



# RIICOM201D

## Communicate in the workplace

THIS UNIT FORMS PART OF THE

RIISS00044 Work Zone Traffic Control  
Traffic Controller Skill Set

RIISS00041 Work Zone Traffic Control  
Implement Traffic Control Guidance Plan Skills Set

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RIICOM201D	Communicate in the workplace
<p><b>Application</b></p>	<p>This unit describes a participant's skills and knowledge required to communicate in the workplace within the Resources and Infrastructure Industries.</p> <p>This unit is appropriate for those working in operational roles.</p> <p>No licensing, legislative or certification requirements apply to this unit at the time of publication</p>
Elements	Performance Criteria
<p>1. Plan and prepare for workplace communication using equipment and systems</p>	<p>1.1. Access, interpret and apply communication site documentation and ensure the work activity is compliant</p> <p>1.2. Identify and access communication equipment and system components</p> <p>1.3. Establish and maintain communication with others</p> <p>1.4. Access and apply communication equipment and systems safety procedures</p>
<p>2. Communicate using communication equipment and systems</p>	<p>2.1. Identify and select the most appropriate method of communication</p> <p>2.2. Use communication equipment and systems</p> <p>2.3. Acknowledge and respond to communication</p> <p>2.4. Take, confirm and pass messages on promptly to the others</p> <p>2.5. Pass communications in a clear and concise manner</p> <p>2.6. Follow safety procedures, including the passing of reports and observance of local communications and emergency procedures</p> <p>2.7. Identify and report faults in communication equipment</p>
<p>3. Carry out face-to-face routine communication</p>	<p>3.1. Speak clearly and listen carefully to promote understanding</p> <p>3.2. Ask questions of the audience and confirm meaning of information</p> <p>3.3. Maintain communication processes with others to assist flow of work activities</p> <p>3.4. Use site approved signalling methods to convey information</p> <p>3.5. Participate in discussion to obtain information and clarify meaning</p> <p>3.6. Communicate cooperatively and effectively with others</p>
<p>4. Complete written documentation</p>	<p>4.1. Complete written documentation clearly, concisely and on time</p> <p>4.2. Use approved documents</p> <p>4.3. Pass on written information to others</p>

# 1.0 Introduction

Workplace Communication is the process of exchanging ideas and information, effective communication plays an important role in the day-to-day operations of any workplace. There are a number of ways we can communicate in the workplace that may include;

- Radio
- telephone
- computer
- Lights
- Business management systems
- Social media
- public address systems and intercom systems
- audible signals (bells, whistles and sirens)
- approved hand signals
- signage
- written documents such as previous shift reporting, forms and reports
- face-to-face individual and group verbal communication
- non-verbal communication such as body language and gestures

## Effective communication and WHS requirement

Effective communication means that the person receiving the message fully grasps the message and what it really means, so for example we all fully understand and appreciate our workplace roles and responsibilities and comply with our WHS responsibilities.

### We communicate to...

- Get informed
- Motivate
- Receive and Provide feedback
- Achieve tasks
- Solve problems and issues
- Persuade

### Communication in the workplace

When you communicate well with your team, it helps eliminate misunderstandings and can encourage a healthy and peaceful work environment.

Efficient communication with your team will also let you get work done quickly and professionally. Workplace and WHS legislation requires that all practical steps to be taken to protect the health and safety of employees at the workplace.

Some examples of the essentials of communication

- Use precise, powerful words
- Support your words visually where you can
- Give examples
- Use eye contact where acceptable

- Paraphrase where needed
- Active listening
- Keep it simple
- Use appropriate facial expressions and body language where needed

#### Avoid

- To many technical terms and references where possible
- Speaking to fast or to slow
- Do not assume that everybody understands you
- Do not interrupt speakers

This means complying with the policies and procedures associated with communication in the workplace, which are in part designed to ensure safety.

In a traffic control, you also have a responsibility to contribute to the safety of road users when they are interacting with traffic control arrangements.

### **Effective communication**

Good communication skills are vital in helping you to work effectively, some major factors

- Listen
- Empathy
- Patience
- Clarity
- Positivity

# 1 Plan and Prepare for workplace communication using equipment and systems

## 1.1 Access, interpret and apply communication, site documentation and ensure work activity is compliant

Relevant policies and procedures should always be followed. This is because failure to do so can end in workplace incidents, accidents or even legal ramifications.

