

RED ZONES / THUMBS UP TOOLBOX TALKS

Group size:

Ideally between 5 & 20 people (If bigger - see summary at end)

You need:

- A **quiet place** to talk with your group
- A **20x20m** cordoned off part of site eg car park or site area with **good ground conditions & no vehicle movement**
- A **15t excavator** (or close to) to place in the centre of the area, with good even ground to walk around it. This session can be delivered using **any item of plant** in order to illustrate the red zones
- Some **barriers or cones** to mark out the red zone in front of the plant (does not need to be all the way round)
- **Spray paint or cones** to mark out the area of natural visibility for the operatives in the seat



Example script:

- Introduce yourself
- Explain **why you are doing this session**. For example, "Because I am really worried about people getting hurt by being hit by plant." **Make the message personal to you**

Does anyone know of some recent accidents involving this?



(If no response, use the following as examples: Mihai Hondru, the bankman/vehicle marshal that was run over by a Dozer on the M25 in 2010, or more recently Ian Walker who got crushed by wheeled excavator in Aberdeen). "These examples are enough to tell us that we all have a **real risk of being seriously hurt or killed by plant**. The positive message is **if you take in and follow the instructions in this session, you will not get hurt!**"

What is RED ZONE?



The correct answer is **the working area of the plant**. It is the full swing radius of an excavator, or the immediate area that a wheeled/tracked item can move into and hit you. Restricted zones are areas where access is strictly controlled. You can only enter the red zone if you follow the correct procedure; otherwise keep clear at all times.

RED ZONES / THUMBS UP TOOLBOX TALKS

Explain the 3 main activities you will do:



Sit in the cab of the machine. The objective is to appreciate the visibility inside of the cab & the blind spots.



Walk around the machine. The objective is to imagine how you would feel if the machine was running.



Thumbs up. Demonstrate this positive form of communication to attract attention of the operator.



- Show everyone how to safely get in and out of the machine (3 points of contact, back facing outwards)
- Explain to them (and show them) that when you are in the machine to put the deadman lever into the unlocked position & look for the person wanting to enter your working area, giving you a thumbs up. When you see them, lock the deadman lever and give them a thumbs up back.
- Walk everyone back out of the red zone & select the first candidate to get into the cab.
- Assemble everyone behind the barriers or cones, facing the front of the machine.
- **What is natural visibility?** This is the position where the operator has no blind spots, doesn't have to look over their shoulders, use mirrors or check cameras.
- In **groups of 2 or 3** get them to attract the attention of the operator with a **thumbs up**, get them to check that the machine has been disabled and then ask, "Are you happy to walk up now?"
- Walk them to the rear of the machine, in touching distance of the counterweight. Ask them "If the engine was running and you were stood here, how would you feel?" or "What would your family say to you if you were standing here?". Ask them the same question on the blind side of the machine.
- Walk them back to the rest & repeat the walk-around with the next group of **2-3 people**. Also switch the person in the cab of the machine for each walk round.
- Once everyone has done the walk around, get the remaining people who haven't been in the cab of the machine to get in line. In turns they will indicate via **thumbs up** to get the person in the cab's attention to enter the red zone and replace them.

RED ZONES / THUMBS UP TOOLBOX TALKS



In this latest update, a **notable enhancement** has been introduced: select machines will now sport a digital thumbs-up, representing a significant addition to their functionality. This innovative feature serves a dual purpose: firstly, it indicates to users that the machine has been **immobilised for safety or maintenance reasons**. Upon activation, a **vivid green thumbs-up light illuminates**, offering a clear visual cue that the machine is in a stationary state and not operational. This intuitive system aims to enhance safety protocols and streamline operational procedures across diverse settings, fostering a more informed and efficient workflow for users.

Summary:

What have you learnt about visibility from the cab? Is it good or bad? “Even though there are 360 cameras that eliminate the blind spots, which are great for the operator, it doesn't change how much at risk you are by standing close to plant.”

How did you feel standing close to the plant? Good or bad? “You all gave me similar answers. So why are people on site sometimes closer to plant?”

Thumbs Up: How aware do you think the operator was of you when he gave you the thumbs up? “It is now very common for plant to have signs on it saying ‘give a thumbs up to the operator before approaching’. This is great but do we all do it? Think of the rail industry - if you are trackside and a train approaches, everyone has been trained to signal the driver. So if they can do it on rail, why can't we do it with plant? Especially as it is more powerful than just eye contact. You are asking them if you can come into their area and that they look after you when you are there. Thumbs Up is what we do **every time** on this project to keep ourselves and others safe.

What are we going to do, every time, around plant? Correct answer is: Keep clear of the working area of plant (red zone) unless the operator has disabled the machine and given you a thumbs up.

End of session:

- Give out red zone stickers (where provided).
- Thank everyone for their participation.
- Ask for feedback; sometimes there are some important points people raise, especially operatives, either about what things are really like on site or simple improvement measures. Raise these with a **senior General Foreman, Works Manager or H&S Manager**.
- For **bigger groups**, it might be time consuming to get every person to sit inside the machine. Try and focus on those who have never been inside plant before or have some people get in and out of the cab after the session. Alternatively, have more than one person walk around the plant at the same time, e.g groups of 5.