



Health and safety alert

August 2026

No. 1

Risks associated with the use of remote controls to move skip bins

Background

In July 2024, a worker received fatal crush injuries while operating a skip bin loader.

While preparing the skip bin for removal, the operator entered a crush zone between the bin and the rear of the truck with the remote control active. The remote control was inadvertently triggered, causing the bin to raise and swing uncontrollably, striking and trapping the worker.

Summary of hazard

Inadvertent triggering of handheld remote controls can activate plant movement, creating a risk of:

- crushing or entrapment
- being struck by objects
- uncontrolled movement of loads or plant components.

Remote controls may be activated:

- intentionally by workers while moving around the plant and carrying out work tasks
- inadvertently, for example:
 - when carrying the remote control in a pocket or attached to a belt
 - when bumped, leant on or gripped unintentionally
- due to equipment faults, worn buttons or damaged controls.

Contributory factors

- Failure to isolate or switch off the remote control prior to entering exclusion zones.
- Failure to clearly define and enforce exclusion zones when using remote controls.
- Workers carrying activated remotes while walking, bending or working near plant that may be activated.
- Inadequate training or unclear procedures for safe remote control operation.
- Unreported faults with remote controls if inspection is not included in pre-start inspections or maintenance schedules.

Actions required

The person conducting a business or undertaking must ensure that the risks associated with

using handheld remote controls to operate skip bin loaders are eliminated or minimised using appropriate control measures.

Isolation and de-activation

- Require remote controls to be:
 - switched off, isolated or placed in a lockout state when not in use
 - stored in a safe location, not carried activated in pockets or on belts.

Exclusion zones

- Establish and clearly enforce exclusion zones around mobile plant and suspended or moving loads.

Risk assessment and safe systems of work

- Identify all tasks involving handheld remote controls and associated crush, strike and entanglement hazards.
- Establish clear operating procedures for when and how remotes are to be used.
- Identify circumstances when remote operation is prohibited.
- Ensure remote controls are used in compliance with manufacturer's instructions.

Training and supervision

- Provide training to workers relating to the hazards of remote control use.
- Ensure workers demonstrate competency before operating plant and machinery.
- Provide ongoing supervision and reinforcement of safe work practices, ensuring workers:
 - follow the manufacturer's instructions; the original equipment manufacturer specifications and instruction information should be available to workers
 - never enter a crush or pinch zone with an activated remote control
 - deactivate or isolate the remote control when not in use
 - keep the remote within control; never carry an activated control in a pocket or attached to a belt
 - report faulty or damaged remotes immediately.

Inspection and maintenance and testing

- Conduct regular inspections and maintenance of equipment including remote controls.
- Include remote control inspections in pre-start checks.

References and further information

WorkSafe

- [HSB No. 2 Lifting, lowering or suspending loads](#)
- [SIS No. 10 Worker crushed while operating a side-loader trailer](#)

Work Health and Safety Commission

- [Managing the risks of plant in the workplace: Code of Practice](#)