

SONORAN DESERT TORTOISE AWARENESS PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Arizona Department of Transportation
Environmental Planning Group

The instructions and outline below are intended as a general guideline. The project contract specifications and project biologist will identify specific requirements of the desert tortoise awareness program.

Time Requirement: A training session should take no longer than approximately 30 minutes. An additional 10 minutes should be sufficient to go over AGFD tortoise handling guidelines with designated tortoise handlers.

1. Before the Training

- a) Determine who would be the project designated tortoise handlers. This should generally be 2 or 3 people, one of which will always be on-site. Designated tortoise handlers can be ADOT staff or contractors.
- b) On the handout sheet, sign-in sheet, and certification cards, enter the project specific information (project name, TRACS number, route and milepost limits, names of designated tortoise handlers and project biologist). Print out the appropriate number of copies of each for the training.

2. At the Training

- a) Distribute handout, sign-in sheet(s), and certification cards. Ask trainees to fill out sign-in sheet, and print their first and last name on their cert card (which you will sign at the end of the training session).
- b) Briefly describe the following:
 - Desert tortoise identification (refer to photo in handout)
 - Difference in range and legal status between Mohave population and Sonoran population
 - Sonoran desert tortoise habitat
 - Desert tortoise burrows (refer to photo in handout)
 - Potential for occurrence in project area
 - Measures to avoid impacting tortoises (refer to handout)
- c) Describe the project-specific procedures to follow in the event tortoises or suspected tortoise burrows are encountered (e.g., contact a designated tortoise handler).
- d) Answer any questions.
- e) Ensure everyone has signed the sign-in sheet, and collect sign-in sheet(s).
- f) Sign trainees' certification cards and ask trainees to carry these cards with them when on site.
- g) Separately, give the designated tortoise handlers a copy of the AGFD handling guidelines, briefly go over the guidelines, and answer any questions.

3. After the Training

- a) Send copies of training sign-in sheets to the Environmental Planning Group biologist.

SONORAN DESERT TORTOISE AWARENESS PROGRAM HANDOUT

Arizona Department of Transportation Environmental Planning Group
Project Name, TRACS Number, Route and MP Limits



Desert Tortoise



Example of Desert Tortoise burrow
(But not all burrows/shelters will look like this)

- State law prohibits take, possession, or harassment of wild Sonoran desert tortoises.
- Be on the lookout for tortoises.
- Check under vehicles for tortoises before moving vehicles.
- Drive slowly, especially on unpaved roads or off-road.
- Cover any holes/pits/trenches at the end of each construction day.
- **DO NOT HANDLE TORTOISES!** If you see a tortoise or possible tortoise burrow, suspend any activity that may harm the tortoise or destroy the burrow and immediately call one of the designated tortoise handlers listed below for direction.

Designated Tortoise Handlers: Name 1 (phone number), Name 2 (phone number)

Project Biologist: Name (phone number)

 <p style="text-align: right;">Project Name TRACS Number Route & MP Limits</p> <p>Participant Below Attended Desert Tortoise Awareness Program</p> <p>Participant (print): _____</p> <p>Instructor (sign): _____</p> <p>Date: _____</p> <p>Tortoise Handlers: Name (phone #) Project Biologist: Name (phone #)</p>	 <p style="text-align: right;">Project Name TRACS Number Route & MP Limits</p> <p>Participant Below Attended Desert Tortoise Awareness Program</p> <p>Participant (print): _____</p> <p>Instructor (sign): _____</p> <p>Date: _____</p> <p>Tortoise Handlers: Name (phone #) Project Biologist: Name (phone #)</p>
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