



Today's discussion is from the Environmental Factors Category.

## MANAGING VEHICLE TRAFFIC IN SMOKE

Smoke has the potential to cause safety hazards to vehicle traffic in the vicinity of active fires (both wildfires and prescribed), especially at night. The following traffic-related items should be considered and addressed in local unit planning documents prior to an incident/project.

- Identification, location, and phone numbers of local units that have law enforcement and traffic control responsibilities in the smoke-impacted areas. Review any local agreements with these agencies presently in place.
- Identification of important, public roads that may be impacted by smoke.
- Identification of adequate equipment and trained personnel to control traffic. This may include warning signs, communications equipment (preferably not using the active fire frequency) and vehicles equipped with warning or flashing lights.
- Identification and phone numbers of radio and television stations that can issue traffic advisories for the smoke-impacted area.
- Identification of alternative traffic routes as part of the incident/project traffic plan.
- Identification of traffic routes subject to temperature inversions as well as contributory factors such as fog and ice.
- When potential smoke-related problems are identified:
  - Advise the Incident Commander, Burn Boss, or Agency Administrator that severe smoke exists.
  - Notify local law enforcement units and highway departments of a potential problem.
  - Implement preplanned actions such as posting smoke warning signs.
  - Ensure that proper equipment is ready and appropriate personnel are briefed on contingency plans and are available to control traffic.

### References:

[Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations](#)  
[Incident Response Pocket Guide](#)

**Have an idea? Have feedback? Share it.**

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