Depending on the type of workplace and environment, communication and documentation will vary, in the traffic management industry; there are specific documents and communication methods that are unique.

In the traffic management industry a Traffic Management Plan provides the details of proposals to safely manage traffic during the conduct of works on roads and normally includes:

- A traffic guidance scheme (diagrams).
- Worksite hazard assessment (such as a Safe Work Method Statement).
- Details of the location, nature and duration of the works.

For long-term work, the plan should also include details of the requirements to manage traffic through the worksite outside normal working hours or when workers are not present at the site (after-care). There are many forms of communication equipment used in the traffic management industry, for example:

- Stop/slow bats
- Hand signals
- Road signs
- Light wands
- Written reports
- Two way radios

### The Traffic Management Plan aims to:

- Protect workers, road users and pedestrians.
- Adequately instruct and guide road users safely through, around or past the worksite.
- Provide appropriate warnings of changes in the road surface, driving conditions and of personnel/workers and plant engaged in work on or adjacent to the road.
- Minimise the impact of the works on traffic and adjacent landowners/occupiers.
- Minimise disruptions to public transport.
- Communicate the arrangements for and impacts of, any activities affecting traffic.

A Traffic Control Plan (TCP) should be available & followed on all sites.

The traffic controller shall direct traffic at and/or through a work site or other event in a manner specified in the approved operating procedure for the safety of all road users and road workers.

### Traffic controllers:

- must be qualified, having passed an approved Traffic Controllers training course, and shall be authorised to control traffic in their jurisdiction
- must be used if road users are to be directed to disobey a traffic regulation, such as crossing a barrier line (portable traffic signals may also be used to direct road users across barrier lines)
- Must act in accordance with the policies, procedures and/or codes of practice in their jurisdiction that govern traffic control

**Examples of types of traffic management documents:**

- Traffic Control Plans (TCP) / Traffic Guidance schemes (TGS)
- Safe work method statements (SWMS)
- Risk Assessments
- Road Occupancy Licence (ROL)
- Certificate 138
- Job safety analysis (JSA)
- company policy and procedure
- manufacturer's guidelines and specifications

**1.2 identify, access communication equipment and system components**

**Key pieces of communication equipment in workplaces include:**

- Telephones (mobile and landline)
- Stop/ Slow bats
- Night Wands
- 2 Way radios
- Road traffic Signage
- Variable message boards
- Arrow boards
- Traffic signals
- Boom gates

And the systems that are used with the equipment may refer to;

- Policy and Procedures
- Codes and acronyms
- Standards and codes of practice
- Confidential messaging requirements

Other systems may include:

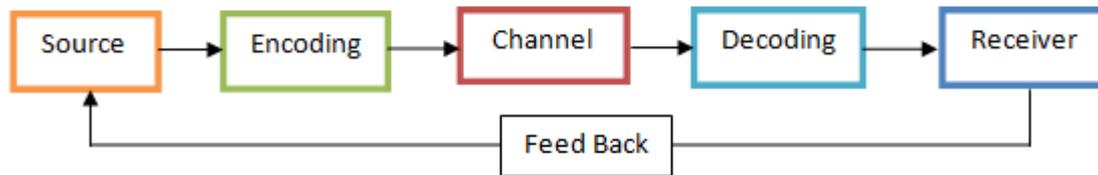
- the systems overview
- operating directories
- communication equipment
- site specific procedures and constraints including:
  - call signs
  - area descriptions
  - voice procedure
  - protocols
- emergency procedures
- Alarms
  - There are various types of alarms on site including vehicle reversing alarms, emergency evacuation air horns, vehicle horns, plant yellow flashing lights etc.
- Signage (refer to section 2.1 for further information)
  - These are examples of compulsory signage



## 1.3 Establish and maintain communication with others

### The communication process

There are many different ways to communicate; all communication follows the communication process.



#### Source or idea

Before you can communicate any information, you need to be sure of what it is that you want to say. This is the subject matter of the communication; this may be an opinion, attitude, feelings, views, orders, or suggestions.

#### Encoding

Encoding is the process of taking the idea or overall subject matter and turning it into something that another person can understand.

#### Transmitting/Channel

At this stage of communication, the message is sent from the sender to the receiver using a medium of communication. Verbally, non-verbally, or through written formats.

#### Decoding

The person who receives the message from the communicator will need to convert or decipher it before they can understand it and respond to it.

#### Receiver

Receiver is the person who receives the message or for whom the message is meant for.

