

Incident Details

A Traffic Controller (TC) temporarily placed themselves in the “line of fire” behind a truck that had commenced reversing. A ground spotter for the truck, saw the truck reversing and contacted the driver over UHF radio to stop all movements. The TC was unaware of the situation and that they had their back to the truck. No one was injured.



Critical Risk: Powered Mobile Plant

Immediate Action taken:

- Spotter contacted truck driver over UHF radio to stop reversing and all works ceased.
- Site Supervisor / Safety Advisor / Client / Safety Manager notified.
- Post incident drug / alcohol test conducted.
- TC re-located further uphill to separate TC from line of fire risks which improved the line of sight for traffic management.
- Exclusion zone was extended to accommodate truck parking within the work zone.

Contributing factors:

- The traffic controller was distracted by other work activities being conducted at the time.
- Use of a task risk assessment was not used by the TC.
- The truck driver had checked both side mirrors but did not check the reverse camera.
- The truck driver did not use the designated ground spotter to check for hazards or obstructions behind them before reversing.
- Truck driver did not follow the SWMS control: “Only reverse when guided by spotter”.

Learnings:

- Work zone layouts should be well planned to avoid worker / mobile plant interaction.
- Workers must always remain vigilant when working near powered mobile plant and be aware of the tasks that are going on around them.
- Use of the Take 5 process could have prevented this Near Miss.
- Before reversing any plant / vehicle, a driver must be 100% certain that it is safe to do so.
- If there is any uncertainty that the path behind a mobile plant / vehicle is unclear, a combination of control methods should be used.
- Positive communications between mobile plant and spotters should not always be the only risk control relied on by drivers.