



# CONSTRUCTION

## Resource Guide

Second Edition Sept 2018





Dear business owner:

Road construction can present challenges for a business, but with the right information, proper coordination, and strategic planning, your business can not only endure the process but also prosper during it.

The Small Business Administration (SBA) and the Ada County Highway District (ACHD) have partnered together to provide you with this “Road Construction Survival Guide” to offer practical guidance on how to approach road construction work, and specifically the planned construction in your area.

We hope this guide will help you and your employees prepare for any future disruptions. We want to help your business throughout the process. Just remember, road construction can be very challenging at times, but the end result can be rewarding to your business and customers!

Sincerely,

Gary Eisenbraun  
District Director Boise  
District Office U.S. Small Business Administration

Chelsea Holt  
Business and Community Relations Coordinator  
Ada County Highway District



## Take Action !

Hello business owner,

So your business is near a future construction project? Don't worry this guide is here to help you plan for the work ahead.

Let's be honest, construction is never without its impact, but when complete, it can improve traffic flow, provide improvements such as sidewalks and bike lanes, and can repair or replace aging infrastructure.

There are some things you can do to mitigate the effects of construction on your business. Keep in mind though that it will require patience as many unforeseen circumstances can delay or lengthen a project. Remember that ACHD and the project contractor are doing their utmost to resolve issues as they arise, as it is also in their best interest to see the project complete on time.

To help small businesses survive road construction, the Boise District Office of the Small Business Administration and ACHD created this survival guide containing appropriate agency and business contacts and tips for surviving the construction process.

While road construction can be hard on small businesses, the maintenance and repairs can be good for your company in the end. With this positive outcome in mind, be prepared ahead of time. Plan carefully so that once the project is completed, your business can continue to thrive.

One business owner who went through two years of road construction said:

**“Although it was a painful process, the end product was worth it. The project enhanced the traffic flow to my business and my guests are more likely to frequent by business because of this.”**

# Know Your Resources



## Resources Available to You:

Most projects will have a project webpage. The project webpage includes information about the work expected, the timeline and construction updates. In some instances there may also be an email list you can join to have updates emailed to you during construction.

You can find a list of ACHD projects by visiting:

<http://www.achdidaho.org/Projects/projects.aspx>

The Business and Community Relations Coordinator provides updates and coordinates work to minimize impact where possible. This staffer can help provide leaflets or detour maps to share with your customers.

You may also want to consider reaching out to other neighborhoods that have dealt with construction projects. Find out how others prepared and communicated. Ask what worked and what they would have done differently--there is no need to re-invent the wheel.

Don't forget to look at the back of this packet for a list of resources that may come in handy during construction. This includes a list of names and phone numbers for various agencies that you may want to engage with during a construction project.



**When in doubt, call us! 208.387.6100**

We are happy to help answer your questions.

## Business Planning: What You Can Do Before Construction Begins!

### *Take Note of All Communications from ACHD and Attend All Meetings*

Projects change, and this will ensure you have the most current information and can organize your business accordingly.

### *Join Local Business Organizations or Consider Forming One*

There is strength in numbers. Make sure to communicate with other local leaders so you can share your concerns with one voice. Consider assigning association staff as liasons to the construction project. That person can attend planning meetings to funnel business concerns to the groups.

### *Partner with Other Neighborhood Businesses*

Remember, you are not alone. Develop a group plan for staying in contact with ACHD, construction project leaders, and your customers.

### *Work with Neighborhood Associations*

These organizations could serve as partners as you find ways to communicate with the community.

### *Work Closely with ACHD in the Early Stages of a Project*

Before construction contracts are written it helps to work with ACHD staff to make sure that those contracts include business friendly requirements. Having things like a regularly scheduled meeting before and during construction between business owners and construction staff could go a long way.

**As a business owner, you are always planning and improving your business model. When you are informed ahead of time, road construction is something you can prepare for. Here are some suggestions from business owners who have been through the construction process.**



# Before Construction Cont.



## Work with Your Employees to Develop a Game Plan

Talk with your employees about the process and strategies to stay prosperous during construction. Discuss marketing efforts and allow employees to share any concerns they may have. Your employees will appreciate the opportunity, and the dialogue may spark new ideas that will benefit your business.

## Identify Marketing, Advertising and Design Firms

Look for resources within your neighborhood or community that may provide pro bono assistance.



## Use Social Media

**Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and other social media platforms are all excellent channels for providing updates and reminding customers you are open for business.**



## Gather Customers' Contact Information before Construction Begins

That way you can keep them apprised of road conditions, best routes and promotional specials during the construction period. Consider sending weekly emails to customers--if you keep them informed and in the loop, they may not be as likely to change their buying habits during construction.

