTCD.) Less clear is where to place them. This article will discuss the factors to consider in these decisions. It draws from a recent FHWA report of pedestrian injuries at intersection and midblock locations.

What is a Marked Crosswalk?

A "marked" crosswalk has lines of paint, thermoplastic, tape, or other material. The lines themselves legally define a crosswalk. At intersections, laws define a crosswalk whether or not marked. A crosswalk is that part of an intersection that connects sidewalks on opposite ends of a road. If there is a sidewalk on only one side, the crosswalk is in line with it to the other side.

Principally markings, but also other devices, help pedestrians and motorists define where crosswalks exist. Motorists expect to drive at the posted speed between intersections. They look for cars more than pedestrians at intersections. The MUTCD and state rules require marking other traffic control devices to alert drivers of crosswalks. (See *Road Business*, Fall 2001, p.1-2.) Whether or not they are marked, motorists are legally compelled to stop at intersection crosswalks. Some pedestrians walk on unmarked crosswalks expecting motorists to abide by that definition. When motorists don't, pedestrians get hurt.

The FHWA study also shows that pedestrians are often hurt at marked crosswalks. They guide pedestrian to the best place to cross. They show motorists and pedestrians that a legal crosswalk exists at a particular location. Where to place them depends on many factors.

The Factors

As expected, researchers found that pedestrian injuries were fatal or more serious on roads above 35 mph than below it. Unexpected *Road Business*, Fall 2002, Vol. 17, No. 3

was the finding that speed limit was not a significant factor for crash frequency. The following factors did influence pedestrian crash rate.

Pedestrian and motorist differing definitions of a crosswalk.

Whether the crosswalk is marked or unmarked.

Vehicle traffic volume.

Pedestrian traffic volume.

Number of vehicle travel lanes.

Other treatments, such as curb extensions, raised crossing islands, traffic and pedestrian signals, roadway narrowing, enhanced overhead lighting, and traffic calming measures.

Recommendations for Marked Crosswalk

Agencies should use marked crosswalks with the "other treatments" described above. Cities and towns should consider marked crosswalks for the following conditions.

- Where vehicular traffic, when stopping for a stop sign or red light, might block pedestrian traffic. (Also note the location of the stop line; see *Road Business*, Summer 2002, p.6-7.)
- At non-signalized street crossing locations in designated school zones.

At other non-signalized locations, many of the above factors influence pedestrian crash frequency. Municipalities should, therefore, seek assistance of a traffic engineer. Properly placed, marked crosswalks increase pedestrian safety and mobility. Improperly placed, the municipality has placed pedestrians at risk of serious, at times fatal, risk.

Source:



Safety Effects of Marked vs. Unmarked Crosswalks at Uncontrolled Locations: Executive Summary and Recommended Guidelines.
FHWA-RD-01-075, Federal Highway Administration, McLean VA
March 2002

Publications

University of New Hampshire Technology Transfer Center

Copies of the following books and pamphlets, and our complete list of publications, are available through the UNH T² Center. When requesting an item with a charge, please include the check with your form. If ordering by mail, follow the instructions below. To request by telephone, call 603-862-2826, or in NH, 800-423-0060. You can also request by fax to 603-862-2364, on-line at www.t2.unh.edu, or by e-mail to t2.center@unh.edu

The following materials are available free of charge.

____ *UNH T² Center Publications and Video Catalog.*

____ *Another Sleepless Night?* From Primex³, this publication gives guidelines for more productive “all-nighters” during winter operations.

____ *Calcium Chloride Package.* A package of articles and pamphlets explaining the benefits of deicing with calcium chloride.

____ *Deicing, Anti-icing, and Chemical Alternatives.* Informative fact sheet discusses the benefits of anti-icing, deicing, prewetting, and liquid chemical alternatives.

____ *Guidelines for Spring Road Use Restrictions.* A system that must be started in the fall, for setting load limits in the spring.

____ *Local Low Volume Roads and Streets.* Basic road design guidelines, materials, and maintenance information for town officials, crew managers, and road managers on rural streets and other less-traveled roads.

____ *Manual of Practice for Anti-icing for Local Roads.* Published by the UNH T² Center in 1996, this manual explains the difference between deicing and anti-icing, and it describes aspects of a good anti-icing program.

____ *The Salt Storage Handbook.* A practical guide for handling deicing salt. Published by the Salt Institute.

____ *Snow Disposal Guidelines.* Environmental Fact Sheet with recommended guidelines for snow disposal.

____ *Snow Equipment Preventative Maintenance.* Flyer discusses general repairs and maintenance for sand spreaders, plow equipment, dump bodies and hydraulics.

____ *The Snowfighter's Handbook.* A practical guide for snow and ice control before, during, and after a storm. Published by the Salt Institute.

____ *Speed Limits: A Guide for Vermont Towns.* Published by the Vermont Local Roads Program, this guide provides advice to set speed limits. NH Speed Limit RSAs—265:60, 265:62, 259:93, and 259:118.

____ *Things to Know Before You Buy a New Plow.* Reprinted from a previous edition of Road Business, this article points out recommended specifications for snow plows, considering New Hampshire's climate.

To Request Material by Mail

Check the items you would like to receive. Fill out this form and include a check in the envelope, if necessary. Cut out this page and mail to the UNH T² Center.

