

TOOLBOX TALK NO.43

Banksmen and Signaller



What is a banksman?

Banksmen are operatives trained to direct vehicle movement on or around site. They are often called traffic marshals.

Banksman signals

Using banksmen to control reversing operations can put the Banksman in the potential danger area of a reversing vehicle. Every year banksmen suffer serious and fatal injuries whilst at work. If we use banksmen, we must ensure they are trained to carry out their duties safely. There must be a safe system of work that ensures the Banksman and driver are using standard signals, so that they are easily understood, and that the driver knows to stop the vehicle immediately if the Banksman disappears from view.

What is a signaller?

Signallers are operatives who are trained to direct crane drivers during lifting operations.

How can we keep signallers safe?

- ✓ ensure that they are trained and competent to direct lifting operations
- ✓ provide a protected position from which they can work in safety
- ✓ provide distinctive 'hi viz' clothing for identification
- ✓ tell drivers that if they cannot see the signaller they should stop immediately
- ✓ agree on the use of standard signals

Banksman, Signaller, Marshal

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- All banksmen/vehicle marshals should be trained and authorised.
- Keep all persons not involved in the operation clear of the machine or vehicle.
- You should never leave the works unless you are relieved by another banksman / marshal.
- Always check for hazards around the works area e.g. overhead lines, underground services etc.
- Always stand in a position where the driver/operator can see you clearly and never stand directly behind the machine. About 45° is best
- Ensure that there is no-one standing within the working radius of the machine
- If you have to use a radio to give directions ensure that they are clear and precise.
- You must give clear, distinct and recognised hand signals, not wiggle your fingers.
- You should wear distinctive hi-visibility clothing and be easily recognisable to the driver/operator.
- Do not allow operations to be carried out too close to unprotected excavations or allow parking which may cause an obstruction to others.
- It may be necessary to position stop blocks to prevent vehicles driving/reversing into buildings etc.
- Do not allow a vehicle to be operated on excessively steep inclines or gradients
- Do not allow anyone to travel or ride on any machine unless there is a seat.
- Never permit riding in any machine bucket.



- Never stand between the vehicle and a hard object such as a truck mixer and pump. Operate the chute handle from the side.
- You are the person most at risk because you are so close. Plan the task you want the vehicle to do. If you explain what you want to the driver he may do nearly all the work for you or just require a stop signal
- Always ensure that there is sufficient space to carry out the works or operation,
- Inform the driver/operator if you spot a mechanical fault on his machine, e.g. hydraulics leaking, flat tyre etc.
- You must fully understand the job you are being asked to do, if in doubt seek advice.

Can we still use banksmen for reversing vehicles?

Yes, but only if trained and authorised. There is a hierarchy of control which places segregation at the top. Banksmen should only be used in circumstances where other control measures are not possible.