



# Napier Port triggers safety ‘chain reaction’

Sharing a serious near-miss led to Napier Port launching a collaborative project which addressed a serious safety risk, while bringing unexpected ‘spill-over’ benefits.

It’s common practice for logging truck drivers to use the port’s log gantries to lift empty trailers onto their trucks using chains attached to the trailer. In May 2013, a CCTV camera at Gisborne’s Eastland Port captured an incident where the chains on a trailer broke, sending it crashing down just as the driver emerged from underneath.

Gisborne alerted log marshalling companies and the video was shared widely across the industry.

“It is absolutely chilling viewing,” said Andrew Locke, Commercial Manager for Napier Port.

“This wasn’t a risk we’d been aware of so we acted immediately to review our processes, including placing cameras on our gantry to monitor driver behaviour, and prominent signage warning drivers not to walk underneath trailers.

“But people were still doing it. Within a short time, we recorded two more serious incidents. There was unanimous agreement across our leadership team that more needed to be done and, to achieve the most effective outcome, we needed to do this collaboratively.”

*“It has been quite a special thing to have collaboration across the ports and wider industry.”*

“We involved log exporters, trucking companies, marshalling services and others, outlined the process we wanted to follow and invited feedback,” said Mr Locke.

“Through our engagement, we found out that 90 per cent of operators had witnessed or heard about a trailer chain breaking, mostly in the bush but also in ports.”



Ultimately, the most effective risk management measures identified were: one-on-one inductions in gantry use for every truck operator; the introduction of Dallas tags – electronic keys which only allow drivers who have undergone full induction to use the gantry; and adoption of the Log Transport Safety Council guidelines.

“Throughout, we have shared our learnings with other ports and a number have implemented similar processes. It has been quite a special thing to have collaboration across the ports and wider industry.”

The Gisborne film proved vital in engaging such a diverse range of organisations, businesses and individuals.

“It has been the most powerful tool,” said Napier Port Safety Advisor Steve Hart. “When you see someone miss losing their life by millimetres, it speaks absolute volumes.

“We gave trucking companies plenty of notice and held two induction days in partnership with WorkSafe, the Police Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Unit (CVIU) and equipment manufacturer Bridon Cookes, who offered free chain inspections onsite. Inductions are ongoing for every new operator.”

“I have personally done more than 300 face-to-face gantry inductions. They take 15-20 minutes each. One guy I showed it to was extremely quiet – then he told me he was the person in the film. He was clearly very happy with the changes we had made.”

The Log Transport Safety Council engaged closely with the project –

including updating its 2007 industry standards – and in 2015 introduced the Trailer Lifting Chain Check and Compliance Certificate.

“This sets the standard for the type and strength of chains which must be fitted to the trailers,” said Mr Hart. “Like a Warrant of Fitness, it’s renewed annually and trucks have a sticker to show they are compliant. Trucking companies bought in so enthusiastically the country sold out of the specified chain type.”

There have been no further incidents at Napier’s gantry since the new procedures were launched. Additionally, Mr Locke said there have been ‘spill-over’ benefits.

“Drivers have more ownership of what they are doing. As well as a big improvement with safety, we are engaging more closely with log exporters and have a database of everyone using the gantry.

“The flow-on from everyone being trained is that the gantry is used more efficiently. The certification process, including documentation of how the trailer lift is performed, means better procedures and maintenance of gear and that leads to further efficiencies.

“But above all, there is the moral benefit. Once we knew this was happening at our port, we knew we had to take action to do everything we could to ensure the safety of the drivers.

“While they are not our employees, they are using our assets and it is our responsibility to ensure their safety as much as possible. Nothing is guaranteed but I know, as I drive past the gantry every day, that we have done everything we possibly can.”

## **WORKER ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION**

The best outcomes are achieved when a business and its workers work together on health and safety. Worker Engagement and Participation is about having planned ways for:

- > workers to give input on issues which will (or are likely to) affect their health or safety. This includes asking for and taking into account their views and
- > workers to improve work health and safety on an ongoing basis (eg by raising concerns or suggesting improvements).

This will help you and your business to make better decisions – and keep your people and productivity thriving.

## **KEY POINTS**

- > Consultation and cooperation leads to more effective risk management.
- > Collaboration benefits wider industry.
- > Worker ownership of safety outcomes.
- > More efficient processes.
- > Strengthened supply chain relationships.

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