

Dear Road Wizard: I use a white cane to help get around the Indian Lakes area. I have found markers, after-hours barricades, sawhorses, and various signs placed on the sidewalks that I and other visually impaired veterans and citizens use. This is dangerous enough, but I also have diabetes. When we skin our legs or arms, healing is very slow and sometimes causes gangrene, which has to be removed via surgery. Can you ask ACHD to insist that their contractors use better judgment when placing temporary signs? A.M., for Gem State Regional Group of Blinded Veterans Association, Boise

The two photographs you enclosed showed how one leg of (several) sign tripods is positioned on the sidewalk with the other legs on the road or in the gutter. A typical sign says "Road Work Ahead." These were signs for projects lasting less than three days. It's easy to see how a white cane could miss the tripod while a shin would not.

ACHD's guidance for workers who place such signs says, "A minimum 3-foot horizontal clearance is required for the safe movement of pedestrians and bicycles when temporary work zone traffic control signs are placed on sidewalks and in bicycle lanes. Vehicular traffic lanes shall not be obstructed."

This means that the inside three feet of the sidewalk must remain clear if part of the sign is on the outer edge of the sidewalk. I had hoped to read something like, "Don't place sign tripods on sidewalks unless absolutely no alternative is feasible."

Still, I sense that ACHD's construction zone inspectors do believe that such signs should avoid sidewalks if possible. Therefore, I invite ANYONE, especially on a subdivision street, to call ACHD's construction dispatcher at 387-6280 if you see such a sign on your sidewalk.

The zone inspector will get the signs off the sidewalk if a better option is available. In the case of the photos you sent, a better alternative definitely was available.

Dear Road Wizard: Re the left turns from Federal Way onto Yamhill Road, couldn't those be given a permissive (green ball) signal? That is so effective at other intersections. W.H., Boise

Alas, you won't find protected/permissive set-ups where you have double left-turn lanes, such as at Yamhill. Two reasons:

Suppose that drivers occupy each of the two turn lanes. The green ball says they can go if the coast is clear. One driver judges that it is clear enough. The other driver, perhaps with slower reflexes or different life experience, doesn't really think so, but seeing the other car go, decides to follow the leader. Crash.

A more obscure reason pertains to the practical problem of where to place the overhead signal. Engineers try to center signals over each lane. But the protective/permissive "doghouse" heads, which have five lights, must govern the left-turn and a thru lane. Engineers compromise by hanging them above the line between the left-turn and nearest thru lane. This wouldn't work with two left-turn lanes.

Dear Road Wizard: A few months ago, you wrote that there must not be a lot of cars using Five Mile Road after it opened to Chinden Boulevard. I must disagree! Cars flow abundantly, especially during commuter hours. I'm grateful for our circular driveway -- we can enter facing the road. R.H., Boise

I proposed that *Fairview Avenue* wasn't then a major source of the traffic. Ustick Road, McMillan Street, and Chinden itself all feed Five Mile. I'm lobbying for a general Five Mile traffic count, but those gadgets are booked

up just now.