

Information sheet #4

Process for temporary restriction or closing and re-opening state-controlled roads during flooding, bushfires and other hazardous events

(incorporates content from Information Sheets #5, #6 and #7 (process for re-opening an SCR during wet weather and flooding and signage)

December 2021

Closing an SCR

The process used to close or place conditions / limitations on access to a state-controlled road (SCR) has six parts.

(1) Delegation to temporarily restrict or close a road due to flood, bushfire and other hazardous events

The decision to approve a temporary restriction of an SCR can be made by Transport and Main Roads legal delegates under:

- [Transport Infrastructure Act 1994](#) (TI Act)

Temporary road restrictions on SCRs are authorised under s46 TI Act for roads that require a limitation or condition. Officers with the legal delegation to approve road restrictions are listed in the TI Act s46(1) *Delegations*.

SCRs that are restricted (through closure to all traffic) should comply with s100 of the Transport Operations (Road use Management – Road Rules) Regulation 2009.

- [Transport Operations \(Road Use Management\) Act 1995](#) (TORUM Act)

In circumstances that present a danger, hindrance or obstruction to traffic, or if other emergencies exist or are likely to exist, reference should be made to the TORUM Act s71 *Delegations*.

These delegations allow authorised Transport and Main Roads and Queensland Police Service (QPS) officers to install official traffic signs on an SCR. Local government has limited delegations to install official traffic signs on an SCR.

Queensland Police Service

QPS officers also have the power to restrict and re-open an SCR. While it is preferable that Transport and Main Roads is consulted, there may be circumstances where the decision is taken without consultation. This will generally be in remote areas of the state where Transport and Main Roads relies on the availability of local QPS officers to make all the necessary judgements and decisions, or if they are the first responders at the location.

QPS officers should record the respective decision and report the details to Transport and Main Roads via email or telephone. Local governments should also be advised. QPS officers may have access to [QLD Traffic website](#) closure / reopening procedures. An agreed local position should be established on how this is coordinated. QPS records any changes to procedures in the *QPS Traffic Manual*.

Transport and Main Roads regional / district officers should ensure appropriate local interagency procedures are established so supporting action can be initiated as required.

Local government

Local governments who are not contracted to Transport and Main Roads under a [Road Maintenance Performance Contract \(RMPC\)](#) and/or [Road Asset Management Contract \(RAMC\)](#) or another agreement to close an SCR have limited powers to close the road under their own delegations.

Wherever possible, restriction or closure decisions should be made in consultation with Transport and Main Roads district / regional officers and be appropriately documented.

Circumstances where this action is likely to arise would be in remote areas of the state where Transport and Main Roads relies on the availability of local government personnel (road steward) to make the necessary judgements and decisions.

(2) Planning and preparation

Transport and Main Roads district / regional officers should ensure an appropriate local interagency process is established for managing and reporting of the SCR road restriction and re-opening.

This includes consideration for cross-district / regional boundary management of closures and re-opening roads.

RMPCs, RAMCs and Road Maintenance Contracts (RMCs) can allow for the local / regional or shire council, RoadTek or private contractor to undertake a range of work on behalf of Transport and Main Roads.

Written agreement between the two parties will be required to incorporate the circumstances of when to:

- commence the physical management of an SCR road restriction
- record and report the road restriction information to the delegate, and
- publish the traveller information.

This would generally form part of the overall contract detailed during pre-start negotiations and should be reviewed annually.

(3) Physical assessment

Initial assessment or re-assessment to retain / increase restrictions on SCR

The physical road assessment can be undertaken by a Transport and Main Roads officer or RMPC / RAMC / RMC / RoadTek contractor in line with the Transport and Main Roads' delegated officers' requirements, and appropriately documented as identified during the pre-season planning and preparation.

The frequency of reassessment, including the physical inspection and/or updating of signs, needs to be determined by the Transport and Main Roads delegated officer.

Where there are pre-identified flood-prone hotspots, location-specific requirements should be documented during pre-season planning and preparation and updated as situations / infrastructure changes (for example, food mitigation measures).

When assessing whether an SCR needs to be temporarily restricted or re-assessed to retain or increase restrictions, authorised assessing officers must consider the following:

- safety of travellers, residents, departmental agency officers and responders on the road
- depth of still water (300 mm or more)
- depth of any flowing water (regional discretion: the faster the flow of water, the lower the depth for closure)
- protection of road assets
- site-specific circumstances, such as known flood hotspots
- site remoteness
- type and volume of traffic
- location is safe from further incident issues
- visibility and/or other terrain factors (such as possible further landslides and washouts)
- stranded travellers and turnaround access (if applicable)
- diversion routes (if applicable)
- determine which other agencies need to be involved / informed (for example, local government, QPS), and
- social and economic requirements of affected communities.

Assessment to reduce restrictions on an SCR

Note: If the SCR contains a vulnerable piece of infrastructure (such as a bridge), an inspection is to be undertaken, wherever possible, by a qualified Class 2 Transport and Main Roads Bridge Inspector before the SCR can be re-opened.

