

May 2015 – the importance of vehicle / pedestrian segregation



Has your workplace been assessed?

A recent HSE prosecution has highlighted the importance of carrying out a risk assessment of the workplace to ensure vehicle / pedestrian segregation has been assessed and appropriate control measures have been implemented.

The prosecution related to a case which occurred in April 2013, where an employee was struck by a reversing fork lift truck and was dragged under a rear wheel causing severe crush injuries to his leg and chest. Full details can be found here:

<http://press.hse.gov.uk/2015/liverpool-skip-hire-firm-fined-over-fork-lift-truck-injuries/>

The investigation and subsequent prosecution by the HSE found that:

- A safe system of work was not in place
- A risk assessment had not been carried out which should have identified the need to segregate pedestrians and vehicles within the workplace
- The fork lift truck was in poor condition (it did not have any audible warning siren or beacon for reversing or wing mirrors, etc)
- The truck had not been subject to a thorough examination by a competent person as per the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 within the previous 12 months.

Waste Away Skip Hire (Liverpool) Limited pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. A Director of the company pleaded guilty to breaching Section 37 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.

What can we learn from this event?

1. Workplace:

- Carry out a risk assessment and implement the appropriate control measures identified in the safe system of work
- Clearly identify and demarcate traffic routes (both physically and on a plan)
- Place suitable signage
- Ensure adequate lighting
- Avoid the need to reverse vehicles wherever possible (ie use of a one-way system)
- Use vehicle marshalls and ensure they have good communication with vehicle operators
- Clearly identify parking area(s) where vehicles and trailers must have their brakes applied
- Instability of vehicles should be minimised through good planning of tipping operations and checking stability of ground conditions

2. Vehicles:

- Vehicles should be 'fit for purpose' and maintained
- Where required, statutory inspections of vehicles must be carried out

3. People:

- Operators should be trained and their competence assessed by their employer on a regular basis
- Ensure the fitness for duty requirements are communicated and enforced with respect to drugs and alcohol
- Supervisors and managers should be visible, set high standards and challenge unsafe acts or conditions
- Consult and engage with employees to encourage a culture of continuous improvement
- Keep the general public away from hazardous environments

These few simple steps identify measures that can be taken to make the workplace not only a safe environment but one which is organised, efficient and effective thereby saving money.

The content of this article is intended to provide a general guide to the subject matter. Specialist advice should be sought about your specific circumstances.

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