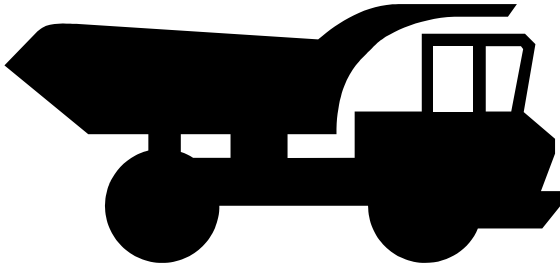


Beware of Back-Ups



The safe operation of trucks and mobile equipment is critical to the success of any accident prevention effort. Operators must be thoroughly familiar with their assigned machines; trained and skilled in safe operating procedures.

Some worksites hold greater potential than others for an accident, resulting in someone being struck by trucks or mobile equipment. There are always people on foot where mobile equipment is operating.

Back-up alarms do not always prevent back-up accidents because the alarms tend to have a high failure rate. Also, people become so accustomed to the *beep-beep-beep* that the warnings are ignored.

Some precautions that can enhance employee safety around moving equipment include:

- Eliminate the need for equipment to back-up whenever it is practical to do so. Operators should not be permitted to back-up for long distances.
- Providing turnarounds and laying out traffic patterns to eliminate congestion can reduce the need for backing up.
- Develop and enforce a safety policy that requires the installation and maintenance of back-up alarms on all equipment. These alarms should be loud enough to be heard above the ambient noise level at the site where they are to be used.
- Require operators to make sure the path is clear before backing or moving into work areas. Mandate that warnings be given and acknowledged at the time equipment is moved.
- Persons on foot should never approach equipment in operation until the operator has acknowledged their presence and that safe approach is possible.
- Designate a back-up person to each crew who is responsible for signaling when it is safe for operators to back equipment in work areas and to make sure everyone keeps clear of the moving equipment.
- Rules prohibiting drivers and operators from backing into work areas until signaled to do so should be strictly enforced. Only the designated person should signal for equipment to be moved.
- Provide barricades, warning signs, or signals where persons must work or travel near heavy equipment operations or congested travel areas.
- Report near misses promptly. Investigate immediately so that corrective action can be taken.
- Publish safety rules, practices, and procedures pertaining to working with and around mobile equipment. Review with everyone having exposure to equipment operations.

Some Good Questions to Ask Yourself . . .

- Am I as careful with my “company” vehicle as I am with my “personal” vehicle?
- Do I regularly inspect my back-up alarms and my back-up lights?
- Does my forklift have a back-up alarm? Is it operational?
- Are my rear windows foggy...covered with ice...mist?
- Are bulky crates in the back of my flatbed blocking my rear view vision?

- If I have long pipe on my flatbed, does it extend too far beyond the tailgate?
- Do I have a “red flag” on any items that extend beyond the tailgate?
- When backing up my construction equipment, am I aware of overhead power lines?
- When backing up, did you remember that you might have a rolling compressor unit affixed to your toe bar?

Admittedly, backing up is twice as hazardous as going forward. Thus, give it extra-added attention. You'll avoid property damage, personal damage, and embarrassment.