

UNCONTROLLED MOVEMENT OF VEHICLES SAFETY ALERT

05 Dec 2017

This alert reminds persons working with vehicles of the risks associated with the uncontrolled movement of vehicles.

BACKGROUND

Each year people suffer serious and fatal injuries in NSW due to incidents involving the uncontrolled movement (roll away) of vehicles, including cars, trucks, buses, vans, forklifts, tractors, mobile cranes etc. In most incidents the operator was not in the driver's seat at the time of the incident, including;

- in 2015 a courier suffered fatal injuries as a result of being struck by his van when it was parked on an inclined surface
- in 2015 worker suffered fatal crush injuries as a result of the uncontrolled movement of a concrete agitating truck in which he was operating
- in 2016 a bus driver sustained fatal crush injuries from the bus he had been driving and a stationary vehicle when the interlock brake was inadvertently released
- in 2017 a farm worker sustained crush injuries to the chest and abdomen when the tractor he was maintaining unexpectedly moved forward
- in 2017 a worker sustained fractures and de-gloving injuries as a result of being crushed between a skip bin transport vehicle and a fixed structure
- in 2017 a worker sustained permanent injuries as a result of a roll-away vehicle when he crawled under the vehicle to investigate a mechanical fault

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

The uncontrolled movement of a vehicle can occur due to any singular or combination of reasons, including;

- the operator not engaging the parking brake, or not engaging the parking brake sufficiently
- the vehicle being left in gear when exiting the vehicle
- not parking on a level surface
- inadequate inspection and maintenance of the braking system
- Inadequate design integrity of interlocked braking systems, i.e. the brakes can be intentionally or unintentionally released by the operator's actions. For example, the parking brakes may be released when the doors of a vehicle are closed without following the correct procedure.

- loads added to or removed from a vehicle that is supported by stabilisers /outriggers on an inclined surface
- forces imposed by the movement of parts of a vehicle supported by stabilisers /outriggers on an inclined surface, e.g. boom on a mobile crane
- failure of a component within the braking system

ACTION REQUIRED - OPERATORS

- park the vehicle on level ground. 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
- chock the wheels of vehicles and trailers before conducting inspection or maintenance activities

ACTION REQUIRED - PERSONS WITH MANAGEMENT OR CONTROL OF PLANT

- ensure the vehicle is 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, which may include seat sensor interlocked brakes or fail safe braking systems
- where it is not reasonably practicable to implement engineering controls to minimise the risk, or in combination with engineering controls, implement lower level controls such as alarm systems and/or operating procedures
- when acquiring vehicles, consider models and options that eliminate or minimise the risk of uncontrolled movement
- develop site specific parking locations and procedures in consultation with workers
- ensure your workers have the necessary training, experience and supervision to identify hazards to control the risks associated with the uncontrolled movement of vehicles
- routinely monitor and review all control measures

FURTHER INFORMATION

The Work Health and Safety Act (<https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/act/2011/10>), details the duties of a PCBU, officer, workers and others, in regards to the management of risks and the primary duty of care.

Also, refer to:

- Working with or around mobile plant (<https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/safety-alerts/safety-alerts/working-with-or-around-mobile-plant>).
- Code of Practice – Managing the risks of plant in the workplace (https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0019/52156/Managing-the-risks-of-plant-in-the-workplace-COP.pdf).

CONTACT US

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