



8 BLUE LIGHT THINKING



Glenmorangie's Tam Taylor highlights one measure in particular as having had a real impact on reducing incidents and near-misses: retrofitting blue directional spotlights.

The blue lights provide a warning to pedestrians, and other FLT users, of when a truck is approaching, and are particularly useful when exiting a stack or rack.

"All of our forklifts are electric so they are almost silent, and production areas can be quite noisy," says Taylor. "Pedestrians were often unaware there was a forklift operating nearby, and operators were unaware of other forklifts. The lights are a real benefit – they really help the trucks stand out, particularly to visitors. Feedback has been really positive, and the lights were relatively low cost to fit."

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Tam Taylor, Glenmorangie

Kraft Heinz has specified blue LED lights for its new fleet and will retrofit them on remaining trucks. It has also specified seatbelts in a contrasting colour so that managers can easily spot whether they are worn.

Kellogg's has also fitted blue spotlights, but Loughran sounds a note of caution: "While they're helpful, we make sure drivers don't rely on them: they still need to sound the horn as an audible warning of their approach."

As well as blue lights, the Glenmorangie fleet has been fitted with red laser lights. Analysis of incident data flagged up that a high percentage happened when a forklift was travelling at under 5 km/h, says Taylor. "Typically, you might have a couple of people chatting and then the pedestrian turns to go and the truck operator drives over their foot."

In response, the red lasers on the sides of the trucks act as a "virtual barrier", creating a 1.5 m exclusion zone that pedestrians must not enter. "We explained that people mustn't break the lasers, and it was really well received. We've had no similar incidents reported since we introduced it and other companies come to see the lasers in action."

9 GOOD KAMA

When safety professionals talk about FLT training, they're usually referring to driver training. But at packaging specialist Skymark Packaging International in Derbyshire, health and safety officer Neil Beacock has improved near-miss reporting and reduced incident rates by educating non-operators on forklift safety, with his "Know as Much as the Driver" (KaMa) course.

"We have an issue with pedestrians and forklifts having to be in the same area," says Beacock, a former FLT driver and instructor.

"There's no possibility of completely segregating them. We have a real mix of staff: some have been trained to use lift trucks, but others have no knowledge whatsoever."

Beacock identified that non-operators' lack of understanding meant they sometimes had unrealistic expectations of how drivers should or could behave; in addition, managers and supervisors didn't know enough to spot unsafe actions and near-misses on the part of operators. "It wasn't practical to put everyone through full operator training, so I took the essential safety elements for drivers and pedestrians and wrote a course of one hour 45 minutes. It runs through the basics of how lift truck drivers approach things, and covers PUWER, LOLER and L117."

Beacock began with supervisors and managers, and the positive effect was immediate: on the

same day the first group of four was trained, he received two high-quality near-miss reports from two trainees. A steep rise in near-miss reporting at the firm – four years ago there were 35 reports; last year there were 275 – has helped Beacock take practical steps on safety. "The reports are often really constructive – suggesting where to place a safety barrier, for example."

As well as increasing pedestrian awareness, the course has improved driver behaviour: they're less likely to deviate from their training

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Neil Beacock, Skymark Packaging

because the culture has changed. "Even with refresher training, some drivers were getting into bad habits because few people could identify what they were doing. But supervisors are now better educated."

Any slight resistance amongst operators to the idea of non-operators reporting near-misses has gone, and Beacock intends to roll out the training to all workers who don't operate forklifts. Beyond that, he hopes to apply the approach to other work equipment, such as the printing presses.

Taylor at Glenmorangie also rolled out training to managers and supervisors who had no experience of operating forklifts. It was well received, and there have been two occasions when supervisors flagged up an operator developing bad habits, allowing Taylor to deliver refresher training sooner than the normal three-year cycle.

10 WALK THIS WAY

Physical improvements to site layout don't come cost-free, but the investment can pay dividends – and not just in safety terms.

At Kraft Heinz, the minimum standard for people/vehicle safety is to segregate walkways using physical barriers. "Any crossing points or 'blind' corners are identified and re-engineered to move the pedestrian to a safe location with clear visibility," explains Stephen Hewitt.

Kellogg's has spent more than £70,000 on physical safety features at its Manchester plant. Recent additions have included additional pedestrian walkways, safety barriers, signage and mirrors.

"We worked with safety reps to work out safe traffic routes," says Loughran. "All the pedestrian walkways are painted blue so it's immediately obvious to anyone new to the site where it's safe to walk."

"There are various types of safety barriers [on the market], and some of them won't stop anything. The ones we've added are tested to withstand up to seven tonnes of pressure."



"Warehouses are fast-moving environments," notes Jonathan Hibbins, commercial director at McCue, which produces safety barriers and other products for industries such as retail and manufacturing. "Choosing the right products is about collaboration with the employer: we go to site, look at the risks and consult with clients about the correct solutions for their environment."

"Our safety barriers are flexible: they're designed to dissipate energy, which reduces maintenance costs resulting from impacts because you don't have metal impacting on metal."