



CFMEU SAFETY ALERT

CFMEU OH&S SAFETY UNIT

SPECIAL SAFETY ALERT

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Pedestrians Hurt By Flying Concrete: Pumping Company Convicted, Fined \$40,000.

December 13, 2004

The County Court in Melbourne has convicted and fined a concrete pumping company \$40,000 after two pedestrians were hit by flying concrete while a pump was cleared of a blockage.

Vic WorkSafe's Construction and Utilities Program Director, Geoff Thomas, said **the incident should warn the construction industry that maintaining safety standards also meant passers by should not be exposed to risk.**

Mr Thomas said the operators of this type of plant and their employers need to appreciate the potential for serious injury or death, not just for people on the construction site, but also members of the public, whether they are on foot or in vehicles.

"The pressures that can be generated by these pumps can be extreme; consequently the risk of a serious injury or death can be high.

"There is a need for risks to be assessed, and then re-assessed if circumstances change," Mr Thomas said.

The Office of Public Prosecutions told Judge Carolyn Douglas **concrete had blocked the pumping lines and that the operator, employed by Combined Concrete Pumping Pty Ltd, had not been trained to deal with this particular situation.**

Combined Concrete Pumping pleaded guilty to charges laid under sections 21 and 22* of the Occupational Health and Safety Act after the incident at the "Liberty Towers" site at the corner of Collins and Spencer Streets, Melbourne, in May 2001.

Although the pump operator had conducted a job safety analysis, it did not anticipate the possibility of a mixer truck not being on the site.

Blockages associated with concrete pumps are generally discharged into a cement mixer, but on the day of the incident the truck had left before the unblocking work was attempted.

The court was told that in the absence of the truck, the concrete was not discharged into a contained area, but into the street without the presence of barriers to protect passers by.

Apart from the two female pedestrians suffering bruising to the legs as a result of being hit by ejected concrete, a window at a nearby shop was smashed.

In passing sentence, Judge Douglas said **it was clear the pump operator was inadequately supervised and that as it was 4:45 pm a shortcut was taken which exposed pedestrians to danger.**

She said **the company needed systems to ensure a truck or barriers were in place to receive cleared concrete and for a system to ensure staff adhered to safety requirements.**

The company was convicted and fined \$5000 for failing to provide a safe workplace (s21) and \$35,000 for failing to ensure people other than employees were not exposed to risk.

DMG Blowback Procedure

- **As a first option;** Lines must be blown out into a concrete truck agitator using a secured 90 bend as shown in the photo below.
- **As a second option;** blow into a rubbish skip, with a formwork ply cover and using two Y20 steel bars through the lifting lugs of the skip to hold the ply down, and anchor the end of the rubber hose to prevent it from coming out of the skip.
- All blowbacks must be carried out in a coordinated and controlled manner, to minimise the dangers associated with the pressure blow out effect.
- Ensure bystanders are kept clear of the blow out area during the blowback operation, this may mean closing off access ways or placing barriers or spotters to prevent people from exposure.
- **Do not:** under any circumstances blow out a line in a public area or adjacent to a public area unless you are following the correct DMG procedures for blowing lines.
- **Do not:** Place other workers or yourself at risk when blowing out lines.
- **If you can not use the two options above seek advice from your Supervisor.**

Use a 90° bend from line into the back of the agitator.



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