(4) Signage and supporting measures

Restricted Road Use Notices

Under section 46 TI Act, the Restricted Road Use Notices (RRUNs) (signs) should be placed at the site of a restricted SCR wherever possible.=

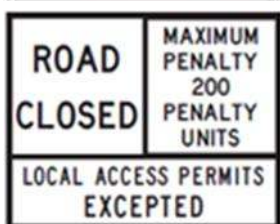
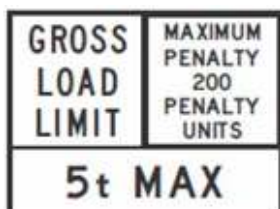
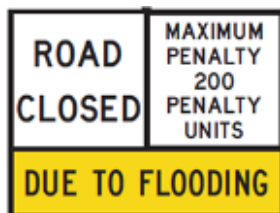
The sign details information about a restricted SCR during wet weather and flooding, or other hazardous conditions. 'Restricted' can mean temporarily closed or restrictions apply.

The restrictions notify the public of the road condition and help protect roads from sustaining further damage.

The RRUN signage is enforceable under section 46 of the TI Act and a penalty applies if a person drives past these signs.

To enable enforcement to be undertaken, the following information must be included on the signage such as the multi-message type signs:

- black-on-white messages that state how the road is restricted (road closed, gross load limit)
- black-on-white message that shows the penalty unit enforcement.



NO ENTRY signs

In circumstances that present a danger, hindrance, or obstruction to traffic, or if other emergencies exist or are likely to exist, reference should be made to section 71, TORUM Act.



This sign may be placed at the site of a temporary SCR closure.

Unlike RRUNS, no approval will be granted to the general public to drive past a NO ENTRY sign on a SCR.



The NO ENTRY sign is enforceable under section 100 of the Transport Operations (Road Use Management – Road Rules) Regulation 2009 (Queensland Road Rules).

The black-on-white

ROAD CLOSED panel can be used with the NO ENTRY sign, as well as the warning sign DUE TO FLOODING.

The white-on-black ROAD CLOSED panel can be used with the NO ENTRY LED wording within the annulus.



Three demerit points and a fine apply to any member of the public who drives past a NO ENTRY sign.

Supporting measures

Wherever possible, barrier boards should be placed at the site of the SCR restriction or road closure.



The ROAD CLOSED... km AHEAD sign shows that the road ahead is closed. These signs must be placed where

travellers can manoeuvre their vehicles and turn around, before the actual point of closure.

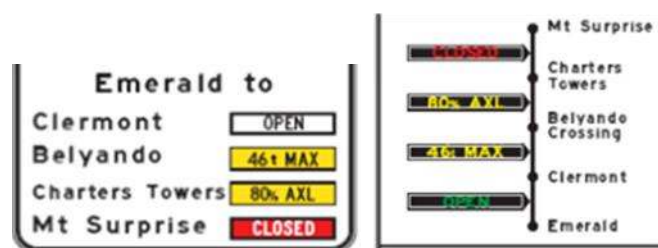


The WATER OVER ROAD sign is used to indicate the road ahead is covered by water but trafficable with care. Depth indicators should be checked, if present.

If the water level rises to a point where the road is no longer considered to be trafficable with care, the WATER OVER ROAD sign must be removed and replaced with appropriate road closure signs.

Neither of these signs is enforceable on its own.

Road condition information signs



The site chosen for advanced information signage should be practical and consideration given to the turnaround point capacity, detouring and load limiting.

They are usually located at strategic locations near towns throughout the road network to allow road users to plan their journey based on the available road condition information.

(5) Recording and reporting information

As a minimum, at each assessment of the road, the information recorded should include:

- details of the physical road restrictions, closure or re-opening (signage and supporting measures)

- reason for decision (for example, flood water, bush fire, hazardous event or asset protection)
- other conditions which have been placed, such as lowering the speed limit, providing warning and advisory signs and restrictions to access
- contact details of the Registered Professional Engineer Queensland (RPEQ) engineer / authorised inspecting officer who inspected the road prior to re-opening (*when applicable*)
- contact details of the assessing officer (in field / at site) making the road restrictions, closure or re-opening decision; and
- date and time of recorded condition change.

This could be completed with the road condition report.

It is also good practice to take and retain photo evidence of the signage implemented, should enforcement need to occur. Photos are also a useful visual aid for publication as traveller information.

This information should (as soon as practicable) be provided:

- to the legal delegate for their approval and record management requirements.; and
- for publishing on the various traveller information channels (see next section).

Note: Unless a suitable record of the decision to temporarily close a road or section of a road is made, the measures taken cannot be legally enforced (for example, in the event of the need to defend a claim for damages sustained in relation to a road closure, or if it is proposed to prosecute those who breach road closure arrangements). In other words, if it is likely that enforcement action will be required, the decision to close or restrict a road must be suitably documented.