When sending a message to someone there are three important steps that you should take:

1. Identify the message that needs to be sent and select the most appropriate communication method for that message. You should also take into account any workplace policies or procedures that govern how communication should take place
2. Send the message
3. Confirm that the receiver of your message has understood your message

**How do you establish communication with others?** Does this come naturally? What are some of the barriers?

In the workplace, sometimes the communication channels do not always occur naturally or are not always obvious.

As you become more familiar with the workplace and environment, the communication channels with others will become easier to identify and easier to maintain.

A good manager/supervisor will ensure that you receive a thorough induction and training for the job, environment and the team.

Once you have established these initial channels and networks ensure that you do what you can to maintain them.

### Strategies for effective communication in the workplace include:

- Keeping the conversation flowing 2 way
- Ensuring that you are consistent
- Maintain professional and courtesy
- Acknowledge the contribution of others
- Respect opinions and ideas
- And never take it personally

It assists effective communication in the workplace, by keeping the conversation flowing both ways, maintaining a professional and courtesy manner, ensuring you are consistent, acknowledging the contribution of others, speaking clearly and concisely, ensuring the message is received by using effective questioning techniques.

### 1.4 Access and apply communication equipment and systems safety procedures

Procedures must always be followed otherwise in the event of an emergency can not only lead to devastating results but legal ramifications as well.

The most appropriate response to any emergency on your worksite is to inform your supervisor, colleagues and the most appropriate personnel on site should contact emergency services by dialling triple zero (000). Workplace documents must be completed including (incident reports, first aid reports and possible WorkCover reports)

Before you can access any equipment, it is vital that you have the appropriate authority and you have received the correct training.

Once you have received the correct training, you will be in apposition to be able to choose the correct equipment for the task that you are undertaking.

When you have been provided the correct level of authority, you may be required to sign and draw out the equipment

### Responsibilities for communications equipment include:

Once you have signed for the equipment, you have a responsibility to ensure:

- That it is use correctly and safely
- Read any instructions if applicable
- That it is maintained and kept clean
- That you secure it and ensure that it does not get removed
- And finally ensure that you returned the equipment is the condition that you acquired it

## 2 Communicate using communication equipment and systems

### 2.1 Identify and select the most appropriate method of communication

#### Types of communication in the workplace

There are a number of ways that we can communicate in the workplace, there are many methods, tools, procedures and devices, some of these may include

- Meetings
- Telephones ( most common for contacting the emergency services)
- 2 Way radios (most common for traffic control operations)
- Intercom systems
- Face to face
- Verbal and non-verbal
- Memos
- Polices and forms
- Signals
- Signage

Effective communication between people is critical to workplace safety.

**There are two (2) ways in which to communicate, Verbal or Non-Verbal**

#### Verbal Communication

- Voice
- Word
- Tones
- Pitch Timbre



#### Non-verbal communication

Non-verbal communication can be referred to communication without words, and it will include behaviors such as

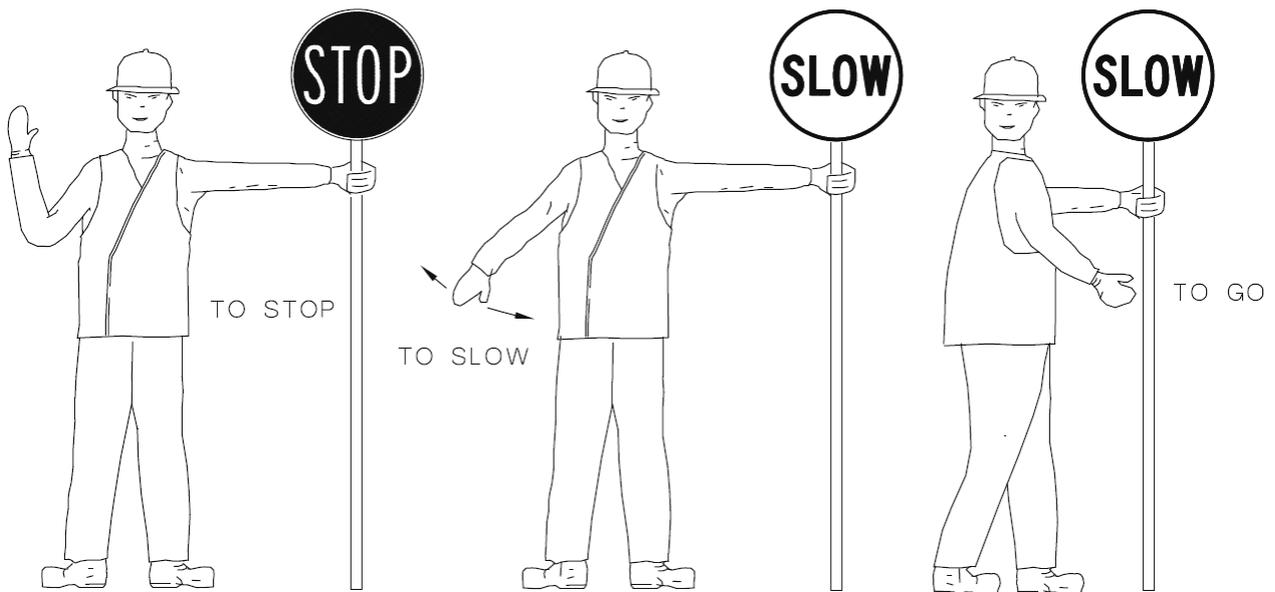
- Facial expressions, Eyes, Physical contact (touching), Posture
- Dress (grooming)
- Spatial distance
- Gestures and hand signals
- General body language
- Visual instructions using signs and written instructions
- 



