Toolbox Talk / Conversation Starter Pack

Plant & Pedestrian Interface on Construction Sites

Duration: 10–15 Minutes

Audience: All Site Personnel, Contractors and Visitors

Objective

The purpose of today's discussion is to ensure everyone understands the risks associated with plant and pedestrian interface and to reinforce the controls required to prevent serious injuries and fatalities on site.

Key Message:

Whenever plant and pedestrians share the same workspace, there is a risk of collision. Every person on site has a responsibility to maintain separation and follow site controls.

Introduction

Plant movements remain one of the leading causes of serious injuries and fatalities across the construction industry.

Ask the team. Allow for participation and discussion

- How many of you have experienced a near miss involving moving plant?
- What was the cause?
- Could it have been prevented?
- What controls were in place at the time?

Why Is This Important? A collision between plant and a pedestrian can result in:

1 - Fatalities

2 - Life-changing injuries

3 - Crushing incidents

4 - Amputations

5 - Internal injuries

6 - Psychological trauma for witnesses and operators

Remember: You will always lose against a machine.

Common Causes of Plant-Pedestrian Incidents

Discuss the following:

Poor Segregation

- Pedestrians entering plant operating areas
- Temporary barriers removed and not replaced
- Shared access routes

Blind Spots

- Operators cannot always see pedestrians
- Large plant can have significant exclusion zones
- Reversing operations increase risk

Complacency

- Assuming the operator has seen you
- Taking shortcuts through work areas
- Walking while distracted

Poor Communication

- No agreed hand signals
- Conflicting instructions
- Lack of banksman control

Environmental Conditions

- Poor lighting
- Dust
- Noise
- Adverse weather
- Congested work areas

Supervisor Questions

Ask the workforce:

Question 1 - What should you do if you need to enter a plant operating area?

Expected Responses:

- Stop
- Make contact with operator
- Gain permission
- Ensure plant is stationary
- Maintain eye contact

Question 2 - Can you assume the operator has seen you?

Expected Response:

- No but ask the audience why.

Discussion Point: If you cannot see the operator, they probably cannot see you.

Question 3 - What are the biggest risks on our site today?

Possible options:

- Excavators
- Dumpers
- MEWPs
- Telehandlers
- Delivery vehicles
- Cranes
- Mobile plant routes

Plant and pedestrian interaction remains one of the highest-risk activities on any construction site. The controls we have are only effective if we all follow them every time. Challenge unsafe behaviours, report concerns, and remember that no task is so urgent that it cannot be done safely.

Site Rules and Controls

Discuss the specific controls in place on your site. Below are some of the controls that can be associated with Plant & Pedestrian Interface.

- Segregated Walkways
- Always use designated pedestrian routes.
- Never take shortcuts through work areas.
- Stay inside barriers and marked walkways.
- Establish clear exclusion zones and install appropriate signage.
- Respect all exclusion zones - do not enter unless authorised.
- Stop work if barriers are damaged or missing.
- Banksmen and Vehicle Marshals.
- Only one Banksman should direct a movement.
- Never walk between a moving vehicle and fixed object.
- Avoid reversing wherever possible.
- Ensure all reversing Operations are closely Supervised.
- Never enter reversing areas.
- Ensure communication lines are established and agreed before any movement.
- Use agreed signals.
- Stop the task if communication is unclear.
- Utilise different forms of technology if the risk assessment deems it necessary e.g. Human Form Recognition.

Key Takeaways

- **Always use designated pedestrian routes.**
- **Never assume a plant operator can see you.**
- **Maintain eye contact and communication.**
- **Respect exclusion zones and barriers.**
- **Follow instructions from banksmen and marshals.**
- **Report damaged controls immediately.**
- **Stop work if the situation becomes unsafe!**