WEEK 37 MID SEPTEMBER · THE DAYS ARE GETTING SHORTER · ~5 MIN READ · ONTARIO CONSTRUCTION

# Reduced Daylight: Visibility & High-Vis

Last week you started in daylight. Now the drive in is dim, the light goes noticeably earlier each evening, and the sun sits low and straight in everyone's eyes. Operators and drivers have a harder time seeing you than they did in July — and the gear that worked all summer may not be what the low-light hours actually require.

## The hazard

Daylight drops fast through the fall, and low sun at each end of the shift puts glare right where a driver needs to see you. In poor light a worker on foot can be invisible to a backing truck or a swinging machine until it's too late. The trap is assuming that "wearing a vest" has covered it — from the side, in the dark, a plain vest gives a driver almost nothing.

## What to do

- **Check the garment against what Ontario actually specifies**, not against a CSA class. A worker who may be endangered by vehicular traffic needs a garment covering at least the upper body that is **fluorescent blaze or international orange**, with **two 5 cm yellow stripes** front and back (≥500 cm² of yellow front, ≥570 cm² back), **vertical and centred on the front**, in a **diagonal X on the back**, and **retro-reflective as well as fluorescent**. **A fluorescent yellow-green vest does not meet the colour requirement.**
- **For night-time work, add the limbs.** Retro-reflective silver stripes **encircling each arm and leg**, or equivalent side-visibility stripes of at least 50 cm² per side. This is the requirement people miss, and it's exactly the one the fall shift starts to need.
- **Keep it clean and intact.** Dirt, fading, and tears take the reflectivity away, and a garment that no longer performs isn't protection.
- **Get positive acknowledgement before you approach a machine** — an agreed signal back from the operator, and the machine stopped and secured the way the procedure requires. **Eye contact isn't authorization.** Modern cabs run cameras and mirrors, so an operator can know exactly where you are without you ever seeing their face; and seeing a face tells you nothing about what they're about to do next.
- **Light the place properly.** Areas where people are working, and the ways in and out of them, have to be adequately lit. Turn vehicle, work, and area lighting on before dusk rather than after, and watch that a single bright source doesn't just create glare and deep shadow.
- **Stay out of the paths and the blind spots**, walk the routes the operator expects, and use the required signaller where the path is obstructed or someone could be endangered.

## Watch out for

- The low fall sun blinding a driver at exactly the start and end of shift.
- **A summer vest carried into night work** with no arm or leg stripes.
- Dark trousers under a good vest at dawn or dusk — your legs disappear even when your torso doesn't.
- "It's only a quick task." Short unplanned moves are worth the same care as planned ones; you don't get a discount for being brief.

## Talk it over

- Look at what people are wearing right now: correct colour, stripes in the right pattern, and arm and leg stripes for anyone here after dark?
- Where on this site is the light worst at the start and end of our shift, and what are we doing about it before it's dark?
- What's our agreed signal for approaching a machine, and does every operator here use the same one?

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