

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland

Forklift safety case study: Making traffic management systems work—VIP Packaging

VIP Packaging provides plastic and steel packaging solutions in Australia and New Zealand.

What were the risks?

VIP staff identified a number of potential risks for serious injuries caused by the continuous interaction of workers, delivery trucks and forklifts.

The risks were that:

- forklift drivers and pedestrians were working together in a confined space, leading to an increased risk of injury
- forklift drivers were exposed to weather and had to operate forklifts on wet and slippery surfaces
- the view from the dispatch office was obstructed, preventing the supervisor from monitoring the interaction of delivery trucks, forklifts and pedestrians in the loading/unloading area.

What were the solutions?

VIP Packaging recognised that it needed to make changes to its traffic management plan for the dispatch area.

The changes included:

- adopting a traffic management plan from another VIP warehouse and amending the plan to suit the requirements of the site
- creating designated truck parking zones using floor line markings to ensure adequate space between forklifts and delivery trucks
- ensuring all loading and unloading of trucks takes place under the dispatch area awning, protected from the weather

- trialling new traffic system elements including marking temporary lines, filling barrels with water to create temporary bollards
- consulting workers from the beginning of the process so they understood the new traffic management plan
- providing ongoing management support for the changes to the traffic management plan.

What were the benefits?

- Loading trucks undercover reduced the need for forklifts to operate on wet surfaces.
- Involving workers in the development of the traffic management plan gave them buy-in to the changes and greater ownership of their own safety.
- Loading processes and forklift and pedestrian movements in the dispatch area were more controlled and predictable.
- Visibility was improved through the creation of a designated truck parking zone, allowing forklift drivers to identify vehicles and pedestrian movements in the dispatch area.
- Adding floor markings and training staff in the changes helped compliance with the traffic management plan.
- Reporting and awareness of safety issues improved, as workers were empowered to report incidents and near misses.

Lessons learned

- Workers and visitors to the workplace can be a rich source of safety ideas.
- Trial different ideas before implementing them.
- Ensure workers are given feedback on their ideas and understand the reasons why some safety ideas may not be able to be implemented.
- Work with transport companies that also believe in a strong safety culture and contract drivers who understand the site safety requirements.
- Consult with workers to develop safety systems. This allows them to have ownership of changes and embrace the new systems.
- Promote changes in safety systems along the supply chain (VIP promoted its plans for safe work to other companies along its supply chain).
- Monitor and consult constantly with the people using the system to ensure that processes are working as planned and making it easier to identify possible improvements.



View of dispatch area under the awning showing coloured line markings of truck bays.

Floor markings have been enhanced to show loading bay area.

Further information

For further information, call the Workplace Health and Safety Infoline on 1300 369 915, or visit www.worksafe.qld.gov.au

More information about forklift safety is available in [Forklift safety – reducing the risks](#).

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