## Hand signals

In order to communicate effectively with road users, giving clear and consistent signals are one of the most important functions of traffic control.

The STOP/SLOW bat shall be used by a traffic controller to control traffic at any temporary obstruction or hazard. Retro reflective material used on the STOP/SLOW bat shall be Class 1W material. The bat shall have a handle a minimum of 1.8 m long to the underside of the sign. For night-time operations, an illuminated wand should be used in conjunction with the bat.



- **Stop traffic** – turn the **STOP/SLOW** bat to **STOP** and raise the free arm into the stop signal position with the palm of the hand towards the traffic
- 
- **Allow traffic to proceed** – check that all traffic from the other end of the work site has passed, then turn the **STOP/SLOW** bat to **SLOW** and with the other hand give the **GO** signal
- 
- **Slow traffic** – show the **SLOW** side of the **STOP/SLOW** bat, extend the free arm and wave arm up and down.

## Signs

Common signage that you will come across in the workplace is based around safety and risk.

Within the traffic control environment you will encounter signage used in the implementation of traffic control guidance schemes to warn and guide road users.

Other signage that will assist in general workplace communication may refer to general, mandatory, Hazchem, danger, warning, emergency and prohibitory signage.

These signs are colour coded and many are stylised so they are recognisable.

**Please see below some categories and examples of signage**

<p><b><u>Mandatory</u></b></p>  <p>HEAD PROTECTION MUST BE WORN IN THIS AREA</p> <p>HEARING PROTECTION MUST BE WORN IN THIS AREA</p> <p>EYE PROTECTION MUST BE WORN IN THIS AREA</p>	<p><b><u>Danger</u></b></p>  <p>DANGER ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT AUTHORISED PERSONNEL ONLY</p> <p>DANGER NO SMOKING NO NAKED FLAMES NO MATCHES</p> <p>DANGER HIGH VOLTAGE</p>
<p><b><u>Prohibitory</u></b></p>  <p>NO ENTRY AUTHORISED PERSONS ONLY</p> <p>STRICTLY NO ADMITTANCE</p> <p>NO SMOKING IN THIS AREA</p>	<p><b><u>Warning</u></b></p>  <p>CORROSIVE</p> <p>DO NOT BLOCK DOOR</p> <p>DO NOT ENTER</p>
<p><b><u>Hazchem/Dangerous goods</u></b></p>  <p>FLAMMABLE GAS 2</p>	<p><b><u>First Aid</u></b></p>  <p>FIRST AID STATION</p> <p>FIRST AID</p> <p>EMERGENCY SHOWER</p> <p>EMERGENCY BREATHING APPARATUS</p>
<p><b><u>Fire related</u></b></p>  <p>FIRE ALARM</p> <p>FIRE HYDRANT &amp; HOSE REEL</p> <p>FIRE EXTINGUISHER</p>	<p><b><u>Exits</u></b></p> 

## Lock Out Tags and Isolation

Equipment and machinery sometimes need to have a tag attached to alert others of its status. This is particularly true when the equipment or machinery:

- is malfunctioning
- needs to be maintained or repaired
- needs additional material such as fuel or lubricant

## 2.2 Use communication equipment and systems

There are numerous types of communication equipment that you will come across, in the traffic management industry; the most common is communication via Radio (2-way Radio). The 2 way radio has parts and functions. Always maintain your equipment to make it will be in good working order when you need to use it.

