

◀ HEALTH & SAFETY ALERT ▶



Slewing Plant Fatality – Hong Kong

A ganger working on a tunnelling contract in Hong Kong was fatality crushed by an excavator during tunnel wall trimming operations. The deceased was positioned in the side of the excavator adjacent to the operator's cab. Whilst tracking backwards the excavator's rear track slipped off the invert slab causing the excavator to jerk. It is believed that either when the excavator slipping off the slab or during reverting to the slab, the deceased was crushed between the tunnel sidewall and the counterweight of the excavator.

Investigation revealed that the excavator operation zone was not barricaded off and warning bars/rods were not installed at the rear of the excavator.



Recommendations:

1. Establish 'exclusion zone' for slewing plant by physical barriers with warning signs.
2. Appoint banksman to guide the plant and stop people from entering the 'exclusion zone'. The banksman should also stay outside the 'exclusion zone' during plant operation.
3. Provide adequate task specific lighting from at least two widely separated sources to avoid shadows.
4. Develop effective means of communication between the plant operator and the working gang, e.g. walkie talkie, whistle, flashlight, baton, etc.
5. Slewing plant should be installed with warning bars/rods at the rear, as well as side mirrors and reversing video device/CCTV.
6. Work area should be levelled off to avoid inadvertent plant movement.
7. Plant which has the counterweight inside its footprint of the track, whilst slewing, should be used at a work location where space is restricted.

