

Shopping trolley collection trailer - fatality

This Alert warns all shopping centres and operators of shopping trolley collection vehicles about potential danger to pedestrians from reversing.

May 2009

Summary

This Alert highlights the danger of shopping trolley collection vehicles colliding with pedestrians and the general public. This follows a recent pedestrian fatality from a reversing trolley collection vehicle.

Background

A pedestrian was killed by a reversing shopping trolley collection vehicle (trailer) operating at a shopping centre's vehicle loading docks.

- The driver's vision while reversing was obscured by the trailer's raised steel ramps
- There were no audible or visual warnings to pedestrians that the vehicle was reversing
- Inadequate traffic management systems were in place at the shopping centre's vehicle loading docks.

Visits to shopping centres show that many shopping trolley collection companies are using vehicles similar to that involved in the incident.

Visits to loading docks at shopping centres show that pedestrians are at risk of being struck by reversing vehicles of all types, due to a lack of adequate traffic control and management systems.

Recommendations

Control measures for trolley collection vehicles:

- Provide a properly designed vehicle for the task of collecting shopping trolleys that maximises visibility around the vehicle for the driver and warns persons of the vehicle's presence, including:
 - reversing cameras
 - mirrors to minimise blind-spots
 - reversing beepers or alarms
 - strobe-type warning lights and reversing lights
 - bright colours or safety tape on vehicle vertical ramps.
- Establish a preventative maintenance and inspection system for vehicles
- Ensure that people working around vehicles wear high visibility vests
- Provide information, instruction and training to workers about the safe use of the vehicle
- Consider use of trained 'spotter' to guide reversing vehicle.

Traffic management in loading/unloading dock:

- Prevent general public access to these areas, and prominently display signs prohibiting unauthorised access
- Enforce separation of vehicles from authorised employee and contractor pedestrian traffic by installing clearly marked walkways, bollards, barriers and marked vehicle parking bays
- Provide safe access and egress for authorised pedestrians to loading dock (interlocked or card access on entry/exit points)
- Monitor the loading dock (eg closed circuit television)
- Enforce clearly signed speed limits
- Install mirrors to provide drivers and pedestrians with better visibility
- Establish a schedule for vehicles to use the loading dock; or control or limit vehicle access to dock.

Design of loading/unloading docks:

- Review design and use of older docks regularly, especially in relation to potential pedestrian and traffic interaction
- Design or retro-fit where practical to better manage vehicle entry/exit and circulation of vehicles
- New designs of loading docks should avoid, where possible, the need for vehicles to reverse where there is potential for interaction with pedestrians or other vehicles. Designs need to ensure that all users have good sight of other users. Mirrors and other aids in the dock should only be considered as a last resort.

Contact details

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For more information on occupational health and safety, go to the WorkSafe website: worksafe.vic.gov.au

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