## Inform Customers in Advance!

Keeping your customers informed gives them the ability to navigate construction and access your business. Examples can include putting up signs or passing out copies of alternative routes to the business before the project begins. ACHD may be able to help provide this information so be sure to contact the Business and Community Relations Coordinator.

## Consider Email Marketing

Use the list of email contacts you compiled to notify customers of special events, discounts, etc. You can also use the list to send out any relevant construction updates or fliers.

# Business Planning

## *Reduce Inventory*

When possible, reducing inventory can be a useful strategy to respond to slower periods due to construction.

## *Secure a Good Line of Credit When Times are Good*

It is important to get a line of credit during a good time when sales are up. That way you'll have it when and if there is an emergency.

## *Contact Lenders*

You may want to inform lenders of the upcoming project and see if there are opportunities to restructure debt and lines of credit in light of potentially diminishing revenues.

## *Keep Your Staff Lean*

It is an unfortunate reality, but if you expect a significant decrease in customers once construction begins, you may want to consider keeping a lean staff. If someone quits in the spring, you may decide to keep the position vacant if there is a construction project coming up that summer. Other options might include reducing hours.

## *You May Need to Rework Your Budget*

For instance, more money might be required for cleaning. While there is little you can do to reduce the dust and noise of a construction site, you can focus on keeping your own business as dust-free as possible. If you only clean your windows once a week right now, you may want to consider increasing that during construction. You may also decide to allocate more time or money for general cleaning and upkeep.



# Tips for Once Construction Begins

## Make Sure Signage is Clear

Traffic delays will be inevitable during a construction project, but signage can help a great deal. See what sort of signs are going up to direct traffic and make sure they make sense for your customers. If you have a need or concern, make sure to share it with ACHD staff.

**Pardon Our Dust!**  
Here are some tips  
and tricks to consider  
during construction.



## Consider Using a Back Entrance for Better Customer Access

Access to your business can be challenging during construction. If you have an alternative access, it may be easier to re-direct your customers that way. Make sure there are clear signs directing your customers or detour maps to show them the alternative route.

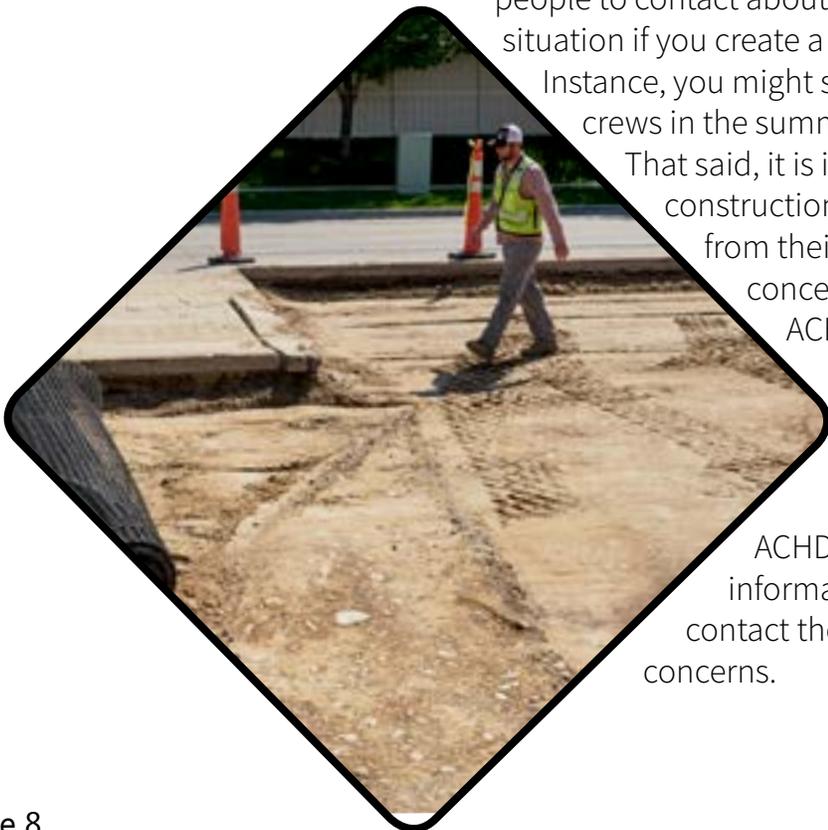
## Create a Friendly Rapport with Construction Workers

While the on-site construction workers are not the appropriate people to contact about concerns, it can only improve the situation if you create a friendly rapport with them. For instance, you might supply complimentary ice water to crews in the summer.

That said, it is important to emphasize that construction workers are following instructions from their supervisors. Communicating concerns to supervisors, project leads, and ACHD staff will get you the best results.

## Keep Contact Information Close at Hand

ACHD will provide the appropriate contact information ahead of time, but you can always contact the ACHD Business Coordinator with concerns.