Some of the features are shown below:



### Effective communication

We can effectively communicate using various methods, systems and processes to achieve the outcome we need, consider the following and how we communicate:

- Equipment and systems
- Forms and paperwork
- Body language and facial expressions (non-verbal)
- Type of language
- Tone and pitch
- Technical and non-technical
- SWMS
- Policies and procedures
- Signage

When speaking with colleagues and road users (face to face) we need to be polite, clear, effective and overall professional.

## 2 Way Radios

You will be required to use communication equipment such as '2 way radios' you need to consider the following

- Space
- Distance
- Noise
- Language
- Sight
- Technical Speak
- Jargon
- Acronyms



### Things that can go wrong when operating 2 way radios

- Many things can go wrong when operating two-way radios typical problems are flat battery, Static, excessive channel traffic making communication difficult, incorrect radio procedure, exceeding the radio broadcast range capability.

Traffic controllers need to know the features of the two-way radio they are using and how to communicate instructions clearly. Common types of equipment used for communicating are 2 way UHF radios. 2 Way radios have closed off frequencies (trunk) and public frequencies. They are quite integral to the successful completion of your duties.

When using two-way radios Traffic Controllers should:

1. keep dialogue to a minimum
2. speak clearly
3. make accurate statements
4. provide enough information for the other controller to understand the situation
5. keep jargon to a minimum
6. Never get involved in arguments or confrontations.
7. Never swear or use abusive language.
8. Don't engage in personal conversations.
9. Don't make disparaging remarks about road users or members of the public or work colleagues.
10. Stay focused on the job

When Two-Way Radios are required at a work site traffic controller should become familiar with the radio equipment prior to the commencement of duties.

Traffic controllers should be aware of the following features of Two-Way Radios:

- On/Off switch
- CHANNEL control
- SQUELCH control (if fitted adjust until quiet)
- VOLUME control
- Microphone button
- Spare batteries or battery pack (Fully charged)
- Antenna
- Other relevant features

Traffic Controllers and workers should give a clear description of the last vehicle through the control point, Vehicle colour, make and model and if possible full registration to remove any confusion. The use of a phonetic alphabet in communicating is quite common today, please see below an example:

Alpha	November
Bravo	Oscar
Charlie	Papa
Delta	Quebec
Echo	Romeo
Foxtrot	Sierra
Golf	Tango
Hotel	Uniform
India	Victor
Juliet	Whiskey
Kilo	X-Ray
Lima	Yankee
Mike	Zulu

### **Telephone communication**

Workplaces use telephones which can allow communication either internally within the workplace or to a wider network.

Examples of some rules that can apply are:

- Staff answer the phone in the same way
- Do not assume that you know who is on the other end of the line
- Remain calm and positive
- Your voice should reflect a professional image
- Do not eat, drink or chew gum whilst on the telephone
- Speak clearly at a moderate pace
- Allow for natural pauses in the conversation

When communicating on the phone you should take extra care to determine what is being said. Not being able to see the person while talking can affect the clarity of communication. It is a good practice to repeat or summarise what has been said to avoid any misunderstandings.

### **Mobile Phone/Smart Phones**

Please be mindful, that the use of personal mobile phone/smart devices for communication may be restricted in most cases.

Ensure that you are aware of the policy and procedures for using personal communication devices whilst conducting traffic control duties and tasks.

## 2.3 Acknowledge and respond to communication

Regardless of the equipment or system that you use, clarification and acknowledge of messages and communication process is very important. For example, If an emergency occurs, you must notify your supervisor as soon as possible who will in turn notify emergency services. Your supervisor will acknowledge your concern and manage the sites emergency procedures.

Not only it is courteous, it also established and maintains professionalism. You will gain confidence from your colleagues, when confirmed and clarified, that the task and job has been completed.

Do not be afraid to ask questions when responding to check that you have been heard.

It is important to establish a radio communication protocol for communication over two –way radios such as replying with a positive response to a question, i.e. traffic stopped, worksite clear, and confirming receipt of a message or instruction by using the response “copy” or a similar agreed phrase.

