

Construction Safety Focus

April 2017



Powered Mobile Plant

This document provides employers and employees with information about WorkSafe's current construction safety focus on powered mobile plant, and directs readers to detailed guidance.

WorkSafe inspectors are currently visiting sites across Victoria to ensure employers (and self-employed persons) are identifying hazards and controlling risks associated with the operation of powered mobile plant.

Background

Construction workers being hit, crushed by, or falling from powered mobile plant continues to be a leading cause of death and serious injury in the construction industry.

In the past ten years, workplace incidents involving powered mobile plant have resulted in the deaths of 16 people.

Incidents in Victoria that resulted in fatal injuries include:

- a worker struck on the head by the bucket of an front end loader
- an Elevated Work Platform (EWP) that became unbalanced, throwing a contractor 20 metres out of the bucket
- a motorcycle rider collided with a skid steer loader's bucket during concrete footpath replacement works
- a worker crushed between the basket of an EWP and a steel beam
- a worker controlling traffic was struck by a reversing street sweeper
- a worker struck by a falling concrete pump boom when the concrete pump trucks outrigger moved off the support system, sinking into the soil
- a worker fell 40 meters when the mast on a piling rig collapsed
- a worker crushed by a crane truck when it overbalanced whilst lifting a load
- a worker crushed when an excavator tipped over whilst being unloaded from a trailer

These fatalities highlight some of the common hazards and risks associated with powered mobile plant.

Duty holder obligations

Among other duties, an employer must ensure that a safe work method statement (SWMS) for any high risk construction work (HRCW) has been developed before work commences and ensure the work is undertaken in accordance with it. Construction work involving any movement of powered mobile plant is HRCW.

Additional specific duties apply to employers, for plant, HRCW and SWMS; for detailed guidance see "Further Information" section.

Consultation

An employer must consult affected employees and health and safety representatives when identifying or assessing hazards and risks, and when determining or reviewing risk controls, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Inspector focus

As part of the focus on powered mobile plant, WorkSafe inspectors will be checking for the following, but not limited to:

Safe Plant

- the appropriate plant is being used for the task
- plant is set up correctly for works to occur safely
- appropriate guarding is in place for safe use of the plant
- fall protection (eg guard railing) is in place where there is a risk of falling from the plant (eg during pre-start checks)
- plant is inspected, maintained and serviced in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations
- emergency stop and warning device systems are operating

Safe Systems of Work

- health and safety coordination plans and SWMS have been developed, reviewed and updated as the site changes; updated plans are communicated
- where required, traffic management plans are developed, reviewed, updated and communicated
- external factors that may impact safe movement of plant are considered when scheduling works (including the delivery of material or plant). Eg, sites located near schools, consider having plant and materials delivered outside of the usual school pick-up and drop off times
- works are planned so that plant moves in a forward direction as often as practicable

Safe Environment

- isolation and separation of employees and members of the public (pedestrians/ cyclists/ motorists) from the plant
- appropriate signage is displayed and where required barriers are in place
- exclusion zones for overhead power lines / underground assets are implemented and maintained
- ground conditions have been assessed to ensure the ground is suitable and can safely support the plant being setup or used
- employees are visible, to plant operators, when entering or near work zones particularly in conditions where lighting is poor (eg fog, rain, night works)

Safe Operation

- the plant operator is appropriately trained and competent for the type of plant and where required, has the appropriate high risk work licence
- employees have been provided with any necessary information, instruction, training and supervision to safely operate or work near powered mobile plant.

Construction Safety Focus

Employee duties

Employees must take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work. This includes not interfering with or misusing anything provided at a workplace in the interests of health, safety or welfare.

Further Information

Visit www.worksafe.vic.gov.au to download the following publications:

Information About, Safe Work Method Statements
Information About, Earthmoving equipment used as crane
Construction Safety Focus, Safe Worker and Traffic Industry Standard, A guide to managing safety in Civil Construction
Safety Alert , Safe loading of elevated work platforms on tilt tray trucks
Safety Alert, Workers crushed in EWPs
Safety Alert, Mobile plant overturns
Guidance Note, Preventing battery explosions
Guidance Note, Telehandlers design and licensing
No Go Zones for overhead electrical power lines, special provisions for plant and equipment
Certification, licensing & qualifications checklist
Working safely in the general construction industry, Handbook
Working safely in housing construction industry, Handbook

Contact WorkSafe's Advisory Service on (03) 9641 1444 or free call 1800 136 089.

Note: This guidance material has been prepared using the best information available to WorkSafe, and should be used for general use only. Any information about legislative obligations or responsibilities included in this material is only applicable to the circumstances described in the material. You should always check the legislation referred to in this material and make your own judgement about what action you may need to take to ensure you have complied with the law. Accordingly, WorkSafe cannot be held responsible and extends no warranties as to the suitability of the information.