

Heavy construction plant on housing sites

Published 07 Nov 2018

An alert about heavy machinery on housing construction sites overturning onto neighbouring residential houses.

Incident background

WorkSafe inspectors have recently attended two serious incidents in which heavy machinery at construction sites has overturned onto occupied residential houses.

These incidents have included:

- a crane becoming unstable while suspending a load, causing it to topple onto a neighbouring residential house
- a piling rig toppling onto an adjacent residential house while moving through a housing development site

Contributing factors

With the increased use of heavy plant in the housing construction sub-sector, incidents often occur when builders and contractors using this plant are unfamiliar with identifying hazards and implementing suitable risk control measures.

Recommended control measures

Builders and contractors with management or control of workplaces where heavy plant is used must eliminate or reduce, so far as is reasonably practicable, the risk of the plant overturning. Duty holders should ensure that:

- the appropriate plant is being used for the work activity or task
- ground conditions are assessed by a competent person to ensure plant can be

supported during setup or use, or while it traverses the ground

- plant is set up correctly for works to happen safely
- the plant operator is appropriately trained, qualified and competent to operate the type of plant and, where required, has the appropriate high risk work licence
- the plant operator and other employees have received necessary information, instruction, training and supervision to safely operate or work near powered mobile plant
- the plant is safely decommissioned on site, as per manufacturer's instructions
- the plant is safely loaded and unloaded onto the transport vehicle/trailer
- exclusion zones are set up and maintained to ensure employees and members of the public are not nearby when lifting or moving suspended loads
- employees and members of the public, including pedestrians, cyclists and motorists, are isolated or separated to prevent them making contact with the plant
- health and safety coordination plans and safe work method statements have been developed and reviewed, and revised and updated, as site or work activities change. The information is communicated to employees and contractors

- plant is inspected, maintained and serviced using manufacturer recommendations.