

TOOLBOX TALK

BRIEFKIT

Plant & Pedestrian Segregation

A ready-to-deliver toolbox talk for foremen and supervisors. 8-10 minute spoken script plus briefing register for operative sign-in.

REFERENCE	TBT-PLANT-PEDESTRIAN-SEGREGATION-001	DURATION	8-10 minutes
DATE		SITE	
TRAINER (PRINT)		SIGNATURE	

1 Why it matters

Around 30-40 UK construction workers a year are killed by being struck by a moving vehicle or piece of plant. Another several hundred suffer life-changing injuries. The HSE consistently identifies poor segregation between people on foot and moving plant as the single biggest factor. CDM 2015 puts the duty on the principal contractor to plan and maintain pedestrian and vehicle routes that don't cross. PUWER 1998 puts the duty on the employer of the operator to make sure the plant is safe to use, including the controls around it.

2 PPE required for this task

Hard hat with chinstrap (mandatory near working plant)

Safety boots to BS EN ISO 20345 S3

Gloves

Hi-vis Class 3 (essential near moving plant, not Class 2)

Safety glasses (dust kick-up from plant)

3 What to say

Spoken script for the supervisor. Read or paraphrase, in order.

1 The hierarchy: eliminate, segregate, control

First we try to eliminate the conflict entirely. Can the work be done when plant isn't operating? Can the plant be parked while the foot work happens? Often yes, if we plan it. If we can't eliminate, we segregate physically: barriers, fences, routed walkways that don't cross the plant area. If we can't segregate physically, we control with admin: banksmen, signage, exclusion zones, agreed signals, radio contact. Each step is worse than the one before. PPE is the last line and on its own it's not segregation, it's just visibility.

2 Exclusion zones: how big and how marked

Around any operating plant there's an exclusion zone nobody on foot enters without permission. The size depends on the machine and the task. For a tracked excavator, the rule of thumb is the full slewing radius plus 2 metres (so for a 20-tonne machine that's 7-9 metres in every direction). For a telehandler with a load up, it's the full reach of the boom in any direction the load can travel, plus a fall margin. For a dumper, it's at least 5 metres behind the vehicle and across the full discharge arc when tipping. Mark the zones with cones, tape, Heras, or chapter 8 barriers. Operatives know not to cross without making eye contact with the operator and getting a thumbs-up.

3 The excavator hazards: tail swing and blind spots

An excavator's counterweight swings out the back when the cab turns. The operator can see the bucket, can usually see the cab side, often cannot see the tail. A worker stood behind the machine thinking they're "out of the way" is exactly in the tail-swing path. This kills people regularly. Other excavator hazards: quick hitch failures (buckets falling off when not pinned correctly), tracks running over feet when the machine repositions, and digging into buried services without scanning. Pre-start checks every shift: quick hitch pin home, tracks clear, area cleared, banksman briefed.

4 The telehandler hazards: tipping and load fall

Telehandlers tip. They tip sideways on slopes. They tip forwards when overloaded or with the boom extended too far. They tip when the operator turns with the load high. When they tip, the load comes off and goes wherever physics takes it. Operatives within reach of where the load could land are in the kill zone. Specific rules: stabilisers out for any lift over a metre or any extension of the boom; load capacity respected (read the chart in the cab); slope angle below the manufacturer's stated maximum; nobody under or behind the load while it's elevated; load lowered before any travel except very short repositioning. NPORS or CPCS A21 ticket for the operator, no exceptions.

5 The dumper hazards: reversing and end-tipping

Dumpers have killed more construction workers in recent years than any other single piece of plant. Two main reasons. Reversing: the driver's view behind is almost nothing, and white-noise alarms get tuned out on noisy sites. Solution is reverse-parking on arrival (forward-out for exit), banksman for any non-trivial reversing manoeuvre, cyclic camera checks, and physical segregation of the route. End-tipping (forward-tipping dumpers): if the ground in front of the tip point is soft, or the dumper isn't square to it, the dumper can pitch forward and crush the driver against the steering wheel. Solution is firm level ground at the tip point, never tip uphill on a slope, drive at sensible speed always with the cab belt fastened.

6 Banksmen: when and how

A banksman is required whenever the operator can't see the area they're moving into, or whenever pedestrians could be present. That covers basically every reversing manoeuvre on a busy site. The banksman stands where the operator can see them in the mirror at all times. Standard signals: arms crossed for stop, palm patting downward for slow, beckoning for come back. Banksman authorised to stop the movement instantly if anything goes wrong. Banksman is not optional and is not a chargeable extra for the foreman to skip. NRSWA training where the work is on or near the highway.

7 Communication and the agreed signal

Before any operative crosses an exclusion zone, two-way signal: pedestrian makes eye contact with operator and waits for the operator to acknowledge (thumbs up, machine paused, bucket lowered). Operator does not assume the operative will get out of the way. Radio handsets on busy sites, especially around lifting operations. If the operative is wearing hearing protection or hi-vis is dirty, the signal protocol is the only thing keeping them alive.

