

SAFETY ALERT (ALT-008)

Unauthorised use of plant



BACKGROUND

A sub contracted transport driver delivering timber to site narrowly escaped serious injury when he decided to use a 'parked up' Rough Terrain Masted Forklift Truck to load/unload his own trailer. The driver was not authorised or trained to operate the machine and whilst attempting to unload the timber he drove too close to an open excavation which caused the excavation edge to collapse and the forklift to subsequently overturn. A review of this incident revealed that the driver was not wearing the seatbelt (in accordance with manufacturer's instructions) and that the incident occurred early in the morning when other operatives were not on site.

This incident highlights several issues, primarily unauthorised use of plant, but also site security, safe use of plant and lone working.



PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

The work site should be fully secured to prevent unauthorised access onto it.

Parked machines (and their keys) should be secured and immobilised to prevent unauthorised cab access and use of the machine, and also to help prevent plant vandalism and theft.

Only trained and competent operators should operate plant on site. The nationally recognised qualification for competence in Britain is a Scottish/National Vocational Qualification (S/NVQ) Level II Plant Operations.

Operators should also receive induction training before they are authorised to operate plant on site. As a minimum requirement, this should include: emergency procedures, traffic management and pedestrian/vehicle segregation, access and egress from site, safe use of a banksman, hazard management, working alone and safety signage.

Transport routes should be positioned at a safe distance from open excavations to prevent excavation collapse and where possible excavations should be suitably supported. Painted timber, concrete baulks, barriers and so forth should be used to keep vehicles at a safe distance away from excavation edges.

Where there are specific hazards, such as open excavations, then the movement of machines should be strictly controlled by competent banksmen. The banksmen must be excluded from the 'operational area' of the machine and a risk assessment will be required to determine the safe area and distance around

the machine – if in any doubt, the plant should be segregated from the banksmen and other workers.

Employers have a general duty to carry out a 'specific' risk assessment for 'working alone' and to develop appropriate procedures to control these risks and protect employees. As a minimum requirement, this assessment should consider:

- whether the work can be done safely by a lone worker;
- how to deal with foreseeable emergencies, such as illness, injury or acts of violence;
- an assessment of operator fitness to operate and suitability of the person to work alone;
- the level of supervision required and how operator contact will be maintained; and
- specific lone worker training needs.

Additional guidance can be found in Regulations 28 and 29 of PUWER 1998 and also in the following HSE publications: Workplace transport safety: An employers' guide (HSG136), Safety in working with lift trucks (HSG6) and Working alone in safety (INDG73).



Images for illustrative purposes only

SAFETY ALERT (ALT-008)

Unauthorised use of plant



BACKGROUND

A sub contracted transport driver delivering timber to site narrowly escaped serious injury when he decided to use a 'parked up' Rough Terrain Masted Forklift Truck to load/unload his own trailer. The driver was not authorised or trained to operate the machine and whilst attempting to unload the timber he drove too close to an open excavation which caused the excavation edge to collapse and the forklift to subsequently overturn. A review of this incident revealed that the driver was not wearing the seatbelt (in accordance with manufacturer's instructions) and that the incident occurred early in the morning when other operatives were not on site.

This incident highlights several issues, primarily unauthorised use of plant, but also site security, safe use of plant and lone working.



PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

The work site should be fully secured to prevent unauthorised access onto it.

Parked machines (and their keys) should be secured and immobilised to prevent unauthorised cab access and use of the machine, and also to help prevent plant vandalism and theft.

Only trained and competent operators should operate plant on site. The nationally recognised qualification for competence in Britain is a Scottish/National Vocational Qualification (S/NVQ) Level II Plant Operations.

Operators should also receive induction training before they are authorised to operate plant on site. As a minimum requirement, this should include: emergency procedures, traffic management and pedestrian/vehicle segregation, access and egress from site, safe use of a banksman, hazard management, working alone and safety signage.

Transport routes should be positioned at a safe distance from open excavations to prevent excavation collapse and where possible excavations should be suitably supported. Painted timber, concrete baulks, barriers and so forth should be used to keep vehicles at a safe distance away from excavation edges.

Where there are specific hazards, such as open excavations, then the movement of machines should be strictly controlled by competent banksmen. The banksmen must be excluded from the 'operational area' of the machine and a risk assessment will be required to determine the safe area and distance around

the machine – if in any doubt, the plant should be segregated from the banksmen and other workers.

Employers have a general duty to carry out a 'specific' risk assessment for 'working alone' and to develop appropriate procedures to control these risks and protect employees. As a minimum requirement, this assessment should consider:

- whether the work can be done safely by a lone worker;
- how to deal with foreseeable emergencies, such as illness, injury or acts of violence;
- an assessment of operator fitness to operate and suitability of the person to work alone;
- the level of supervision required and how operator contact will be maintained; and
- specific lone worker training needs.

Additional guidance can be found in Regulations 28 and 29 of PUWER 1998 and also in the following HSE publications: Workplace transport safety: An employers' guide (HSG136), Safety in working with lift trucks (HSG6) and Working alone in safety (INDG73).



Images for illustrative purposes only