

SAFETY ALERT

MOVING PLANT ON CONSTRUCTION SITES

There have been a number of recent incidents where workers have suffered serious injuries from being hit by moving plant on construction sites. Some of these incidents have been fatal.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

Occupational health and safety legislation requires employers to ensure that controls are implemented to eliminate or minimise the risk of moving plant colliding with pedestrians or other moving plant.

Employers must also ensure that moving plant is fitted with appropriate safety features and warning devices that are maintained and tested, to alert people who are at risk from the movement of the plant.

Working near moving plant is a high risk activity. Particular care should be taken to ensure the safety of workers and members of the public where moving plant is in operation.

CONTROLS FOR THE SAFE OPERATION OF PLANT

The use of specific measures to eliminate or minimise identified risks should involve the selection of the most effective control measures based on a risk assessment.

The controls identified in this Safety Alert are not exhaustive and it is expected that a number of measures would need to be selected and integrated into the system of work to ensure the highest possible level of safety.

The following are some of the control measures that should be considered:

- isolating vehicles and plant from persons on the site
- using fencing, barriers, barricades, temporary warning or control signs
- planning the direction that plant moves, so visibility is not restricted
- implementing safe working distances
- using clear communication systems
- minimising amount of plant working at one time
- using demarcation lines or zones
- using audible reversing alarms
- using reversing sensors
- using reversing cameras (as pictured)
- using flashing lights
- using high visibility garments
- using spotters or observers.

The use of technology such as sensors or reversing cameras is a useful aid to the plant operator but has limitations (eg blind spots) and must always be used with an effective warning system for persons at risk from the movement of the plant.

Safe work method statements (SWMS) and vehicle movement procedures are required under occupational health and safety legislation and will assist in ensuring the safety of workers and the public around moving plant.

Workers must be consulted during the development of the SWMS and the vehicle movement procedures, and receive instruction on the procedures. These should be updated each time the conditions on the site change in a way that may affect the health and safety of persons at the workplace, or if they are found to be insufficient to effectively control the subject risks. Vehicle movement procedures and traffic control plans are particularly important where work is being undertaken on or near public roads.

Vehicle movement procedures should consider:

- positioning and repositioning of plant
- isolating workers/pedestrians from the moving plant
- plant being operated near underground or aboveground services
- plant operating in noisy environments
- moving plant onto a public road from site
- maintenance and servicing of plant
- planning the work so that plant moves in a forward direction as often as practicable
- reversing plant.

The plant operator should observe the following procedures:

- follow all the directions in the SWMS
- where practicable, plant should always move in a forward direction
- ensure no persons are at risk before reversing
- avoid hazards by facing and maintaining attention in the direction of travel.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information on moving plant can be found in:

- *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001*
- *WorkCover NSW Code of practice: Moving plant on construction sites* (Catalogue No. 1310)
- Australian Standard AS 1742.3:2002, *Manual of uniform traffic control devices – Traffic control devices for works on roads*

Information is also available on the WorkCover website www.workcover.nsw.gov.au or by calling WorkCover on 13 10 50

FIGURE 1: EXAMPLE OF A REVERSING CAMERA



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Catalogue No.5049 V1.00 © WorkCover NSW 1206



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