

REVERSING TRENDS

A security guard died at Coventry City football club, killed in a reversing accident involving the Arsenal football team's bus.

A leading supermarket chain has been heavily fined following the death of an employee who was offering guidance as a truck reversed into the loading bay.

These two incidents highlighted a problem that is too often ignored because accurate data is often unavailable.

Official statistics (RAGB 1997) suggest that less than 2 per cent of road accidents involve reversing, but the data on which it is based is highly flawed. It totally misrepresents the extent of the reversing risk for commercial vehicles. Other sources suggest that the actual figures are much higher.

- Figures produced by the Association of British Insurers suggest that about 17% of accidents involve reversing.
- HSE research indicates that 25% of all deaths involving vehicles at work occur while vehicles are reversing.
- When the University of Huddersfield carried out a survey among 60 vehicle operators in 1998, the results suggested that about 25% of accidents involved a reversing manoeuvre.

Separate detailed case studies by the University have proved more revealing. The figures showed that reversing manoeuvres accounted for:

- 30 per cent of accidents at a home delivery operator
- 39 per cent of accidents at a large parcels operator
- 38 per cent of accidents involving vehicles from one depot of a large food retailer

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