**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Pedestrian Safety in Busy Work Environments**

In operational environments all over the UK, you’ll find workers busily navigating their way around sites, all focussed on their latest tasks and deadlines. Among them may be staff of varying experience levels, forklifts operating alongside colleagues on foot, sometimes even customers, and all occupying the same space.

With all this in the mix, it’s vital that effective measures are in place to reduce the risk of any accidents involving this hugely powerful MHE, starting with segregation to keep pedestrians at a safe distance, wherever possible.

**Why Segregation Matters**

According to the latest provisional figures for RIDDOR-reported injuries, being struck by a moving vehicle led to over 1,300 injuries to employees in Great Britain in 2023/24 alone and was the largest cause of fatal injuries to this group.

In the last five years reported, being struck by a moving vehicle has accounted for 24% of all work-related employee fatalities in Great Britain. This figure spans all industries, but when looking at the transportation and storage sector in isolation, this kind of accident accounts for over 32% of its fatal injuries, making it the most common cause of fatality in that sector and underscoring the very real risks involved.\*

With pedestrians and forklifts often operating in the same vicinity, segregation is critical to keep everyone out of harm’s way.

For example, a UK company was fined £400,000 (plus costs) after a worker was seriously injured by a forklift while walking on site. An HSE inspector highlighted the importance of employers implementing suitable measures to segregate pedestrians and vehicles; this includes safe systems of work, training, and compliance checks.

**Effective Segregation Methods**

Wherever possible, pedestrians should be kept out of forklift operating areas. Ideal measures include separate working zones, physical barriers, clearly marked pedestrian routes and crossings, and prominent signage as visual reminders.

When planning crossing points, evaluate all locations where pedestrians and forklifts may interact, such as access points, aisle ends, areas with limited visibility, and battery charging stations. These are high-risk zones where caution is essential.

Where physical separation is not viable, the Approved Code of Practice for Rider-operated lift trucks (L117) recommends additional safety measures such as:

* Audible warning devices (e.g., reversing alarms)
* Flashing beacons
* Visibility aids (e.g., CCTV cameras or convex mirrors)
* High-visibility clothing for pedestrians
* Presence-sensing equipment to alert operators of nearby obstacles or individuals

Implementing a combination of these methods helps build a safer work environment that clearly communicates risk areas and supports safe navigation, particularly for new or less experienced employees.

**Maintaining Safe Forklift Operating Areas**

In addition to segregation, site layout and maintenance are equally important for ensuring the safety of both pedestrians and forklift operators.

Workers must be familiar with designated safe routes, and those paths must remain clear, well-lit, and accessible. This means:

* Removing obstructions from walkways
* Ensuring routes are wide enough
* Using one-way systems where appropriate

Adequate lighting is especially important in high-traffic areas where vehicle and pedestrian interactions are frequent, helping to highlight potential hazards and improve visibility.

**Training All Workers for Safety**

Accidents can occur at any workplace, but those involving forklifts tend to carry higher risk. A well-designed site is only one aspect of workplace safety, and training remains critical to reinforcing safe behaviours.

Whether operating MHE or working around it, every employee must understand how to stay safe on your site. Even experienced operators can develop complacent habits over time, while new team members may be unaware of the operational risks altogether.

It’s important to remember that pedestrians have no protection like the cab of a forklift truck offers its driver. This makes them particularly vulnerable to serious injury and highlights the need for comprehensive training from day one.

As an employer, you have the same duty of care to all employees, regardless of tenure. In fact, new starters are more than three times as likely to be injured in their first six months as compared to longer-term employees, making early and effective training essential.

While forklift operators will require more specific training, all staff working around MHE must understand the day-to-day risks this poses, and dedicated awareness courses are available to help non-operators meet this need.

**Proactive Safety Measures Are Essential**

In a busy working environment, it is essential to proactively implement pedestrian and forklift segregation measures to reduce risk. Then, for long term safety gains, managers and supervisors have a key role to play, monitoring operations and reinforcing best practice to ensure bad habits and complacency don’t creep in and undermine any progress. By ensuring that the relevant practices are in place, communicated and that staff understand the importance of following them, you’ll create a safer workplace for all.

For further information about forklift safety and training, please [contact us](http://www.mentortraining.co.uk/contact-us) today.

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**Accompanying Image: Segregation**