

FOCUS ON

workplace transport

Every year about 65 people are killed in workplace transport accidents - and there are also more than 1300 major injuries. In construction, there are around 15 deaths and more than 600 injuries, with 11% of fatal accidents in construction caused by transport.

Usually these accidents are caused by unsafe systems of work. **Most of them can be avoided.**

FRACTURED

A construction worker's shoulder was crushed so badly in an accident at work that he was still off sick two years later.

The accident happened during road surfacing on the new A1 in Cambridgeshire. Worker Simon Phillips, 32, was filling in cracks in the road when he was run over by a reversing tipper truck weighing 20 tonnes.

The lorry from an asphalt plant arrived to drop materials but wasn't able to turn round. The driver tried to reverse over the bridge and knocked Simon over. Lying on the ground winded, Simon got caught in the wheels of the lorry's two rear axles. The driver only stopped when he heard Simon screaming.

The contractors on the job were fined £75 000 plus £55 000 costs. The fine was this high because a month before the accident this national company had been convicted for another reversing accident when a worker was actually killed.

AMPUTATED

A man had to have his leg amputated after another accident involving a reversing vehicle.

Paul Richardson, 36, was run over by a chipper spreader while working on resurfacing work in Cambridgeshire.

Paul was acting as a banksman for the tipper lorry when the accident happened. As the chipper driver got ready to reverse he looked round and thought Paul was standing clear. But when he started reversing he felt a bump and heard a shout. He drove forward, got down and saw Paul lying on the road.

The chipper had a central mirror but no wing mirrors. On both sides the area between the axles was a blind spot for the driver.

The manufacturers had not fitted any mirrors. The company supplying the chipper only fitted a central mirror when the contractors insisted on it, and the chargehand did not check whether the chipper had any mirrors fitted.

The three companies involved - Paul's employer, and both the supplier and the manufacturer of the chipper spreader - were all prosecuted. They were fined a total of £120 000 at Peterborough Crown Court. The judge said the accident was the fault of all three companies and could have been avoided.

HSE inspector Trevor Tollervey said: 'I am sure the size of the fine will send a clear message to all construction companies that they cannot afford to ignore safety'.

Nearly a quarter of all deaths involving vehicles at work happen while vehicles are reversing. Most of these accidents happen at low speeds and they can be avoided by taking simple precautions (see checklist on right).



This chipper spreader reversed over a worker, who lost his leg in the accident

KILLED

A bricklayer's labourer was killed when he was hit by a telescopic handler weighing six and a half tonnes.



This truck was used for general transport when it should only have been used for moving materials

Terry James was working on a development in Dorset when the accident happened.

He was working on his own, mixing cement, while his workmates had gone for lunch. While he had his own lunch, he kept checking the mixer, crossing the road from his car every time.

The site driver was using the telescopic handler to move from the site offices down the road to the showhouse. On his way back he saw Terry lying in the road. He did not even know he had hit him - the driver's vision was impaired on the right-hand side by the mast on the telescopic handler.

The site contractor - a subsidiary of one of the top house builders in the country - was fined £35 000 for four offences plus over £15 000 costs.

HSE Construction Inspector Jim Pride said: 'The site was very poorly organised with no way of segregating pedestrians and traffic. And the telescopic handler, which is supposed to be for moving materials, was wholly unsuitable for general transport around the site'.

You can find more information in the HSE publication *The safe use of vehicles on construction sites* (ISBN 0 7176 1610 X, price £7.95).



This site was badly organised and machines and men all had to use the same site roadway

Reversing safely

action checklist

- ▼ Remove the need for reversing
- ▼ Keep people away from the reversing area
- ▼ Minimise the distance vehicles have to reverse
- ▼ Make sure staff are trained
- ▼ Use a trained banksman or guide
- ▼ Brief all visiting drivers
- ▼ Supervise all vehicle manoeuvres properly
- ▼ Make sure the driver has adequate visibility
- ▼ Fit a reversing alarm
- ▼ Use other safety devices such as barriers or trip devices

You can get more information from HSE's free leaflet **Reversing Vehicles**.

