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# Customer Engagement at Street Works and Roadworks

## A Code of practice

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# 1. Summary, objectives and benefits

## What will this plan cover?

This code of practice sets out the way in which, and the tools we should use to interact with customers affected by works.

Predominately, this involves the distribution of information and engagement with residents, businesses and road users. This should not be confused with Public Consultation.

For example:

- We will tell you about upcoming road works to lay a new main
- We will then ask you what you thought about the way we conducted the work
- We will *not* canvass opinion on whether you think the works were needed.

## What are our objectives?

- To provide all Street Works and Highway practitioners with the minimum standards of customer engagement
- To notify customers concisely, consistently and clearly

## What are the benefits?

Following the code of practice will:

- improve public awareness
- improve public perception
- reduce the number of incoming queries
- improve the quality of outgoing information
- deliver top feedback results
- help provide excellent customer service

## 2. Classification of Customers

When planning roadworks, it is useful to understand the different customer groups who should be notified. We have grouped these customers into the following categories to help target and understand the best method for delivering information.

2.1. **Primary Customers-** those whose day to day lives are directly affected by the works:

- Direct householders: directly within the site boundaries
- Indirect householders: live near/on the affected road
- Direct shops and businesses: directly within the site boundaries
- Indirect shops and businesses: based near/on the affected road
- Road users: those who use the affected road daily or regularly
- Major events: Local carnivals, marches sports etc that are located within or near the site

2.2. **Secondary Customers-** those who need to know about the works for practical or professional reasons:

- Statutory Authorities: police, fire, ambulance, coastguard
- Public Transport
- Educational establishments: nearby schools and colleges
- Elected Representatives: County Councillors, Parish/Borough Councillors, District Councillors, MP, Town Councillors
- Site Staff: sub-contractors, supervisors
- Road users: those who use the affected road occasionally
- Local amenities: waste sites, community centres hospitals
- Other statutory undertakings: gas, water, electric etc

2.3. **Tertiary Customers-** those who have a general interest in our works:

- Road lobby groups: Freight Transport Association
- Local Media: Press, radio
- Environmental groups: English Nature, South Downs Conservations Board
- Business and Trade Associations

### 3. Levels of Engagement

In order to decide the level of engagement required we have graded the works by the potential disruption to customers. This is based on a number of factors, outlined in the grid below. For example, if the area where the works are planned are best described within the red boxes the works are level three.

	Typical location of works	Duration	Type of road	Are there businesses affected?	Are there any schools, hospitals nearby?	Is it a bus route?	
<b>Level of engagement</b>	Rural Area	Less than one week	U road	None	None	No	Mostly green= LEVEL 1- Minimum of one week's notice
	Residential area	1-2 weeks	C road	Handful of businesses	Yes- but not within site boundaries	School bus route	Mostly amber= LEVEL 2- Minimum of two weeks' notice
	Busy Urban Area	Over two weeks	A or B road (or traffic sensitive)	Town Centre	Yes- within site boundaries	Yes	Mostly red= LEVEL 3- Minimum of 4 weeks' notice

When deciding which level is appropriate, the communications team must determine the level of engagement based upon their knowledge of the particular area. This is based on the information provided to them by the Works Project Manager.

## 4. Communication channels

In order to communicate well with customers we need to make sure that the method of communication used is the right one.

Communicating effectively with customers not only provides a better service but improves public awareness of what we do and can reduce the number of incoming queries.

Every week we communicate with our customers in a variety of ways. Whether it is a customer seeing an advanced warning sign, sending an email or posting a tweet, there are a number of methods we use to communicate our works.

### Which method to use?

When informing customers of our works it is important that we use the correct method of communication in order to ensure that our message is heard; but which method should we use?

Once a level of engagement has been determined and stakeholders identified, it is then important to best decide the best methods in

which to communicate our works with our stakeholders based on the table.

		Method of Communication	Level of Engagement		
			1	2	3
Primary Customers		Public Meeting	x	x	✓*
		Information Pack /Letter	✓	✓	✓
	Secondary customers	Variable Message Signs	x	✓*	✓
		Advanced Warning Signs	✓	✓	✓*
		Courtesy Boards	✓	✓	✓
		Site Information Boards	x	✓*	✓
Tertiary Customers	Secondary customers	Press Release	x	✓*	✓
		Radio Release	x	✓*	✓
		Social media	✓*	✓*	✓

**KEY:** ✓Required; ✓\*Optional- based on knowledge of work, area etc    xNot required

#### 4.1. Advanced Warning Signs

Advanced warning signs are those erected before works commence, as opposed to countdown markers that give motorists warning of roadworks on the road ahead. Advanced Warning Signs should provide:

- Date of roadworks
- Duration of roadworks
- What is happening?
- Contact details
- 
- 

Signs should comply with the TSRGD

#### 4.2. Resident Information

This may take many forms but should include:

- Date of roadworks
- Duration of roadworks
- What is happening?

- Contact details
- Access restrictions

It may also include:

- Diversion details
- How to give feedback

## 5. Change control

Once works have been programmed and the pre-construction processes are underway, every effort should be made to maintain the start date. Change is both disruptive and expensive. The closer the change is made to the anticipated start date, the more expensive and disruptive this change becomes.

### Rationale

Changing our work plans once

we have communicated them with customers gives the impression that we don't know what we are doing and don't care about our customers.

### What happens when we change?

If dates change before works start but once communicated, it is essential that these changes are communicated to our customers.

### Once works begin

It is understandable that sometimes works do change. Bad weather and plant breakdowns can result in us having to change our plans once work has started. If this is the case, these changes must be communicated to identified customers using the channels already identified



## 6. Exceptions and variations

### 6.1. Mobile works

Mobile works programmes such as grass cutting, gully emptying and weed killing operate outside of the levels of engagement.

As these programmes follow schedules which often mean that teams can be in a number of locations in one day, it is difficult to accurately communicate these works in advance.

As a result, we should use channels that are appropriate and practical. For example, we may issue a tweet to let followers know where the grass cutting team will be each week.

The cyclic maintenance schedules should be made available to East Sussex Highways staff, especially the Highways Contact Centre, so that information can be given to customers who contact us about these works.

### 6.2. Reactive and Minor Works

As reactive works are exactly that, reactive, it is hard to communicate these works in advance.

On site courtesy signs will be on site whilst works are taking place. These signs will let customers know who we are and how to get in touch.

Operational Teams may also be supplied with Comments Cards and Contact Us postcards that they can give to customers to ask how we are doing and to let customers know how to get in touch.

## 7. Review and revision of code of practice

This document was produced as part of the East Sussex Highways Beyond Transformation Programme, its on-going programme for improving customer service and best practice.

East Sussex Highways is a partnership between East Sussex County Council and Kier Services.

As a working document this plan needs to be continually reviewed and revised. If in the view of the user or reading, should any part of the plan become:

- Unworkable, impractical or unnecessary, or
- If improvements can be made, or

- The plan can be streamlined in any way.

Then, this should be brought to the attention of:

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