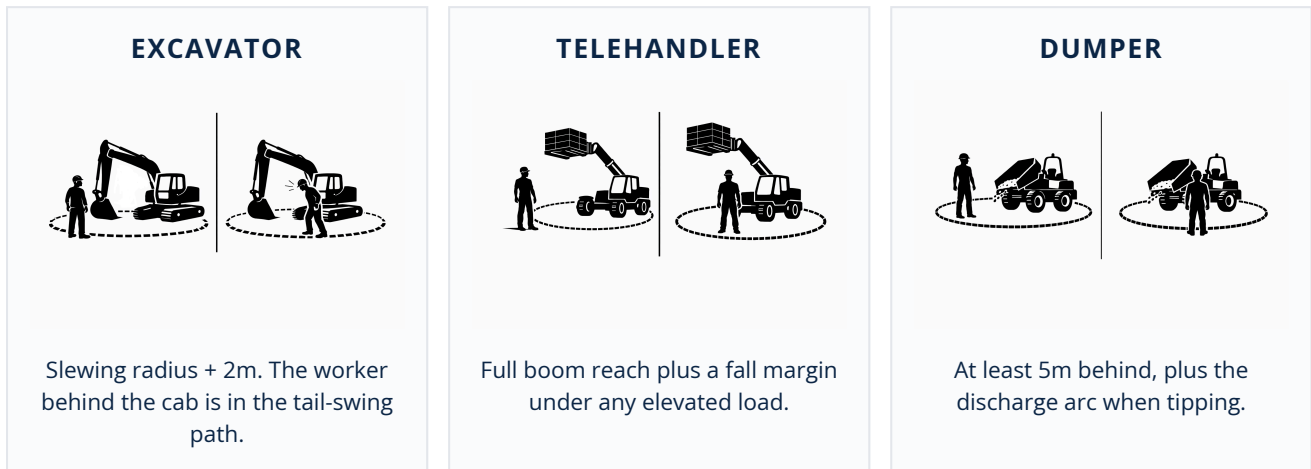
8 If you see plant and people too close, stop work

Anyone on site has authority to stop work the moment plant and pedestrians look too close. That's not a recommendation, it's a duty. If you see a worker drift into an exclusion zone, blow your whistle, raise your hand, shout, do whatever stops the operation. The conversation afterwards about whether you over-reacted is fine. The conversation that doesn't happen is the one where the bag goes in the body wagon.

4 Exclusion zones around plant

Excavator, telehandler, dumper. The dashed line is the zone nobody enters without permission.

The dashed line is the zone nobody on foot enters without permission. Same principle for every machine; the size of the zone changes with the machine.



5 Common mistakes to call out

Operatives crossing behind a working excavator because they think the operator has seen them (they probably haven't)

No banksman on dumper reversing manoeuvres ("it's only a short reverse" is how people die)

Telehandler operating with stabilisers up because "it's only one lift" (one lift is all it takes)

Quick hitch on excavator not pinned home (bucket drops off when boom moves)

Pedestrian walkway crossing the plant route (segregation in name only)

Hi-vis Class 2 worn near plant instead of Class 3 (operator can't see you against background)

White-noise reversing alarms tuned out by operatives because everything beeps (use spoken word alarms, e.g. "vehicle reversing")

Loading vehicles where the driver can't see the loading operator (radio or banksman, not eye contact alone)

End-tipping dumpers on soft, sloped or uneven ground (drivers crushed against steering wheel)

Operators jumping in without daily pre-start checks (quick hitch, mirrors, lights, alarms, fluid levels)

6 Watch on site this week

What the supervisor should be actively spotting on walk-arounds.

- Operatives standing behind working excavators within the tail-swing radius
- Telehandlers operated with the boom extended and the load above a metre with stabilisers retracted
- Reversing dumpers without a banksman, or with a banksman the driver can't see in the mirror
- Quick hitches that haven't been visually pinned home before lifting
- Pedestrians taking shortcuts across plant routes rather than the designated walkway
- Operatives in dirty hi-vis that's no longer high-visibility
- Plant left running and unattended with the bucket up (parking brake on, bucket down, key out)
- Operatives near a tipping dumper standing in the discharge arc
- Loading or unloading wagons with no banksman and no signal protocol
- Anyone (including site visitors) inside the boundary fence without site PPE and induction

7 Confirm the team understood

Ask one or two of these at the end of the talk.

1. What's the exclusion zone around a working 20-tonne tracked excavator? (Slewing radius plus 2m, typically 7-9m all round including behind for tail swing.)
2. When is a banksman required for plant reversing? (Always, unless the operator has a clear unobstructed view of the entire reverse path, which on a real site is almost never.)
3. What hi-vis class is required near moving plant? (Class 3, not Class 2.)
4. If you see plant and a pedestrian getting too close, what do you do? (Stop work immediately. Anyone can. Don't wait for the supervisor.)

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Briefing register: Plant & Pedestrian Segregation

All operatives who attend this toolbox talk must sign below. Their signature confirms they have heard and understood the briefing.

Briefing delivered by:

Name (print):		Date:	
Signature:		Time:	
Site:			

Attendees. I confirm I have heard and understood the briefing detailed above:

#	Name (print)	Company / Role	Signature	Date	CSCS / Ticket No.
1					
2					
3					
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Keep this register in the site Safety File. Additional sheets may be appended if more than 12 operatives are briefed.

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