



## Seat Belts Save Lives

Every year, there are over 5,000 accidents involving transport in the workplace. About 50 of these result in people being killed ([www.hse.gov.uk/statistics](http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics)). The main causes of injury are people falling off vehicles, being struck or crushed by them.

Failure to use, tampering with or the bypass of safety devices can result in a significant risk to operators and other persons.

In the event of a machine overturning, the operator will be protected from death and serious injury by wearing a seat belt. The seat belt works in combination with the roll over protection system (ROPS) to keep the operator in the seat, preventing them from being crushed by the machine.

Unfortunately, a minority of operators choose to drive these machines without a seat belt due to inconvenience, low levels of trust in the combined seat belt/roll over protection or a poor safety culture thus increasing their risk of death or serious injury should the machine overturn.

In order for a seat belt to be effective, the following points should be adhered to:

- The belt should be worn as tight as possible, with no slack.
- The lap belt should go over the pelvis region, not the stomach.
- The diagonal strap should rest over the shoulder, not the neck.
- Nothing should obstruct the smooth movement of the belt by trapping it.

**Seat belt Status Alarm Beacon** systems are widely used to indicate that the operator is wearing the seat belt. The lap belt buckle has a switch, which is activated by the belt when fastened. This is connected to a green beacon on the roof of the vehicle to show that the operator is wearing the seat belt.

Employers have a legal duty to ensure the health and safety of their employees, contractors and members of the public are not put at risk as a result of their activities. Employees and the self-employed also have a duty to look after their own health and safety and that of anyone who might be affected by their work.

## Recommendations and action points

- User pre-checks should include a functional test of the seat belt paying particular attention to the condition and cleanliness of the belt and that it operates effectively.
- Supervisors should robustly monitor and enforce the wearing of seat belts and provide information, instruction and training in the correct use of any restraining system.



*Bypassed Restraining System*



*'Green Beacon' Electric Seat Belt Monitoring System*