



## Uncontrolled movement of vehicles and plant

### Background

WorkSafe has recently had a number of reported incidents involving the unplanned and uncontrolled movement of plant or vehicles, which have resulted in the death or serious injury of workers.

- A worker was conducting maintenance underneath a forklift when the forklift moved unexpectedly and struck the worker to the head, causing serious injury.
- An owner-operator was conducting brake maintenance underneath his truck when the truck rolled down a slope, striking the man underneath, causing fatal injuries.
- After a heavy vehicle driver exited his vehicle, the vehicle rolled down a slope. The driver was pinned between his rolling vehicle and another parked vehicle, causing serious injuries.
- After a heavy vehicle driver exited his vehicle to couple with a trailer, the vehicle rolled on a slope. The driver was crushed between the prime mover and trailer, causing fatal injuries.

### Contributing factors

The uncontrolled movement of a vehicle or plant may occur due to any singular reason or for a combination of reasons, which may include:

- the operator not engaging the parking brake properly
- wheels not being properly chocked during parking or maintenance activities
- the vehicle or plant being left in gear when exiting
- parking on an unlevelled surface or surfaces which are loose or slippery
- inadequate inspection and maintenance of the braking system or warning alarms associated with the braking systems
- failure of a component within the braking system
- not following manufacturer's specifications for the conduct of maintenance procedures
- improvised maintenance facilities without fit-for-purpose equipment.

### Action required

#### Operators of vehicles and plant

Vehicle and plant operators should:

- park the vehicle or plant on level ground, where possible. Where it is not reasonably practicable to park the vehicle on level ground, be aware of the limitations of the vehicle, including the maximum slope of the supporting surface and what to do when parking on a gradient
- always apply the parking brake when exiting the vehicle or plant
- chock the wheels of vehicles and trailers or plant before conducting inspection or maintenance activities

- ensure maintenance and inspection equipment is fit-for-purpose
- follow manufacturer's specifications for the conduct of maintenance and inspection
- ensure maintenance and inspection areas are fit-for-purpose.

## **Persons controlling the operation of vehicles and plant**

Persons controlling the operation of vehicles and plant should:

- ensure vehicles and plant are inspected and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations
- be familiar with the components and limitations of the braking system that may allow the intentional, or cause unintentional, release of the brakes
- consider the implementation of aftermarket controls that minimise the risk of uncontrolled movement of vehicles and plant (e.g. seat sensor interlocked brakes, fail safe braking systems, brake alarm systems)
- where it is not reasonably practicable to apply engineering controls to minimise the risk, or in combination with engineering controls, apply lower level controls such as alarm systems and/or operating procedures
- consider models and options that eliminate or minimise the risk of uncontrolled movement when acquiring vehicles or plant
- develop site-specific parking locations and procedures in consultation with workers
- ensure workers have the necessary training, experience and supervision to identify and control hazards and risks associated with the uncontrolled movement of vehicles and plant
- ensure parking areas are fit-for-purpose
- ensure maintenance and inspection equipment and facilities are fit-for-purpose
- routinely monitor and review all control measures.

## **Further information**

- [Guidance note: Safe movement of vehicle at workplaces](#)
- [Safety Alert: Vehicles and mobile plant causing deaths at workplaces](#)
- [Safety Alert: Farm worker fatally injured during unexpected movement of tractor](#)
- [OSH newsletter for employers: Plant and mobile plant movement in the retail and transport industry](#)
- [Self-Assessment Tool: Safe movement of vehicle and mobile plant](#)
- [Media statement: Warning on vehicle movement after multiple incidents](#)

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