In the event that the decision is taken to restrict, close or re-open a state-controlled road by a Police officer or other authority (with or without consultation with Transport and Main Roads officers or contractor), on becoming aware of the decision, the relevant officer should record the decision, who has made it and under which authority or delegation, the circumstances and all relevant details as defined previously.

(6) Providing traveller information

Section 46(3) of the TI Act states that road restrictions should be appropriately advertised, including the option to publish to a Transport and Main Roads website.

The [QLD Traffic website](#) has been designed to allow departmental officers (and other authorised users) to record, update and advise the travelling public of road restrictions in next-to-real time.

QPS officers and local government regional / shire councils are encouraged to link their road reporting systems to *QLD Traffic* to provide comprehensive statewide road conditions information.

Transport and Main Roads district / regional officers should ensure appropriate local interagency procedures are established and any supporting action can be initiated, including the reporting of the restriction and re-opening of the SCR onto *Qld Traffic* (email QLDTraffic@tmr.qld.gov.au).

If there is a gap in time between the official decision (installation of physical restriction or closure) to temporarily restrict, close or re-open an SCR and the ability to access the *QLD Traffic* website to record and report the details relating to that decision, the authority / authorised officer may initially record the decision and any consequential actions using the appropriate departmental form. This will ensure the details can be accurately progressed once the *QLD Traffic* website is accessible.

As a minimum, the information recorded should include:

- contact details of the delegated officer making the decision
- details of the temporary restriction (closure / condition / limitation)
- reason for the temporary restriction (for example, to prevent damage to the road, protect safety of road users)
- supporting measures initiated, including the recommended signage requirements, and
- whether the restricted road has a bridge and requires an inspection (prior to re-opening).

Re-opening an SCR

The process for reopening an SCR following a temporary restriction or closure has three parts.

(1) Physical assessment

Key factors to consider when determining whether to reopen a road:

- velocity and depth of remaining / anticipated flood waters
- road integrity

- restrictions on vehicle access by type and load, and
- a road that has been inundated with water for some time may need to be restricted to a certain load limit until repairs have been completed.

(Signs will need to be removed or changed to display current restrictions).

Prior to a road (or section of road) being reopened, the following must be undertaken to ascertain safety of passage by some or all classes of vehicles:

- assessment / inspection of damaged / saturated roads, drainage systems, shoulders, bridges and roadside furniture (signage, lighting, guard rails), and
- assessment inspection officers will include:
 - engineering and technical staff
 - road inspectors (level of inspector will depend on the severity of the infrastructure condition)
 - bridge engineers (where a valuable or vulnerable bridge is on the road that has been restricted, a Class 2 Bridge Inspector should be present)
 - specialist officers
 - local government authorised officers, and
 - Queensland Police Service (QPS) officers.

Where a re-opening decision presents potential for non-compliance by road users, supporting measures and attendant personnel arrangements can be established, where possible.

More detailed information is available in the [Road Drainage Manual](#).

(2) Power to reopen an SCR

Officers with the legal delegation to approve the reopening (and closure) of an SCR are referred to the following:

Transport and Main Roads

The current schedule of delegations under the TI Act can be found on insideTMR [Delegations database](#).

A trained and experienced Transport and Main Roads inspector can recommend the reopening of a road under the direction of a departmental engineer. If the road has geotechnical and/or structural damage, an RPEQ engineer (where possible) should be involved in the decision-making to re-open the road.

Queensland Police Service

QPS officers have the power under several sections of transport legislation to close and reopen an SCR. Where it is necessary for QPS officers to re-open a road, contact should be made with Transport and Main Roads wherever possible.

QPS can record its respective re-opening decision and report the details directly onto the QLD *Traffic* website if system access is requested.

QPS is to advise Transport and Main Roads and local governments of the re-opening roads through appropriate communication channels as agreed within each district.

Local government, RoadTek or contractor

If there is a contract in place between Transport and Main Roads and RoadTek, a contractor or local government, those parties can re-open an SCR in line with the reopening process outlined previously and provided Transport and Main Roads has been advised.

(3) Recording and reporting of data

As with temporary closures and any other restrictions, the approval, data recording and information reporting of SCR re-openings is managed through the QLD *Traffic* traffic information core system.

QLD *Traffic* is Transport and Main Roads' single source of truth for closure and reopening of SCRs.

As a minimum, the information recorded should include:

- details of the reopened road, including any restrictions on vehicle access by type and load
- other conditions which have been placed on the road, such as lowering the speed limit, providing warning and advisory signs and restrictions to access
- contact details of the RPEQ engineer (where appropriate) or authorised inspecting officer who inspected the road prior to reopening
- contact details of the delegated officer making the reopening decision, and
- date and time of recorded condition change.

Constant contact with the Transport and Main Roads Statewide Traffic Management Centre or local Traffic Management Centre / Control Centre should be maintained.

Contact information

Policy and standards

timanagement@tmr.qld.gov.au

Traffic Engineering, Technology & Systems
Engineering & Technology

Signage

TrafficEngineering.Support@tmr.qld.gov.au

Traffic Engineering, Technology & Systems
Engineering & Technology