Warning on vehicle movement after multiple incidents

WorkSafe has issued a reminder to ensure safe systems of work are in place in workplaces where vehicles and pedestrians are present.

The reminder has been prompted by a number of recent incidents involving people being injured or killed by vehicles or parts of vehicles such as ramps.

WorkSafe Director Joe Attard said today it was evident by the number of recent injuries and deaths that insufficient attention was being paid to spaces where vehicles and pedestrians interacted.

"Wherever vehicles and people interact, strict rules need to be in place to ensure the work environment is kept as safe as possible, and the number of recent incidents indicates that more attention needs to be given to this crucial workplace issue," Mr Attard said.

Some examples of recent serious and fatal incidents involving vehicles and people are:

- A bystander was killed when an operator was manoeuvring a truck in a loading dock. While moving forward, the rear of the truck swung out and crushed the bystander against a wall.
- Two people – a bystander and a truck driver - were killed in separate incidents when the hydraulic ramps of low loader trailers fell on them.
- A person was hit by the rear of a trailer and crushed by the wheels when a truck was moving slowly around a corner at a workplace.
- In several incidents, people suffered serious or fatal injuries while forklifts or cranes were being used to unload vehicles. These people were standing too close to the raised load and were crushed when the load, or part of it, fell.
- Several serious injuries were suffered when drivers turned on the ignition while not sitting in the driver's seat. Vehicles that were in gear moved suddenly and caused injuries.
- A front end loader at a workplace reversed and crushed a bystander against a parked vehicle, causing serious injuries.
- A member of the public was killed when an earthmoving machine reversed over him. The vehicle was landscaping in a garden bed next to a park where there was no spotter or exclusion zones for pedestrians.

"We're really concerned about the number of recent incidents involving mobile plant and pedestrians," Mr Attard said.

"There seem to be a number of contributing factors to these incidents, but the bottom line is a lack of management of the movement and speed of vehicles and a lack of segregation of pedestrians and vehicles.

"I urge employers to ensure the movement and speed of vehicles is managed to minimise the risk of injury and that workplaces are designed and maintained to ensure the safety of operators and others.

"In addition, safe systems of work, communication systems and signage need to be in place, and everyone at the workplace needs to be adequately trained in these safe systems.

"Lastly, operators and others should not be permitted to work in the fall zone of ramps or underneath vehicles or mobile plant that is not adequately supported.

"WorkSafe recently published a Safety and Health Alert on its website that contains more detailed information on the factors that contributed to recent incidents, along with advice on the actions required in workplaces.

"There is also a Guidance Note on safe movement of vehicles at workplaces, and all relevant workplaces should ensure they are familiar with the contents of this publication."

Further information on safe movement of vehicles and the Guidance Note and Alert can be obtained by telephoning WorkSafe on 1300 307877 or on the website at www.worksafe.wa.gov.au.

Authorised by Sally Dennis, General Secretary, The State School Teachers' Union of W.A.
ABN 54 478 094 635 © 2026