

Working as a flagger can be challenging. Stopped traffic can make motorists impatient, frustrated, or angry, and flaggers may receive that frustration directly.

We understand the challenges you face. Your job requires focus, patience, and professionalism while managing traffic in an environment where conditions can change quickly. **Your work matters.** You play a critical role in protecting our crews, motorists, and the public. Your efforts and professionalism are appreciated.

- **Their frustration is not personal.** A motorist is usually frustrated by the **delay—not you**. Do not take insults, gestures, honking, or complaints personally. Your job is to safely control traffic, not to make every driver happy.

6 STEPS TO DE-ESCALATE

1	STAY CALM	Keep your voice and tone respectful. Do not yell, argue, use sarcasm, or make aggressive gestures.
		Take a breath and pause before responding.
2	MAINTAIN A SAFE POSITION	Stay in your designated flagging position and watch approaching traffic.
		Never approach, chase, or pursue an angry motorist.
		Do not lean into or reach inside a vehicle.
		If threatened, create distance and notify your supervisor.
3	LISTEN WITHOUT ARGUING	When safe to do so, acknowledge the driver's frustration without agreeing with inappropriate behavior. Try: "I understand the delay is frustrating. We're working to get traffic moving as soon as it is safe."
		Avoid: "It's not my fault." / "Calm down." / "There's nothing I can do."
4	EXPLAIN ONLY WHAT IS NECESSARY	Briefly explain that traffic is being held for safety and vehicles will move when conditions allow. Try: "We're holding traffic for the safety of the workers and traveling public. I'll get you through as soon as it's safe."
		Do not debate the project, schedule, traffic plan, or reason for the delay.
5	SET BOUNDARIES	If a motorist becomes verbally abusive: "I understand you're frustrated, but I'm asking you to please remain respectful."
		If the behavior continues, do not engage further than necessary.
6	KNOW WHEN TO GET HELP	Do not handle a threatening situation yourself. Notify your supervisor and follow project emergency procedures if a motorist makes you feel you are in immediate danger such as:
		o Threatens you or another worker.
		o Attempts to drive around or through traffic control.
		o Exits their vehicle and approaches aggressively.
		o Displays or reaches for a weapon.
		o Intentionally attempts to strike a worker or equipment.
		Move to a safe location when possible. If there is an immediate threat, contact emergency services according to company procedure.

You cannot control how a motorist reacts, but you can control how you respond.

- Stay calm, maintain your position, communicate respectfully, and disengage when necessary.

Your safety—and the safety of everyone traveling through our work zone—is the priority.



Toolbox Talk Attendance Form

Supervisor / Project Manager: _____ Date: _____

PRINT NAME	SIGNATURE