
CASE STUDY – VISIBILITY HAZARDS – SHIPPING/RECEIVING YARD

Keywords: Line of Sight, Visibility, Trucks, Pedestrian, Yard

1. Background

A large warehouse has a number of functioning loading docks which are operated in congested areas with pedestrians nearby. There are often many trucks in operation at once. There is a shipping/receiving office at the south end of the building and many workers are required to be in the yard.

2. Assessment

Concerned with the amount of people in the yard and the increased amount of traffic, the company:

- Completed a document review on policy and procedures.
- Reviewed inspection records and incident reports.
- Reviewed training records.
- Observed employee behaviour.
- Interviewed operators and workers on job tasks.
- Completed a risk assessment of the yard.
- Spoke to the JHSC and several employees.
- Completed a basic line of sight assessment to determine where the blind spots would be when pulling away and backing into a loading dock.

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3. Conclusion

The company discovered that:

- They did not have a formal Traffic (Pedestrian) Management Program.
- There was no posted speed limit in the yard.
- The painted lines located directly in front of the truck cabs were designed to prohibit pedestrians from being in the loading area, however, instead they actually resembled a walkway and were used as such. This was especially concerning since pedestrians located directly in front of a truck cab are totally obstructed from the driver's field of view and cannot be seen.
- They did not have any formal training on pedestrian hazards.
- It was rare to have supervisors present in the yard due to their workload.
- Pedestrians did not have proper PPE such as high visibility vests.
- Shipping office was far away from the last loading dock which led to pedestrians taking shortcuts through the yard.

4. Recommendations

The following recommendations were implemented:

- Developed a Traffic (Pedestrian) Management Program and communicated roles and responsibilities to all employees.
- They painted a well-marked and dedicated pedestrian walkway. To determine the location of the walkway, they used the shortest person in the warehouse (5ft) and had them stand in front of the truck where the driver could not see them. They then walked away from the truck until the driver could see their high visibility vest. Considering other yard traffic they then placed the walkway in a suitable location.
- Expanded and repainted the area in front of the trucks red with symbols to prevent pedestrians from walking in front of the trucks.
- Added in a north shipping office to prevent pedestrians from walking across the yard to get to the south entrance.
- Implemented a policy on yard speed and posted appropriate signage.

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- Re-trained JHSC members to incorporate line of sight, lighting and pedestrian safety in monthly inspections.
- In locations where pedestrians would cross into traffic, the company added crosswalks with strobe lights to alert drivers.
- All employees entering the yard including drivers must wear high visibility vests and the policy enforced.
- Depending on what was being shipped/received that day, the loading docks were assigned according to which office was going to be utilized the most thereby reducing the likelihood of drivers crossing the yard to get to the shipping office.

5. Success Factors and Challenges

The company experienced the following successes:

- Pedestrian traffic was reduced in the yard.
- JHSC inspections were more thorough and identified other areas of potential concern.
- The implementation of the traffic management plan as well as increase signage and strobe light usage led to a more familiar environment for drivers which made them more aware of the presence of pedestrians.
- Clear pavement markings using red and green were well received by both pedestrians and drivers which led to proper use of the pedestrian walkway.

Implementing these changes were not without their challenges:

- It took a bit of time for drivers to adjust to the changes. It was important to communicate these changes before they came to the yard for the first time.
- Because there was a cost associated with the changes and there are changes to work process and scheduling it was difficult to get buy-in from all parties. Moving forward they plan to have stakeholder meetings to discuss any upcoming changes.

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6. Transferability

The company has decided to apply the lessons learned in the yard to the areas in the warehouse. They also decided to look at how they can bring the pedestrians inside to move around the warehouse as opposed to being outside when it may not be necessary.

7. Further information

<https://www.wsps.ca/Search?searchtext=warehouse&searchmode=anyword>

<https://www.wsps.ca/Search?searchtext=pedestrian&searchmode=anyword>

For additional information, ask to speak to your local Ergonomist.

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