## 2.4 Take, confirm and pass on messages promptly to others

There are a number of ways that we can communicate and pass on information to colleagues, road users and management.

Where possible we need to use an array of tools and techniques to pass on communication but always be mindful to follow work procedures.

On a road worksite your options will be limited due to a number of reasons;

- Location
- Time
- Physical nature of the work
- Limited tools and devices

In a number most circumstances you will be required to pass on messages to traffic controllers and other workers quickly and efficiently, and in most cases via a 2 way radio.

When taking messages, confirming the information and passing it consider the following:

- Listen intently
- Check for understanding
- Ask questions
- Where possible write it down
- Break the message in to small components or 'chunks'
- Use simple phrases and terminology if applicable
- Avoid mumbling and jargon
- Never assume that the receiver will know the entire contents, so be accurate

## 2.5 Pass communications in a clear and concise manner

As discussed earlier, communication and information is vital to the success of the operation.

Clear communication allows message to be understood and minimises confusion and misunderstandings.

It is important to complete forms and documents legibly and accurately so that other can read and understand what is being written and conveyed in the form or document so that it can be referred to and relied on at a later date

To ensure a safe, efficient and productive workplace, you need to ensure that you have the capacity to communicate in a clear, accurate and timely manner.

**There are 7 Cs of communication** that will assist

### **Clear**

- Be clear about your goal or message, what is the purpose

### **Concise**

- Stick to the point and keep it brief

### **Concrete**

- Ensure the message is concrete and not vague, ensure you are focussed

### **Correct**

- Of course accuracy is vital and the best communication is error free

### **Coherent**

- When you are coherent, you are logical, all the dots are connected, there is a flow and context

### **Complete**

- Do not leave anything out, ensure the message is complete for the receiver to take action

### **Courteous**

- Common courtesy can still be maintained with time restrictions and pressure situations

## **2.6 Follow safety procedures, including the passing of reports and observance of local communications and emergency procedures**

Most accidents and emergencies in the workplace are preventable but some still occur despite the best efforts of everyone to stop them. Prevention is the best course of action and that is why safety is a major emphasis in the workplace.

When an emergency or accident does occur, efficient and effective communication is vital. You must know the procedures to follow in an emergency and be able to implement them. When an accident or emergency occurs, you do not have time to look them up and learn what to do. You must follow these procedures to make sure that all personnel involved know what to do otherwise potential serious incidents may occur. There is also a possibility that disciplinary actions can be actions towards those that fail to follow procedures and if equipment.

Workplace documents must be completed including (incident reports, first aid reports and possible WorkCover reports)

### **Incident reports may contain the following information:**

- time, date and location of incident;
- type of incident (for example, a motorist fails to stop; accident; abusive/insulting/threatening language; assault; breach of these Approved Procedures by another person);
- incident identification, including:
  - vehicle type and colour
  - registration number including registered state or territory
  - direction of travel
  - description of driver/other road user and occupants
  - full and accurate description of the incident
  - witness details.

In an emergency situation, Traffic Controllers must:

- never leave their post (unless their own safety is threatened or a competent person takes over the job of traffic controlling)
- never risk their personal safety when trying to get a vehicle to stop
- secure traffic behind the incident to prevent additional collisions
- always warn co-workers, other Traffic Controllers and supervisor (if time permits) of the situation
- Notify supervisor who will contact emergency services. Complete appropriate forms when you have managed the emergency situation.

## 2.7 Identify and report faults in communication equipment

In addition to the traffic signs and devices, various tools and equipment will need to be obtained to carry out tasks that are consistent with the requirements of the job.

Always maintain your equipment to make it will be in good working order when you need to use is.

Communication equipment may include:

- 2 Radios
- Arrow boards
- Signalling device

Two-way radios are required at worksites where communication is required over long work distances or sight distances are limited, particularly for traffic controllers. Characteristics, technical capabilities, uses and limitations of the regulatory equipment listed above can be found in AS1742.3-2009 and the relevant state or territory Code of Practice.

There are many types of faults that can occur to communication equipment:

- Faulty or flat batteries
- Broken antennas
- Broken signs and or corresponding broken/damages sign mountings

Any defective equipment needs to be dealt with in accordance with site procedures. Commonly this would include isolating or tagging out the equipment and reporting the fault to a supervisor for corrective action, replacement or repair.

## 3 Carry out face to face routine communication

Face to face communication is one of the most effective and time saving ways of communicating

With face to face communicating, it is real time and you will get a strong sense of the overall context of the message and intent.

