



Roadside Mowing Safety

Across Louisiana, roadside mowing operations are one of the most common and most exposed activities taking place in the right-of-way. Yet, there are many times that crews operate without proper advance warning signage or traffic controls in place. When signage isn't set up correctly, drivers don't have time to process what's ahead. That's when you see sudden braking, last-second lane changes, and near misses. It only takes one of those situations to turn into something serious and becomes a huge risk for your municipality. Below provides guidance based from the Department of Transportation (DOT).

State Compliance

For any work in the right-of-way, including mowing, the DOT expects traffic control to follow the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). In plain terms, that means:

- Put out advance warning signs (like “Road Work Ahead” or “Mowing Ahead”)
- Space them out based on the speed of the road
- Use flashing lights and, when needed, a shadow vehicle
- Don't rely on just the mower or truck to alert

It is important to note that DOT requires certain signage distances dependent upon if a road is classified as Urban, Rural, or Expressway. DOT also provides guidance on types of signage as well as the size of signs. To reference these important distances, you can look up the Manual on Uniform Traffic Devices for Streets and Highways 11th Edition published December 2023.

Table 6B-1. Recommended Advance Warning Sign Minimum Spacing

Road Type	Distance between Signs**		
	A	B	C
Urban (low speed)*	100 feet	100 feet	100 feet
Urban (high speed)*	350 feet	350 feet	350 feet
Rural	500 feet	500 feet	500 feet
Expressway / Freeway	1,000 feet	1,500 feet	2,640 feet

Proper Signage

The picture below shows a mowing crew successfully setting up signage requirements on a busy highway. The most common issues when working on or near roadways are:



- No advance warning signs at all
- Only one sign being used where more are needed
- Signs placed too close to the work area
- Signs not properly spaced based upon speed
- Crews relying only on vehicle lights to alert drivers

Reflective Safety Devices

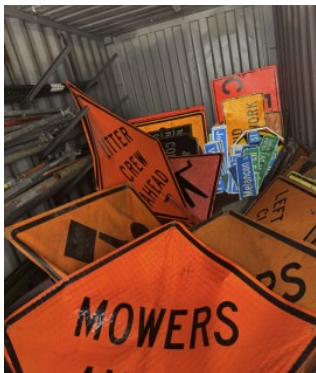
At a minimum, every mower or large piece of equipment operating along a roadway should have:



- Flashing amber light: Must be on and visible at all times while operating near traffic
- Slow Moving Vehicle (SMV) emblem: Clean, not faded, and clearly visible from the rear (reflective triangle)
- Visible rear of equipment: No grass buildup or obstructions
- Personnel wearing hi-visibility reflective vests and/or clothing

Reducing Risk

Training and equipment review:



- Ensure employees are trained on proper roadside mowing setup, including signage and visibility requirements
- Review current equipment to confirm required items are present and in working condition
- Replace or repair any missing, damaged, or non-functioning equipment