



Public Sector Safety Talks: APERMA

Backing Equipment and Vehicle Intrusions

Road construction work zones have one of the highest fatality rates in the construction industry. According to the latest BLS – “Fatal Occupational Injuries at Road Construction Sites” – 2011 report:

- Pedestrian Workers Struck by Vehicle/ Mobile Equipment accounted for 61 (more than half) of the occupational fatalities in work zones. 38 were from being struck-by a forward moving vehicle, 17 when backing
- Motorized Highway Vehicles were involved in 83 of the 119(70%) 2011 fatalities.

What can equipment operators and construction truck drivers do to reduce these risks?

- Turn on road construction lighting systems when entering, and while operating in, the work zone. Turn them off upon exit of the work zone.
- Look for a designated spotter to assist in entering the devices such as back-up alarms and warning lights.
- Park equipment and vehicles away from the traffic edge of the work zone. This improves sight lines and allows more time for workers and the general public to react.
- Slow down! Driving inside a job site is no different than driving on public streets. You must be able to recognize an obstacle where trouble could develop, apply the brakes, and stop the vehicle/equipment within the clear distance before the obstacle. Obstacles include work crews, other vehicles, and mobile equipment.
- Set brakes whenever leaving the vehicle for any period of time and for any activity. Leaving a vehicle/equipment in gear is not safe, especially if diesel powered.
- Inspect equipment and vehicles daily and include safety devices such as back-up alarms and warning lights.
- Avoid parking equipment or vehicles in close proximity to other equipment. A pinch point or crushing zone maybe created when the other equipment is moved.
- Before Backing:
 - Be sure back-up alarms are working
 - Look for your spotter and wait for the signal to proceed.
 - Remember to use your mirrors when backing. If you loose sight of the spotter, STOP!
 - Make eye contact with workers in your area before moving your vehicle.

What can workers on foot do to protect themselves?

- Wear highly reflective garments (class 2 or 3) when in the work zone. These garments significantly increase your visibility to drivers and operators
- Stop, look, and listen before stepping out from behind equipment, stock piles, trailers, or any other blind spot into the work-zone traffic.
- Keep away from backing equipment/ trucks and don't assume the operators or drivers can see you
- Be prepared and have a plan for adverse weather conditions. Rain, fog and dust storms reduce everyone's visibility on site
- Establish a communication system between operators, drivers and workers on foot. This includes using 2-way radios, alarms, hand signals and even eye contact.

Please feel free to contact Jim Bergemann or Kathi Williams 800-274-2788 with any questions regarding the above material.

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