When communicating face to face, you need to consider a range of conditions and circumstances

### 3.1 Speak clearly and listen carefully

As discussed earlier, speaking clearly and at an appropriate pace will save you time and allow give the receiver the maximum chance of understating the message.

You need to ensure that you have thought about the message and understood the level of knowledge that the receive has

Do not complicate the issue and at times it is best to keep the messages simple and to the point

If the message is too complicated or technical, the receiver may 'tune out' or may not understand the level of the message, keep to the 7 Cs

Alternatively when listening to a message when face to face, you need to pay attention and listen carefully

- Give your undivided attention
- Do not get distracted
- Stay focussed
- Have open body language
- Make eye contact where culturally acceptable
- Nod where you can
- Do not fidget or slouch

Another good tip it is okay to ask questions to check for understanding or to clarify.

### 3.2 Ask questions of the audience and confirm the meaning

Asking questions can be an art form, asking questions is a real opportunity to check your understanding, but also gives the person you are talking to a sense of confidence that you are paying attention. Apart from questions you can always refer to workplace documents such as SWMS or SOP's to help with clarification of work tasks.

Effective questioning will help you

- Better and more fully understand the problem
- Work with staff more effectively
- Help your staff take responsibility for their actions and solve problems within the workplace more easily
- Gather better information
- Reduce mistakes and duplication
- Get cooperation
- Persuade people

## Generally, there are 2 types of questions - closed ended and open ended

A closed question can be answered with either single word or a short phrase, most of the time Yes or No.

Closed questions have the following characteristics

- They give you facts
- They are generally easy to answer
- They are quick to answer
- They can keep control of the conversation with the questioner

An open ended question is likely to receive a long answer and is more descriptive.

- Open ended questions have the following characteristics
- They ask the respondent to think and reflect
- They will give you opinions and feelings
- They hand control of the conversation to the respondent
- They normally start with what, why, how, describe

### 3.3 Maintain communication process with others to assist flow of work activities

The communication process needs to be 2 way and it needs to be consistent and constant.

Never assume that the message is continuing or if the communication channels are still open.

Some tips to ensure that the communication process continues to flow:

- Have scheduled tool box talks and briefings
- Ensure that you stay on topic and agendas within meetings
- Ensure that the same message does not come across the same way, this can cause the information to become stale and therefore people can switch off. Therefore do not be afraid to mix it up, vary the style and method of the message
- Distribute minutes and get staff to sign off on the minutes and instructions

#### Types of communication in the workplace

There are a number of ways that we can communicate in the workplace, there are many methods, tools, procedures and devices, some of these may include

- Meetings (most common type of formal communication)
- Telephones (most common for contacting the emergency services)
- 2 Way radios (most common for traffic control operations)
- Intercom systems (most common type for buildings)
- Face to face (most common and effective type but can lead to misunderstand and conflict)
- Verbal and non-verbal (most common way we communicate with others)
- Memos (most common for quick messages)
- Polices and forms (most commonly used when putting in a police report)
- Signals & Signage (most common type used in traffic control worksites)

Sometimes there may be things that get in the way of good communication. These are called **“barriers to communication”**. With each barrier, there are many ways to overcome them. Please ask your supervisor for advice. An example of how to overcome “noise”, you can simply move away from the noisy environment. Language, you can speak clearly, to the point, simple terms etc.

## Barriers to communication

- Noise
- Location
- Stereo typing
- Generalising
- Bias
- Emotions
- Language
- Complexity
- Assumptions
- Selective listening
- Poor communication devices

### 3.4 Use site approved signalling methods to convey information

In the traffic control industry, you are provided with a number of devices and signs to assist with the communication process.

In addition to these devices, you may be required to use a number of approved signalling methods to convey the information to colleagues and road users. This also includes understanding what to do when you see the emergency services on approach with their blue flashing lights.

It is important to ensure that procedures are followed and communication channels are kept open at all times during traffic control operations and regular, systematic, recorded contact aids that objective

See below some examples of these signalling methods



**Stop**

**Stop There**

**Proceed**

**Slow Down**

- **Stop traffic** – turn the **STOP/SLOW** bat to **STOP** and raise the free arm into the stop signal position with the palm of the hand towards the traffic
- **Point to where the vehicles should stop** – approximately 5- 10 m from your position
- **Allow traffic to proceed** – check that all traffic from the other end of the work site has passed, then turn the **STOP/SLOW** bat to **SLOW** and with the other hand give the **GO** signal
- **Slow traffic** – show the **SLOW** side of the **STOP/SLOW** bat, extend the free arm and wave arm up and down.

