

03/03 Two workers killed by mobile plant

Incident

Two separate incidents in recent months have resulted in the deaths of two people working on the ground near mobile plant.

Factors

- Operators of mobile plant often have severely restricted visibility of ground workers, particularly those close to the plant.
- There is a need to establish an effective means of communication between mobile plant operators and ground personnel.
- Noise and other environmental conditions.
- Whether it is practicable to separate ground personnel from areas crossed by mobile plant.
- The need to limit movements of site visitors with barricades and appropriate signage.

Recommendations

1. Employers must ensure there is a system of work in place that provides adequate protection for employees who have to work on the ground near mobile plant.
2. When mobile plant is being used, pedestrian movements in that area should be prohibited, if possible.
3. Pedestrian movement around mobile plant that is being manoeuvred (ie where reversing is involved) should be prohibited.
4. An effective system of communications between mobile plant operators and ground personnel should be established before work commences. Relevant staff should be trained in the procedures involved with the selected system.
The system should stop ground workers approaching mobile plant until the operator has agreed to their request to approach.
Similarly the system should stop operators from moving their plant closer than a given distance from ground personnel until the operator has received acknowledgement that the ground personnel are aware of the proposed movement.
5. Mobile plant operators and ground workers must be trained and familiar with the blind spots of plant working around them. They should be supervised adequately when working near mobile plant.
6. Mobile plant that works near persons on the ground should be equipped with a revolving light and reversing alarm.

Further Information

Further information can be obtained from the WorkSafe internet site www.worksafe.wa.gov.au, or by contacting customer service on 1300 307 877 or email: safety@docep.wa.gov.au.

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