Mobile Plant and Vehicles Toolbox Talk

Key points, do's and don'ts, and questions with answers. The attendance sign-off sheet is on the last page.

Asked to show your toolbox talk records? The Site Book keeps each talk and its signatures with the job, on Pro: **thesitebook.co.uk/features/toolbox-talks**

Key points to cover

- Segregate pedestrians and vehicles wherever possible — use physical barriers, not just signs
- All plant operators must be trained, competent and authorised for the machine they are operating — usually shown by a valid CPCS or NPORS card
- Avoid reversing where you can and keep people clear. If a vehicle must reverse near people or into a blind spot, use a trained, authorised banksman
- Never walk behind or close to moving plant — assume the operator cannot see you
- Wear high-visibility clothing at all times in areas where vehicles operate
- Mobile plant must be fitted with appropriate safety devices: FOPS, ROPS, mirrors, and reversing aids

Do's and don'ts

Do

- Use designated pedestrian walkways and crossing points
- Make eye contact with the operator before approaching any machine
- Obey site speed limits — typically 5-10 mph on construction sites
- Use a trained banksman when plant has to reverse near people or into a blind spot
- Check mirrors, cameras, and blind spots before moving off

Don't

- Never walk behind reversing vehicles or plant
- Never approach an excavator within the swing radius of the arm
- Never ride in the bucket of a telehandler, excavator, or loading shovel
- Never operate plant you are not trained and authorised to use
- Never leave keys in unattended plant — remove keys and apply the parking brake

Questions to check understanding

Ask each question and let the crew answer before you read out the answer.

Q1. Why does reversing need careful control?

Answer: HSE says nearly a quarter of all deaths involving workplace transport happen during reversing. Operators have limited rear visibility, and pedestrians can be struck or crushed. Remove the need to reverse where you can (one-way systems, turning areas), keep people out of reversing areas, and use a trained banksman where a vehicle still has to reverse near people or into a blind spot.

Q2. How should pedestrians and vehicles be separated on a construction site?

Answer: By physical barriers such as concrete blocks, armco barriers, or fencing — not just signs or painted lines. Dedicated pedestrian walkways should be clearly marked and maintained, with designated crossing points where routes must intersect.

Q3. What should you do before approaching any mobile plant?

Answer: Make eye contact with the operator to confirm they have seen you. Approach from the front or side, never from behind. Wait for the machine to stop moving before entering the working zone. Follow any site-specific rules for that type of plant.

Q4. What does FOPS and ROPS stand for on mobile plant?

Answer: FOPS is Falling Object Protective Structure — a reinforced cab roof to protect the operator from falling objects. ROPS is Roll-Over Protective Structure — a reinforced frame designed to protect the operator if the machine overturns. Both are legal requirements on relevant plant.

Attendance sign-off sheet: Mobile Plant and Vehicles Toolbox Talk

Everyone who attended prints their name and signs to confirm they received this talk.

Date _____ **Time** _____

Site or location _____ **Presented by** _____

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Presenter's signature _____

This is general guidance for UK construction sites. Check it against your own risk assessment, method statement and the site before you deliver it. Toolbox talk from The Site Book, reviewed 7 November 2026. Read it online at thesitebook.co.uk/toolbox-talks/mobile-plant.