### 3.5 Participate in discussion to obtain information and clarify meaning

As noted earlier, the communication process within the workplace is 2 way and therefore all parties need to participate and contribute effectively.

We need to ensure that all parties have the capacity and environment to part of the overall communication process.

By involving others or involving the team, there are no surprises, so the more involvement and coverage, the better the message will be, and there will be less chance of ambiguity, you will have a better chance to ensure that the message is clear.

You may have heard the following expressions 'I am not sure how to explain this.' as a way of clarifying the message or information

Some techniques that may assist in clarifying meaning,

- Use a practical example
- Share a personal experience
- Provide a definition or a key term
- Make an analogy to some other concept that the receiver may already know
- Offer a comparison and or a contrast, you can compare to a similar term or opposing term
- Link to previous situation
- Provide visual means if possible
- Refer to workplace documents such as SWMS, SOP's

### 3.6 Communicate cooperatively and effectively with others

Cooperation in the workplace is the key to success, and this can be achieved by ensuring that we communicate in a cooperative and effective manner.

We must always maintain a professional approach to the way we work, communicate and behave. A professional approach to communication will ensure its validity, confidentiality and urgency.

There is an old saying 'do not shoot the messenger' which means in modern terms, not to take the message personally and that the person passing on the information may be just doing their job. Therefore, maintain your composure even if the message may be sensitive in nature.

The difficulty that workers and workplaces can face regarding cooperation can be complex; communication can be affected by;

- Complexity in messages and systems
- Pressure to perform
- Feelings of hostility
- Operational issues
- Personal conflict
- Negativity in the workplace

Effective and cooperative communication can deliver positive and effective results for all workers and management alike. (eg face to face, toolbox meetings, site inductions etc)

## 4 Complete written documentation

### Written communication

Written communication is the ability to use terms and references in a variety of modes in an effort to transfer information to a range of audiences, such as workers, management, and road user. Regardless of your role or the tasks you perform, you will be required to complete forms of written communication on a regular basis.

There are a range of different situations that require written communication, including:

- Incident reports
- Safe Work Methods Statements
- Logbooks and timesheets
- Sign off on TMP/TCGS/TCP where applicable to you role
- Shift reporting,
- Giving instructions

### Advantages of Written communication

- No need for personal contact
- Saves money
- Written proof
- Fairly universal

### Disadvantages of Written communication

- May delay in communicating
- Lack of confidentiality dependant on the environment
- Can be costly

### 4.1 Complete written documentation clearly, concisely and on time

Just like anything you write, there are things you should be mindful of.

These include checking that:

- your details are correct
- spelling is correct – especially names
- the information is accurate
- the form is fully completed
- if handwritten, the handwriting is legible and large enough to be legible
- the form is sent/taken to the appropriate person or place

### 4.2 Use approved documents

There will be a number of approved documents for communicating effectively in your workplace. In the Traffic control/management industry, there are number of approved and documents, depending on your level, you may not be required to use them all.

Below is a list of the types of documents you may come across:

- Incident forms
- Safe Work Method Statements

- Job Safety Analysis
- Safety Data sheets
- Traffic control Plans/Traffic Control Guidance Schemes
- Traffic Management Plans
- Environment Management plans
- Safety inspection sheets
- Risk Audits

These documents will assist the work flow and the communication process.

### 4.3 Pass on written information to others

We have now discussed what communication is, the types of communication and now we need to ensure that we pass on the information to others

- You need to consider the urgency of the information you are passing on as per work procedures.
- Consider the confidential nature of the information and who can view it.
- What methods will you use to pass the information on, will you use technology? will it be face to face?
- How do you confirm that the message was received, are you required to gain a signature or a date stamp

#### Summary

- Communication vital to the success of a worksite and to the safety of workers and road users
- Communication can come in many forms and methods
- Ensure that you are familiar with policy and procedures
- Use communication devices correctly and report faults
- Ensure that you pass on information accurately and effectively
- Maintain a strong and professional communication routine
- Complete all appropriate written documentation as per policy and procedures
- Do not assume that everyone know what you are trying to communicate
- Ask Questions to clarify meaning
- Follow the 7 Cs