



Safety Alert

Mobile VMS Wheel incident

24 March 2021

The following pages of this safety alert were issued by Highways England's supply chain partner:

Chevron

Safety Alert

Significant Near Miss

Mobile VMS Wheel incident 24/02/2021



DESCRIPTION

A recent Significant Near Miss incident occurred on the A30 Chiverton to Carland Cross project in February. The nearside wheel of a Variable Message Sign (VMS) fell off and travelled across the carriageway into oncoming live traffic whilst the unit was being towed.

The unit had previously been installed in the location for one day with its wheels removed to prevent theft. Traffic management operatives replaced the wheels to tow the unit with the incorrect tools ultimately causing the wheel of the trailer to come loose.

TYPE OF ALERT	Safety Alert		
TARGET AUDIENCE	Network users	REF NO.	LWCTM101
AUTHORISED BY	Chevron TM	DATE ISSUED	22/03/2021

Investigation Findings:

- The manufacturer installed the VMS signs but did not leave the correct impact gun and torque wrench to meet the 85Nm torque for re-installing the wheels on the VMS signs on site. When the VMS sign was identified as being in the wrong location, the traffic management crew did not have the correct equipment despite requesting it from their line managers and the site team.
- The move of the VMS was not planned for in the daily briefings.
- There were no method statements or risk assessments provided to cover the activity.
- The traffic management crew felt pressured to move the VMS unit – receiving several phone calls from the TSCO to move the VMS sign as soon as possible.
- The traffic management crew did not speak up.

Lessons Learnt and Key Points:

- No matter how much pressure you are being put under, if you do not think an activity or works situation is safe, **STOP WORK** and seek advice.
- Always ensure you have the correct equipment to carry out your task safely. If not, **STOP WORK** and seek advice.
- Always ensure you have the correct and appropriate Risk Assessments, Method Statements and Safe Systems of Work in place before you start a task. If you do not, **STOP WORK** and seek advice.
- **YOU ARE EXPECTED AND ENCOURAGED TO CHECK EVERYTHING IS SAFE AND IN PLACE FOR YOU TO CARRY OUT A TASK. IF IN DOUBT EVERYBODY HAS A RIGHT TO STOP WORK.**

Further Recommendations:

There are hundreds of VMS signs in use across the network. Some have been sitting unused for long periods. Ensure that when moving VMS signs, especially ones that have been in-situ for extended periods, a full inspection of the trailer is carried out before moving it.

- Make sure RAMS have been provided for the task.
- Ensure the correct tools and equipment have been provided to install the wheels on the trailer to the manufacturer's specified requirements.
- Investigate whether your operatives require training to install or move VMS signs.

Remember, TRAINING, RAMS, THE PROPER TOOLS and if in doubt, STOP and SPEAK UP!