Critical Risks – Using and working around mobile plant and machinery (vehicles)

Identifying, Assessing, Managing and reviewing critical risks is a Canterbury Safety Charter commitment. Remember I AM safe on site where it’s up to everyone on site to understand and manage the critical risks you’ll come across.

Mobile plant and machinery

Mobile plant means any moving vehicle or equipment on site, this includes vehicles such as utes, forklifts, delivery trucks and other light vehicles.

Some of the common hazards associated with mobile plant include:

- People or plant sharing the same site or route
- Where there is uncontrolled entry to and from the site
- People using and arranging mobile plant inappropriately.

Did you know that in Canterbury between April 2008 and March 2013 38% of deaths on construction sites were due to accidents involving mobile plant?

Of these accidents trucks and earthmoving stand out as the major hazards on sites.

*Data from Navigatus Consulting and WorkSafe New Zealand.*
Step 1: IDENTIFY the traffic management plan

The first thing you can do is to develop a traffic management plan. Talk to your workers on site about what that will involve, and ensure it is specific to the requirements of the particular site you’re working on.

Ask your employees to help you develop the traffic management plan for the site; or if this is already in place ask them to review it and come back to you with how they think it could be improved.

You may also want to refer to the Safety Charter toolbox talk #11 – Critical Risks – Traffic Management.

Some of the control measures to consider when developing the traffic management plan, include:

• Planning work so vehicles and pedestrians are not in the same area at the same time
• Providing drive-through access to minimise turning or reversing
• Using fences, barriers, barricades, safety rails and exclusion zones
• Think about red zone awareness, where the blind spots will be for each piece of plant
• Planning the direction of traffic to minimise plant travel around the site
• Establishing speed limits on site
• Using audible reversing alarms, flashing lights, spotters and/or dedicated traffic controllers to manage traffic movement
• Ensuring everyone on site is wearing high-vis clothing.

Before you develop the traffic management plan, consider:

• Congestion – can some vehicles be moved out of work areas?
• Who has the right of way?

Step 2: ASSESS blind spots

It’s important to involve employees, contractors, sub-contractors and everyone on site when developing the traffic management plan, and to make sure they’re trained in the control measures. After all, they’re the ones who’ll be using it! The traffic management plan should identify blind spots and where possible indicate exclusion zones around plant for workers and the public.

Where do we get more information?

The Safety Charter’s Critical Risk Mobile Plant & Machinery webpage has more information which is regularly updated. You can view it here or by clicking on Improve Health & Safety – Critical Risks – Mobile Plant & Machinery from the homepage.

You may also want to look at Safety Charter toolbox talk #11 Critical Risks - Traffic Management. If you want toolbox talks on the other 12 critical risks you can check them out online.

Step 3: MANAGE – keep a safe distance

It’s important a traffic management plan is put in place for every site – no one site will be the same.

Even on the same site, the layout may change during the course of the build or work, so traffic management should be regularly reviewed, and if necessary propose alternative control measures for when the site layout changes.

Remember to keep a safe distance and follow the traffic management plan.

Employee issues raised:

Date to be resolved by:

Thank you to Fulton Hogan, Downer and WorkSafe New Zealand for providing information for this toolbox talk.