Name: _____

Position: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

Town: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Videos

University of New Hampshire Technology Transfer Center
Road Business, Fall 2002, Vol. 17, No.3

The following videos are available from the UNH T² Center Video Library. You can have five videos for a two-week period with no charge. To request by mail, check the videos you would like to borrow (up to 5), fill out the mail request form, staple closed, affix stamp, and mail. To request by telephone, call (603) 862-2826 or (800)423-0060 (in NH). Visit our complete publication and video catalog on our website at <http://www.t2.unh.edu>. Or email t2.center@unh.edu

____ **DC-254, Soil Erosion and Sediment Control**, 28 min. This video shows how soil erosion and sedimentation are related. It describes in detail various types of erosion and erosion prevention/control procedures

____ **ST-235, Chainsaw Safety**, 21 min. Demonstrates the do's and don'ts of chainsaw operation.

____ **PA-217, Safety Restoration Snow Removal Guidelines**, 25 min. Presents snow and ice removal safety hazards, and methods for correcting them. Also discusses the importance of snow and ice removal management plans and how they can be implemented.

____ **M-243, Plow Power**, 15 min. Modern techniques for efficient and effective plowing, focusing on plowing in towns and cities. Techniques include main streets, intersections, cul de sacs; wing blade, tandem blade, and reversible blade usage, and one-way streets.

____ **M-244, Asphalt Emulsion Spray Applications**, 24 min. Describes asphalt emulsion, and shows procedures in applying it

for surface treatment. **Recycling Roads with Asphalt Emulsions**, 20 min. Recycling dirt roads with cold-mix recycling, and the advantages of it.

____ **M-302, Winter Operations Training Program: Pre-Season Preparation**, 30 min. This video discusses how to mount snow removal equipment, including reversible plow, B-plow, light-duty wing, and heavy-duty wing. It provides a step-by-step approach to conducting a pre-season check of plow trucks and all mounted equipment.

____ **M-303, Winter Operations Training Program: Plowing Techniques**, 30 min. This video discusses the basic snow plowing techniques and procedures for clearing two-lane roads and multiple-lane highways. It also outlines how to use the heavy-duty wing, ice blade, V-plow, and the reversible plow. The video also covers special techniques for clearing intersections, bridges, railroad crossings, ramps, gores, curbs, and islands.

____ Video Catalog.

Place
Stamp
Here

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Milestones:

Roland Bergeron has retired from Litchfield. He was the Road Agent.

Doug Hemingway is the new Road Agent in Epsom.

David Leel has joined New Ipswich as the Road Agent.

Tom Smith is the new Road Agent in Landaff.

Bruce Thomas is now the Public Works Director in Bedford.

Grafton, Lyndeborough, Peterborough and Westmoreland have joined the New Hampshire Public Works Mutual Aid Program.

Websites:

There are many helpful websites for public works employees. If you have others that your colleagues could benefit from, send the urls to t2.center@unh.edu. We'll publish the site and your name in *Road Business*. (No commercial sites please).

UNH T² Center: <http://www.t2.unh.edu>

DigSafe <http://www.digsafe.com/>

Institute of Transportation Engineers
<http://www.ite.org/>

Recycled Materials Resource Center
<http://www.rmrc.unh.edu/>

Stormwater Manager's Resource Center
<http://www.stormwatercenter.net/>

ITE Briefing Sheets on intersection safety
<http://www.ite.org/library/IntersectionSafety/briefing.htm>

Free Millennium Edition MUTCDs Available to Municipalities

From a grant from the Highway Safety Agency, the New Hampshire Department of Transportation has purchased 148 Millennium Editions of the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices



(MUTCD). The editions purchased are often referred to as the "Perfect Bound" version, meaning they are bound rather than in a notebook.

These MUTCDs are available to municipalities on a first-come, first-serve basis, one copy per municipality. Municipalities that would like a copy should contact the UNH T² Center as soon as possible; they will go quickly. Contact information is on page 2 and page 12 of this issue.

PW.NET

Want to know what is happening in other towns? Learn the very latest in regulations? Need a place to ask questions of other public works officials? Want to be the first to receive notifications of UNH T² Center workshops? Then, subscribe to PW.NET. It's free. Send an email message to: kathy.desroches@unh.edu

In the body of the message type:
Add pw.net your name

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Road Business

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Calendar

<i>October</i>				
30—Winter Operations, Portsmouth	1—Winter Operations Equipment, Hillsboro	2—Winter Operations Equipment, Lincoln	3	4
7	8—Spec, Bids, and Contracts, Manchester	9	10—Specs, Bids, and Contracts	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22—Cost Estimating and Budget Preparation, Manchester	23	24—Cost Estimating and Budget Preparation, Lincoln	25
28	29—Municipal Garage Compliance, Manchester	30	31—Municipal Garage Compliance, New London	1—Basics of a Good Road, Manchester
<i>November</i>				
4	5	6—Mutual Aid, Lincoln	7	8
11	12	13—Mutual Aid, Dover	14	15
18	19	20—Mutual Aid, Manchester, NHMA Annual Conference	21--NHMA Annual Conference	22
25	26	27	28--Thanksgiving	29
<i>December</i>				
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12—Gravel Road Maintenance, Hillsboro	13—Gravel Road Maintenance, Plymouth