## More Tips!

### *Provide Direction and Access Information for Your Employees*

Depending on the number of people you employ, you might want to consider offering a carpool from an agreed upon location.

### *Consider Alternative Ways of Getting Your Message Out*

When preparing for construction, using social media tools during construction can also benefit your business. Think outside the box and make sure you are taking full advantage of social media. For example, you can always share detour maps through social media if your signage is not proving effective.

### *Contact Suppliers to Provide Directions*

Find out the schedule for your delivery trucks and talk with the project contractor or ACHD to coordinate deliveries. If there are alternative routes, share those with your suppliers.

### *Deliver Products to Your Customers*

This may help you reach customers who are unable or unwilling to navigate the construction site.

### *Stay on Message*

Consider keeping a script next to your phone, so that you and your employees have quick and easy directions to provide to customers. Make sure all your employees know what to say and how to say it.

### *Extend Business Hours*

Consider staying open later in the evening after construction crews are finished for the day. Be flexible to accommodate customer demands and other perceived needs.



*Don't Relocate!*

**Occasionally businesses facing lease renewals consider moving to avoid construction. Be careful--check to see if any projects are planned in a location before you move.**

# Additional Communication Tips

## Stay Positive

**While sometimes easier said than done, encouraging and generating a positive, healthy environment will support your staff and ensure retention of valuable employees and your customers!**

## Creative Promotions!

Businesses have come up with a lot of creative ways to make the construction period fun for customers:

- One business had a construction worker sit outside of its shop during the lunch break and talk to kids and families about the ongoing project. The trucks were a big draw for kids.
- Some businesses have used prize drawings to attract customers. Do something above and beyond what you would usually do to attract customers.
- Other ideas include cash mobs, loyalty punch cards, monthly events, “construction happy hours,” etc.

## Consider Pooling Resources with Other Businesses

Partner with other businesses in the construction zone to let the public know you are still open. If you are part of a business association, consider agreeing to increased dues temporarily so the organization can broaden the marketing area. Then you, as a business owner trying to keep staff lean, won't have to spend as many resources on it.

## Stay Informed!

Attend any public meetings related to the project. That way you can hear the latest news, get ideas, and share concerns. Be sure to open all correspondence or emails from ACHD.

## Make the Construction Work for You

If you have been considering a remodel for your business, why not do it during construction? Use this slower time to get things done that you haven't had time to address.

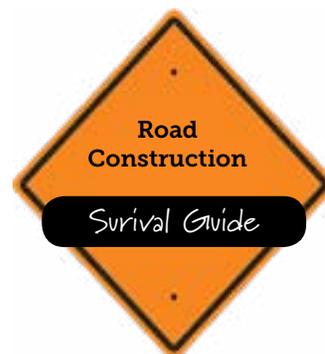
## Once Construction is Complete

Now's the time to focus on recapturing market share and winning back customers.

**Consider promotions and advertising** to let customers know the roadways are free of construction. Now is your chance to promote a new image and the convenience provided by the completed roadway.

### **Celebrate the projects completion.**

Take advantage of your chamber membership (if applicable) by grand re-opening ceremony. You may also consider pooling resources with local businesses for a grand celebration and/or shared advertisement.



## Additional Business Resources:

For additional help, you might consider seeking free guidance from local business organizations such as:

### **Boise Metro Chamber of Commerce:**

1101 Front Street #100  
Boise, ID 83702  
Monday-Friday 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
208.472.5205  
[www.boisechamber.org](http://www.boisechamber.org)

### **Boise District Office U.S. Small Business Administration**

380 E. Parkcenter Blvd.  
Boise, ID 83706  
Monday-Friday 8 a.m-4:30 p.m.  
208.334.9004  
FAX: 208.334.9353  
[BDOEventReg@sba.gov](mailto:BDOEventReg@sba.gov)  
[www.sba.gov/id](http://www.sba.gov/id)

### **SCORE**

Boise District Office SBA  
Suite 330  
380 E. Parkcenter Blvd.  
Boise, ID 83706  
Monday-Friday 10 a.m.-2 p.m.  
208.334.1696  
[www.treasurevalley.score.org](http://www.treasurevalley.score.org)

### **Idaho Small Business Development Center**

2360 W. University Drive  
Suite 2132  
Boise, ID 83706  
Monday-Friday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
208.426.3875  
[www.idahosbdc.org](http://www.idahosbdc.org)

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## ACHD Contact:

- **Chelsea Holt**, Business and Community Relations Coordinator, 208.387.6147

**Email:** [projects@achdidaho.org](mailto:projects@achdidaho.org)

**Website:** [www.achdidaho.org](http://www.achdidaho.org)

**Phone:** (208) 387-6100

**Hours:** Monday-Friday; 8:00 a.m-4:30 p.m.

