

BLIND SPOTS IN MOBILE EQUIPMENT OPERATIONS

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Two recent incidents at Manitoba workplaces involving construction equipment backing overworkers, have highlighted the need for employers to review work practices where workers are required to be in the vicinity of moving vehicles and equipment.

One of the accidents resulted in the death of a worker who was hit by a vehicle-mounted aerial device that was being moved from one location to another. The other incident occurred when a dump truck used on a road repair project was backing into an unloading area, and ran over a worker involved in road maintenance work. In both cases, the accidents were caused by a lack of proper signaling and improper work procedures.

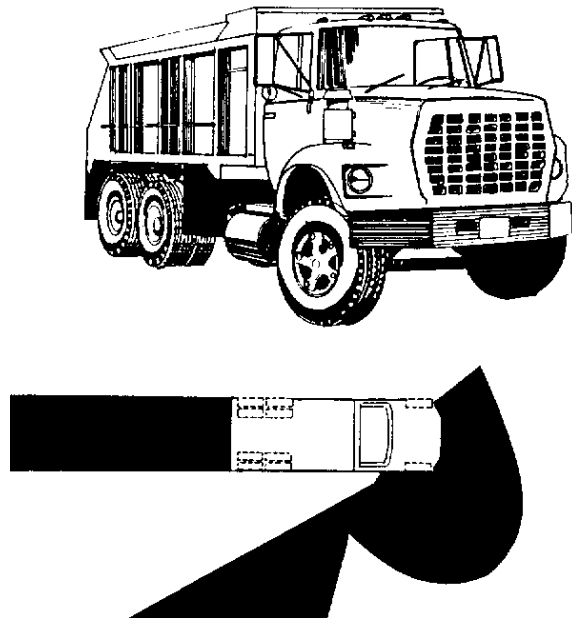
Poor sight lines and lack of visibility are inherent in some equipment used on construction projects and in industrial workplaces. This is especially true when the equipment is backing up, or moving in areas where space is limited and the turning radius is tight.

Warning devices, such as back-up alarms and/or flashing lights are provided on some of the mobile equipment, but this is not always sufficient to ensure worker protection. This is especially true on projects where there are many pieces of equipment, constant movement, and high noise levels.

Proper site planning, traffic control systems and worker training are the best ways to reduce accidents where vehicles and Employees must work in the same area. (See pre-job risk assessment check list.)

The signal person must be properly trained, wear reflective fluorescent blaze outerwear, wear safety footwear, headwear, and other personal protective equipment required on the project and use clearly understood hand signals or standard traffic control devices (STOP paddle, etc.).

Driver blind spots (dark areas)

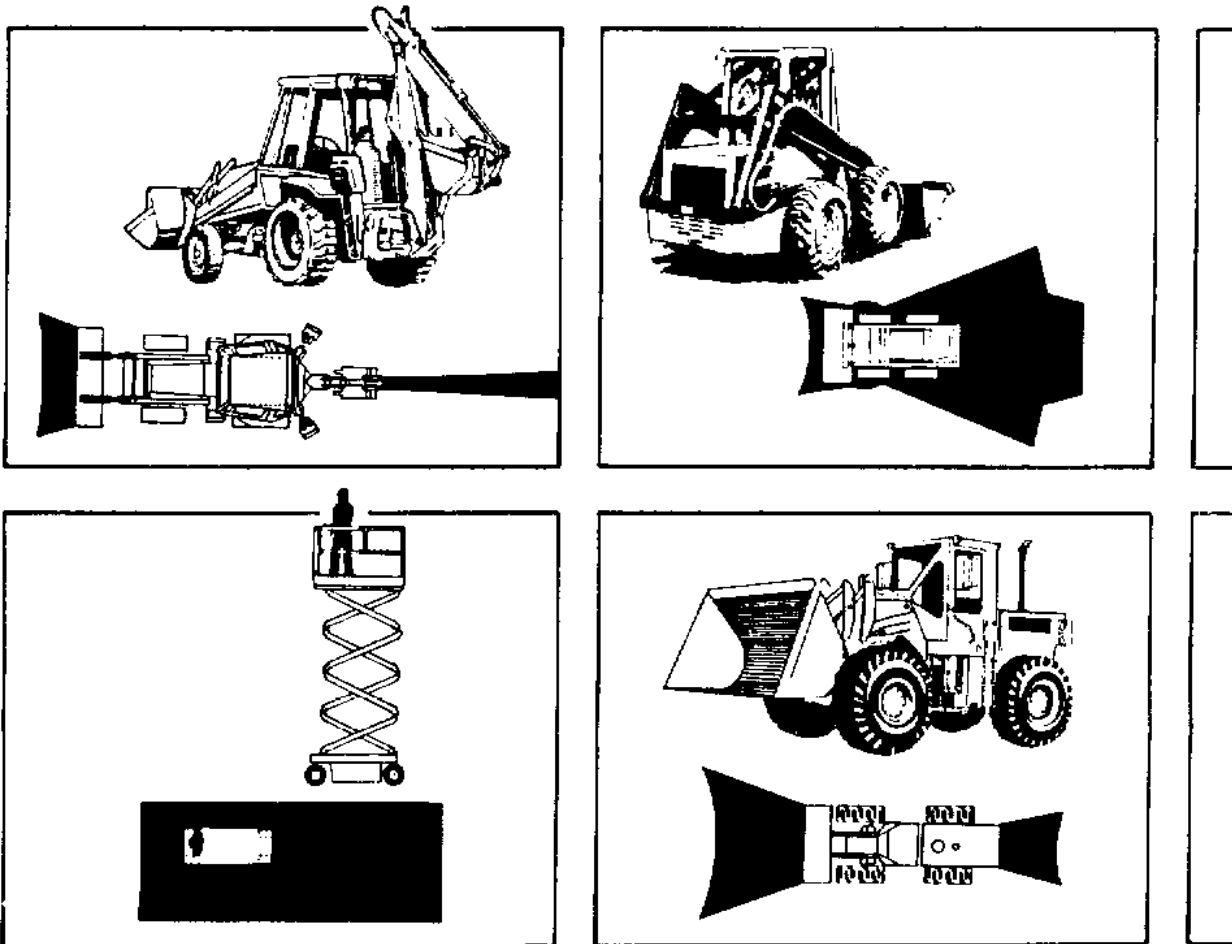


When doing your pre-job risk assessment consider these points:

- ❑ Consider the suitability of providing back-up alarms on all mobile equipment.
- ❑ Whenever possible, plan the project to allow for drive-through operations that will limit the need for vehicles to back-up.
- ❑ Reduce foot traffic in areas where mobile equipment is to be working. Establish designated travel areas, ideally with barricades or other means to set apart from work locations.
- ❑ If you must have workers and mobile equipment working in the same area, establish a traffic control system. Where you have heavy traffic a signal person or traffic spotter should be designated to control traffic movement at the site.

- The signal person must know driver 'blind spots' and remain at all times visible to the driver and any workers in the travel area. The signal person must make eye contact with the driver prior to signaling or changing location.- The driver must always obey the signal person and never back up or move in congested areas without the signal person indicating the path is clear. The driver must be trained to understand all signals used by the signal person.
- Workers on foot should also be trained to recognize driver blind spots and avoid entering these areas.

Driver blind spots (dark areas)



Illustrations courtesy CSAO