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Worker struck by telehandler

19 April 2022

A 51-year-old worker suffered fatal crush injuries whilst walking through a waste collection and recycling facility. The worker was struck by a telehandler fitted with a bucket which was reversing after loading recycled material onto a truck in the warehouse.



The telehandler involved in the incident

Safety information

Managing traffic is an important part of ensuring the workplace is without risk to health and safety. Vehicles, including powered mobile plant, moving in and around a workplace, reversing, loading and unloading are frequently linked to fatalities and injuries to workers and members of the public. Consider 'reasonably practicable' control measures to manage the risks of mobile plant in the workplace. Effective systems must be implemented to prevent mobile plant striking workers.

Businesses should:

- keep people and vehicles apart - have clearly defined pedestrian-only spaces and vehicle-only spaces
- implement fixed and secured barriers that prevent people from accessing vehicle-only areas
- implement alternative controls to minimise risks if it is not reasonably practical to separate people and vehicles using fixed and secured barriers, such as:
 - bollards that prevent vehicles from accessing pedestrian-only areas
 - temporary barriers

The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing and the findings are not yet confirmed. SafeWork NSW has commenced an investigation in response to the incident to determine its cause and circumstances. No conclusions should be drawn from the information in this publication about the cause of the incident or the culpability of any party.

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- markings or other visual indicators that clearly define pedestrian-only areas
 - using warning devices like reversing sensors, reversing cameras, mirrors, rotating lights, or audible reversing alarms
 - fitting proximity sensors that detect pedestrians and other mobile plant, triggering alarms and/or automatically applying the brakes to prevent collisions
- develop a traffic management plan for the site which covers controls and procedures
- inform, train and instruct your workers on the traffic management plan and ensure it is being followed
- ensure workers are wearing high visibility clothing and using other appropriate personal protective equipment.

As an operator you should:

- carry out a daily check of the plant before use, and report any faults and damage
- always follow the site safety rules, traffic management plans and safety instructions
- wear high visibility clothing and other appropriate protective equipment
- before moving the plant, look in all directions for people and be aware of the exclusion zones and pedestrian walkways.

Related information

- [Managing risks of plant in the workplace](#) – Code of practice
- [Traffic management guide, warehousing](#) – Safe Work Australia
- [Moving around safely during loading and unloading](#) – SafeWork NSW
- [Mobile plant in the manufacturing industry](#) – SafeWork NSW