

# Safety and health alert

## 23/01 Inadequate communication with isolated employees

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### Incident

A tour bus attempting to overtake a moving road train near Eneabba collided with the rear of the road train. At the time of impact, the bus was transporting 15 passengers.

An investigation by the bus company revealed that an inadequate communications system on the bus had caused major problems in initially raising the alarm. This may have exposed both the bus passengers and the drivers to further risks if their injuries had been of a more serious nature.

### Factors

- Mobile telephone coverage did not extend into the area of the accident scene.
- Lack of an alternative means of raising the alarm from the accident scene.

### Recommendations

- Employees who are required to travel and work in remote locations must have a means of communication available to them in an emergency situation.
- Occupational Safety and Health Regulation 3.3 states: "If an employee is isolated from other persons because of time, location or the nature of work, then an employer must ensure that -
  - a. There is a means of communication available which will enable the employee to call for help in the event of an emergency; and
  - b. There is a procedure for regular contact to be made with the employee and the employee is trained in the procedure."
- Guidance on providing a means of communicating in the event of a emergency situation can be obtained through the Guidance Note published by WorkSafe Western Australia titled "Working Alone." This guidance note can be downloaded from the department's website at [www.safetyline.wa.gov.au](http://www.safetyline.wa.gov.au). Hard copies of this document can be purchased for \$3.00 from the Publications Officer at WorkSafe Western Australia, telephone (08) 9327 8775.

### Further Information

Further information can be obtained from the WorkSafe internet site [www.worksafe.wa.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.wa.gov.au), or by contacting customer service on 1300 307 877 or email: [safety@docep.wa.gov.au](mailto:safety@docep.wa.gov.au).

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