

SAFETY ADVICE DESIGNED TO KEEP YOUR STAFF SAFE AND YOUR BUSINESS COMPLIANT



Reversing Vehicles

Nearly a quarter of all deaths involving vehicles at work occur during reversing. Many other reversing accidents do not result in injury but cause costly damage to vehicles, equipment and premises.

Main Points

Most of these accidents can be avoided by taking simple precautions, such as those below:-

Remove the need for reversing altogether, by setting up one-way systems, for example drive-through loading and unloading positions. Where reversing is unavoidable, routes should be organised to minimise the need for reversing.

Ensure visiting drivers are familiar with the layout of the workplace, and with any site rules. Do drivers have to report to reception on arrival?

In locations where reversing cannot be avoided:

- Reversing areas' should be planned out and clearly marked.
- People who do not need to be in reversing areas should be kept well clear.
- Consider employing a trained signaller (a banksman), both to keep the reversing area free of pedestrians and to guide drivers. Be aware: The use of signallers is not allowed in some industries due to the size of vehicles involved, and the difficulty that drivers have in seeing them.

A signaller:

- Will need to use a clear, agreed system of signalling.
- Will need to be visible to drivers at all times.
- Will need to stand in a safe position, from which to guide the reversing vehicle without being in its way.
- Should wear very visible clothing, such as reflective vests, and ensure that any signals are clearly seen.
- If drivers lose sight of the signallers they should know to stop immediately.
- Consider whether portable radios or similar communication systems would be helpful.

Discussion Points

The following steps might help to reduce the risk of reversing accidents.

Reducing the dangers caused by 'blind-spots':

- Most vehicles already have external side-mounted and rear-view mirrors fitted. These need to be kept clean and in good repair.
- Refractive lenses fitted to rear windows or closed-circuit television systems can be used to help drivers to see behind the vehicle.
- If drivers cannot see behind the vehicle, they should leave their cab and check behind the vehicle before reversing.

Reversing alarms can be fitted:

- These should be kept in working order.
- Audible alarms should be loud and distinct enough that they do not become part of the background noise.
- where an audible alarm might not stand out from the background noise, flashing warning lights can be used.

Other safety devices can be fitted to vehicles

- For example, a number of 'sensing' and 'trip' systems are available, which either warn the driver or stop the vehicle when an obstruction is detected close to, or comes in contact with, the reversing vehicle.
- Stops such as barriers, or buffers at loading bays can be used. They should be highly visible, and sensibly positioned.
- Where vehicles reverse up to structures or edges, barriers or wheel stops can be used to warn drivers that they need to stop.
- White lines on the floor can help the driver position the vehicle accurately.



Talk to Atlas about Safety Management for your business

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