

Transport - Fatal 2, 5 & 6 - Preventing vehicle runaways

Six separate 'runaway incidents' in 2024 highlight the importance of drivers ensuring that they follow "Safe Stop" procedures to prevent fatalities, serious injury and damage to property. Tragically, one of these incidents did result in a fatality, any of the other incidents had the potential to have a similar outcome.

1. The driver of a tipper vehicle on a contract surfacing job was trapped and crushed between his own vehicle and another vehicle. The driver had left the cab and preliminary investigations indicate that the vehicle was in drive and moved under power.

2. During a delivery to a client's CDM site a concrete mixer driver exited the vehicle cab. Whilst the driver was out of the cab the mixer truck rolled forward striking the driver before finally coming to a rest against a tree.

The incident is currently under investigation and the details as to the cause of the 'roll away' are yet to be established.

3. A truckmixer driver returned to a concrete plant to park up at the end of the day. Space on site is limited, requiring trucks to double park. The driver got out of his cab to ask a second driver if he wanted to park at the front, so he could be loaded first the following morning. As the driver walked away from his vehicle, it started to roll away. The driver and a colleague tried to get into the moving truck, putting themselves in severe danger; the truck ran away and struck another vehicle in the loading bay

4. A security vehicle that had been parked correctly in a parking space had rolled away and into the road. No vehicles or pedestrians in the area. Handbrake was on but not left in gear.

5. An employee parked a Landrover outside a substation. On his return to the vehicle he discovered that the Landrover had rolled approximately 10 metres away striking a steel conveyor support beam.

6. A third party hotbox wagon was loaded at the asphalt plant. The driver parked just beyond the designated sheeting area and failed to apply their parking brake. Whilst performing checks on the wagon prior to leaving the site the vehicle began to roll away.

The driver jumped down from the vehicle on the passenger side and ran in front of the moving vehicle to try and access the cab and stop the vehicle. The driver was unsuccessful in stopping the vehicle which came to rest after colliding with the boundary fence.

MPA would like to draw to the attention of the membership the HSE "Safe Stop" guidance. Although specifically this is designed for the agricultural sector it applies

equally well in ours. Essentially it comprises 4 key actions by drivers when they stop their vehicles

- Engage handbrake
- Controls in neutral
- Switch off engine
- Remove Key

Further information can be found at

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture/topics/machinery/safe-use-1.htm#safe-stop>

It may sound obvious, however, based on safety observations, Members have reported that these simple steps are not universally followed. There is an opportunity to engage with drivers to reinforce this simple message to avoid a similar tragedy.

It is strongly suggested that Drivers should not leave their cabs unless they have carried out the safe stop procedure.

Please also view the incident alerts that provide more information on three of the runaway incidents referenced above, this includes a graphic video showing one incident where two operators put their lives at risk by trying to access the vehicle whilst it is moving.