



Significant Incident Summary No. 4

Driver entrapment risk when exiting a bus or coach – fatal incident

Date: 19 March 2024

Background

WorkSafe has conducted an investigation into an incident where a bus driver was entrapped between the door and frame of the bus, causing fatal injuries. There have been several reported incidents across Australia of workers being fatally entrapped in bus doors.

The bus had a single pneumatic door on the left-hand side, which could be operated by switches located under the front bumper, on the driver's instrument panel or through an emergency release switch on the footwell between the driver's seat and the door.

It is believed that the driver used one of the switches to close the door while attempting to exit and became entrapped between the door and the frame.

Contributory factors

Factors which may contribute to incidents like this include:

- buses not fitted with an entrapment prevention system
- bus drivers working alone
- bus drivers operating unfamiliar vehicles or in an unfamiliar environment
- bus drivers inadequately informed and trained in safe operation of the bus doors.

Recommendations

A person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) must reduce the risk of entrapment of drivers and others by:

- ensuring that the door of the bus is maintained and is in a condition to function appropriately
- ensuring that workers accessing and egressing the bus are appropriately qualified, trained and supervised in the correct procedure for entering and exiting the bus
- instructing drivers to only use the external switch under the front bumper to close the door when exiting, ensuring workers keep clear of the closing door
- instructing drivers to only use the emergency door release switch in an emergency and not for general operation.

PCBUs should consider installing controls that may mitigate the risk of exposure to an entrapment hazard, such as:

- door force limiting devices
- door entrapment prevention devices
- protective covers over any switches or controls located inside the vehicle near the exit door to prevent operation except in an emergency.

References and further information

Department of Transport and Main Roads Queensland

Information Bulletin PT411 2016: [Guidelines for front door closure systems on heavy buses providing public passenger services](#)