Portable Variable Message Signs (PVMS)

These devices provide added (supplemental) warning and real time information concerning changing conditions. Use PVMS, if available, on high-speed, high-volume roadways (and on other roadways as needed) to supplement static signs to alert drivers to nighttime maintenance activities, road closures and workers exposed to traffic. PVMS shall not be used by themselves except in emergencies. Radar equipped PVMS should also be deployed in major active work zones where workers are exposed to traffic on high speed limited access highways for a minimum of 4 hours.

- Place PVMS well upstream of work areas, road closures or detours to allow time for driver response or diversion to other routes.

- Simple, specific messages are essential to ensure that they can be read and understood. Provide specific instructions and information (“Paving Ahead / Right Lanes Closed”, or “Exit 45 Closed / Use Exit 46”). Check the “Policy and Guidance for use of VMS” manual which is available from the Regional Traffic office for standard messages or consult with the Traffic Group.

- Limit messages to 2-part, 3-word text if possible. Longer messages cannot be read at typical freeway speeds. Don’t display general messages (“Drive Safely” or “Have A Nice Day”) or cautionary messages (“Caution” or “Road Work Ahead”).

- When not needed, turn off VMS, and, if possible, store outside the clear zone.