

Are you a first responder? Please Don't Cut the Cables!

A new safety feature is being added to many stretches of select Michigan highways. A new barrier type called high-tension cable barrier (also known as cable guardrail) is being used by MDOT primarily in freeway medians to reduce the frequency and severity of median crossover crashes.



Keeping the Cable Intact

If vehicles get tangled in the cable, it may seem easy to just cut the cable to gain better access. However, there are better options. The first is to loosen the cables by removing adjacent support posts.

If a vehicle gets tangled in the cables, try to move the cables back to their original position to release tension in the cables. Consider removing the vehicle by extricating it in the opposite manner that it entered the cable system.

The cables also can be loosened at the turnbuckles. However, when loosening turnbuckles, the threaded terminals always should remain visible in the inspection holes located on the turnbuckle. **NOTE:** If the cables are under tension, loosening the turnbuckles any further should never be attempted since this can damage the threaded terminals and turnbuckle.

A preferred alternative to cutting the cable is cutting the turnbuckle. It is much easier and less costly to replace a turnbuckle than installing a cable splice or replacing a cable section. When cutting a turnbuckle, it is advisable to remove the adjacent posts in the vicinity of the turnbuckle. Before cutting the turnbuckle, loosen the turnbuckle until the end of each threaded terminal reaches the inspection hole. Always cut in the middle of the turnbuckle.



CUT THE CABLES ONLY AS A LAST RESORT. Cutting cables should only be considered under life or death situations where time is absolutely critical, and other alternatives for loosening cables are not feasible. Cutting cables will require a cable splice or a complete cable section replacement, which is time consuming and costly.

If the cables must be cut, make sure all personnel are clear of the cable. Also, cut the cable between two undamaged posts, away from the impact area.

**Need assistance or
more explanation?
Contact MDOT ASAP**

MDOT Maintenance personnel can provide guidance and on-site help at a crash scene 24 hours a day, seven days a week, through your local State Patrol or Law Enforcement Dispatch Center.

High-tension cables are under thousands of pounds of tension. Therefore, cutting a cable has the potential to cause injury. MDOT Maintenance personnel are trained to safely add slack to cables by taking out posts and loosening turnbuckles.

Contact your local MDOT Transportation Service Center with any questions or safety concerns regarding high-tension cable barrier.

**For more information, visit:
www.michigan.gov/cableguardrail**

BEFORE CUTTING AT TURNBUCKLE, REMOVE POSTS FIRST FOR SAFETY REASONS

