

# Traffic Note 46

*Date* December 2004

*From* Safer Roads

*Authorisation* Peter Croft, Manager Safer Roads

*Signature* \_\_\_\_\_

*No. of pages* 3

## Voluntary traffic surveys – Guidelines

### Introduction

Section 20 of the *Land Transport Act 1998* requires prior written approval from the Director of Land Transport (the Director) for any traffic survey likely to involve stopping, delay or diversion of vehicles. This consent may be issued on behalf of the Director by a regional engineer of Land Transport New Zealand (Land Transport NZ).

Surveys involving the stopping of traffic to request driver interviews could be useful for a range of purposes. Some inconvenience to the public may be justified when potential benefits to road users are derived from the information obtained. Unless carefully designed and controlled, however, such surveys can cause serious traffic delays and increased crash risk.

Consents for survey are likely to impose conditions described below.

### Conditions of approvals

Approved traffic surveys will generally be for gathering data for reasons such as traffic safety or transportation planning. Surveys to obtain information for commercial or industrial research will not be approved. Charity tolls are not traffic surveys and are not covered by this policy.

Except where data on night travel is specifically required, approval will only be considered for surveys conducted during daylight hours. Dawn and dusk can be particularly dangerous times to operate and surveys will generally not be approved for these times.

The site will be located with appropriate road safety considerations of factors such as available visibility, proximity of intersections, and provision for queueing traffic.

The site will have sufficient space or suitable layout so:

- drivers at the designated survey area will not impede normal traffic flow
- motorists not wishing to participate in the survey can leave the site without being held up by those being surveyed ahead of them
- those surveyed are able to leave the site immediately data has been collected.

If there is an adequate off road area, an off road survey should be conducted. On-road surveys will only be approved if there is sufficient road width and no off-road area is available. Central interview surveys will only be approved if there is sufficient road width available.

Where both directions of traffic are to be surveyed simultaneously, there should be reasonable separation between the sites in each direction, to avoid interaction between sites.

The layout and organisation of the site should be such that emergency vehicles can travel unimpeded past the site at any time.

Traffic will be controlled and guided with suitable signs, traffic control devices and trained personnel to ensure the highest possible safety is provided. Transit New Zealand's *Code of practice for temporary traffic management* should be used to ensure adequate standards.

The survey should be designed to avoid, or only cause minimal, delay to the passing traffic (ie the traffic not being surveyed). Individual vehicle delays of up to one minute each for up to 10 vehicles, or queue lengths of up to 10 vehicles (including vehicles from either direction) may be tolerated for short periods of time. When these levels are exceeded the survey must cease until the queue has dissipated.

Off-road surveys may be approved even for high traffic volumes provided passing traffic is not delayed. Unreasonable delays can be avoided through appropriate sampling.

On-road surveys may only be approved for traffic volumes up to moderate levels. Excessive delay to passing traffic would occur at high traffic volumes due to the relative closeness of the survey area.

Central interview survey layouts are often proposed for postcard surveys, and may involve the stopping of all vehicles. This could lead to major delays and therefore, these surveys will generally only be approved in low volume locations. However, if the survey is to be conducted during the red phase at a location with traffic signals, approval may be given even if moderate traffic volumes exist. For this type of survey, the sample surveyed will be only those drivers stopped during the red phase. Information sheets should be available for drivers participating in postcard surveys to minimise disruption and delays.

Directions for motorists to enter the survey site will be made by a member of the NZ Police or a person authorised by Land Transport NZ. In some situations (generally where there are high speeds or volumes of traffic past the site) a police constable may be a required condition of approval. The provision of a member of the NZ Police is organised by the applicant and at the applicant's expense.

It is desirable to have an authorised person directing surveyed traffic back into the traffic.

At all times a clearly identified person in charge of the survey site will be present. This person, who will not be directly involved in the data collection, will ensure compliance with the approval conditions and have authority to delay, interrupt or discontinue the survey. If two directions of traffic are being surveyed simultaneously, then two separate sites will be operating.

All survey personnel will be easily and clearly identified and wear appropriate safety clothing specified in the *Code of practice for temporary traffic management*. All personnel should wear name and organisation identification.

The survey will be discontinued immediately upon verbal instruction of an officer of the NZ Police, the road controlling authority or the person issuing the approval for the survey.

A copy of the approval will be held by the person in charge of the site and produced on request to a member of the NZ Police, the road controlling authority or Land Transport NZ.

No one will have authority to detain any driver or require participation in the traffic survey.

Vehicles used solely to transport surveyors to the site should not be parked so they obstruct any part of the carriageway or shoulder within 100 metres of the survey site. A Police car may be located at the survey site at the discretion of a Police officer.

## Applications and information

Applications should be submitted in writing at least 15 working days prior to the date of the proposed survey and include the following details.

- Details of the survey purpose and reasons why the survey is necessary, and why other survey methods are deemed inappropriate.
- An approval from the appropriate road controlling authority to undertake the survey.
- A traffic management plan with detailed and dimensioned plan of the survey site layout including signs proposed.
- A copy of the proposed survey form along with a description of the proposed sampling method. For example, will the sampling be by the officer directing the traffic (eg number plate ending in 7) or by people within the survey area who are kept supplied with potential interviewees by the officer directing traffic.
- Estimates of the likely delays to traffic, including vehicles not interviewed. The estimates are to be supported by appropriate calculations based on traffic flows, interview duration, sample rate etc.

This policy is subject to revision at any time.

Applications and enquiries should be addressed to the nearest Land Transport NZ regional office.