

HEALTH, SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL NEWSLETTER



HSE image from a different incident

A dumper driver was killed on a David Wilson Homes site. He was driving onto a spoil heap that had a vertical (1.8m) drop. Driving too close to the drop, the weight of the dumper took him over the edge. He was crushed by the dumper and died from his injuries.

If he'd worn his seatbelt it's unlikely he would have been crushed and he would probably have survived.

Incidents like this show how important seat belts are. Experience and statistics show significant reductions in injury numbers and severity when a seat belt was worn compared to when it was not. This applies to vehicles, dumpers, rollers, and other items of plant.

The basic rule is: if there's a seat belt – wear it!

Where Roll Over Protective Structures (ROPS) are fitted, the seat belt is even more vital if the plant overturns, as it keeps you within the ROPS's protection.

Green light systems are becoming more common on sites – where fitted, a green light flashes to show the seat belt is fastened. Some systems work so that the plant won't start until you put your seat belt on.

It is NEVER acceptable to leave a seat belt fastened and sit on top of it. It may be a pain, but it will save you and your family pain.

The recent fatality also shows how easily forward-tipping dumpers can be overturned. There are several factors that can contribute to plant overturning, such as:

- operating at excessive speed;
- operators not fully concentrating on driving;
- overloading the machine, creating inherent instability;
- operating on inclines or uneven/unstable ground; and
- operating too near to edges of open excavations or trenches causing their collapse.

Dust and Air Quality

- Dust, emissions and odours can annoy neighbours and may cause health risks at very high concentrations.
- **Environmental harm:** Dust can damage the ecology of a watercourse and affect plant growth, including crops.
- **Nuisance:** Dust can settle on neighbours' properties and give rise to local dispute. Poorly controlled emissions and odours from plant or works may give rise to valid complaints.
- **Health:** Dust may cause eye irritation or make asthma worse. Some dusts, such as silica, also cause chronic illness.
- **Prosecution and delays:** The Local Authority has the power to stop works if dust is causing a nuisance. Emission of dark smoke from plant and fires is illegal.

WHAT TO DO:

- Keep surfaces swept and damp down with water regularly.
- Minimise drop heights into haulage vehicles and conveyors.
- Adequately wet/shield cutting and grinding operations.
- Sheet lorries that are carrying dry materials off site.
- Keep to site speed limits to minimise dust generation.
- Use the wheelwash, as appropriate, if one is provided on site.
- Store fine, dry materials inside or suitably protect from wind.
- Store bulk cement and bentonite in silos.
- Position silos and stockpiles away from residential areas and watercourses.
- Clean up or damp down any spillage of dry, dusty materials.
- Report any complaints to your Line Manager immediately, or if you think work activities are causing poor air quality.

DO NOT:

- Burn materials on site.
- Use poorly maintained plant. Black smoke may give rise to poor health and can cause a nuisance.
- Leave plant running if not in use.
- Ignore sources of poor air quality, notify your line manager.
- Ignore complaints.



The Importance of Screen Wash

Did you know that windscreen wiper water can cause Legionnaires' Disease?

Legionnaires' disease is fairly rare. It mainly affects the over 50s and is more common in men. Early symptoms are flu-like with muscle aches, tiredness, headaches, dry cough and fever. It is fatal in around 10-15% of patients.

The Health Protection Agency says professional drivers are five times more likely to be infected, with the biggest risk caused by not adding screenwash to wiper water.

Stagnant, warm water is a breeding ground for the Legionella bacterium, which when inhaled causes pneumonia. Yet adding screenwash kills the bacteria.

Something as simple as putting screenwash in your van and car can prevent this unpleasant, fatal disease.