

BULLETIN

VACC Occupational Health, Safety and Environment



Reference No: Safety Alert

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Technician Hit By Vehicle in the Workshop

The following safety alert is to bring awareness to the industry regarding the operation of vehicles in workshops.

What Happened?

An apprentice technician was conducting a service on a vehicle that was located on the ground, parked in a hoist bay. At the time of the incident, the apprentice needed to start the vehicle and rev the engine to conduct an oil check. The handbrake was engaged and the vehicle was in neutral as it was previously manually moved to commence placing it on the hoist. When the apprentice needed to turn on the vehicle to rev it, he was positioned half in half out of the vehicle. When the apprentice started the vehicle, he unknowingly bumped the gear lever into drive. The technician then revved the vehicle and the vehicle moved forward quickly. At the time of the vehicle moving forward unintentionally, another apprentice technician was reviewing a repair order at the workbench in front of the uncontrolled vehicle. The apprentice was struck by the vehicle and pinned against the workbench. Once the apprentice that was in the vehicle realised what happened, he immediately reversed the vehicle to free his colleague and render assistance.

The injured apprentice was taken to hospital by ambulance for treatment. The apprentice sustained injuries to the legs. The police attended the workplace and took details for reporting. The incident was also reported to WorkSafe as the incident was classified as a reportable incident.

Learning Outcomes

Over the past two years the VACC OHSE Unit has now assisted six different automotive businesses with similar incidents in their workshops. It has been fortunate that of these incidents, only minor injuries have occurred and no fatalities. These incidents could have resulted in much more serious outcomes.

When reviewing incidents of vehicles hitting pedestrians/employees in the workshop, the main contributing factor is the employee/person not being in full control of the vehicle when intending to operate the vehicle. Some of the incidents have either had the person turn the vehicle on from outside of the vehicle or the employee/person was seated half in/out of the vehicle.

From these incidents, the following recommended controls must be considered:

- Alert all automotive employees of this Safety Alert via toolbox talks or safety talks.
- Instruct all employees in the automotive business that when operating a vehicle, the driver must be in full control of the vehicle from inside the vehicle. This means the driver must be properly seated in the vehicle.
- When the vehicle is parked, the vehicle should be placed in neutral or park.
- Prior and during the operation of a vehicle, either in the workshop or outside, the driver must:
 - Conduct a visual check of the area.
 - Ensure the area is clear of people, structures and items.
 - Seated in the vehicle with the vehicle door closed.
 - When turning the vehicle on, ensure the handbrake is engaged and the driver's foot is on the foot brake. If the vehicle has a manual transmission, also engage the clutch pedal.

- If there are blind corners or areas, have another employee/person guide the driver out of the spot, use hazard lights and beep the horn to warn pedestrians.
- Review traffic management onsite and focus on segregation of pedestrians and vehicles.

For further queries please contact Patrick D'Alessandri (VACC OHSE Manager) on 03 9829 1138 or by email ohs@vacc.com.au.

Regards,



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