

# UNDERSTANDING PEDESTRIAN SAFETY RISKS AROUND BUILDING CONSTRUCTION SITES... AND HOW TO MITIGATE THEM

## Understanding pedestrian safety risks around building construction sites

Managing pedestrian safety around building construction sites, particularly in locations with high foot traffic, is challenging but vitally important. Pedestrians have never before been more distracted with their attention drawn to their smart phones or rushing to get to where they need to go. Pedestrians, and their lack of awareness, pose serious safety risks around construction sites, particularly at the gate control point, where the environment can present unexpected hazards as vehicles and equipment enter and exit the construction site. Deploying the latest pedestrian management systems, using the PORTABOOM® system of work, can significantly improve pedestrian and traffic controller safety around construction sites.

To understand how the new PORTABOOM® system improves the protection of pedestrians, it's important to analyse the pitfalls of the current pedestrian management methods.

## The disadvantages of standard pedestrian management methods around construction sites

Pedestrian management plans are designed to minimise risks of incidents between vehicles, equipment and pedestrians whilst balancing the needs of the construction site and local traffic. The current pedestrian management practice at construction access gates is to employ at least two traffic controllers to stand in idle waiting for a vehicle or delivery to require access to the building site. At some construction sites the access control point may need to operate at high frequency, while some sites may only receive one or two deliveries a day.

When access to the site is required, the traffic controllers stand at either side of the driveway to stop pedestrians, sometimes holding their arms out wide as a makeshift deterrent or using manual expandable gates as an attempt at achieving a physical barrier.



### The problems with standard pedestrian management methods are numerous:

- Pedestrians walk straight past or ignore the Traffic Controller's instructions and potentially walk into an unsafe zone. This has the potential of also putting the traffic controller into danger as they enter the unsafe zone in an attempt to clear the way and re-secure the access control point.
- The Traffic Controller's attention is wholly focused on pedestrians, at one point only, to ensure they obey the stop directive. They're unable to perform other duties such as spotting trucks and communicating with the site.
- When there is high pedestrian foot traffic, the Traffic Controller, who is attempting to hold back pedestrians, can become obscured in view by all pedestrians and overwhelmed.
- Pedestrians may become aggressive and agitated due to being held up. This can place unacceptable stress on the Traffic Controller who is positioned within close proximity to pedestrians.
- Using manual expandable gates presents manual handling risks.
- The time it takes to deploy manual expandable gates causes delays to the construction site and, in some cases, may cause a bank-up of traffic surrounding the site.
- When manoeuvring manual gates, the Traffic Controller's attention is focused on the gate rather than being attentive to the surroundings and preparing to limit hazards.
- Having traffic controllers waiting in idle for when the need of a vehicle to access to the construction site arises, is an inefficient use of resources and thus financially inefficient.

Using the PORTABOOM® system of work at building construction sites overcomes many of the negative aspects presented by the standard access control methods.

### How does the PORTABOOM® system of work improve pedestrian management at construction sites?

The latest pedestrian management plans use PORTABOOM® units to manage pedestrian foot traffic. Instead of a traffic controller using their arms or having to hassle with manually expandable gates to stop pedestrian foot traffic, PORTABOOM® units are used. The PORTABOOM® units are positioned on the footpath, on either side of the construction site driveway. They are set up so that the boom arm, when lowered, forms a physical barrier across the pedestrian walkway on both sides of the driveway. When vehicles and equipment are entering and exiting via the pedestrian walkway, the PORTABOOM® arms are lowered to prevent pedestrians from walking across the unsafe zone. In this set up, only one Traffic Controller, not two, is required to operate the gate control point.



### How does using the PORTABOOM® system of work improve pedestrian safety?

- Using PORTABOOM® as a solution provides a physical barrier across the footpath. It's unlikely that a pedestrian will disobey the boom arm and crawl underneath to get past.
- Once the PORTABOOM® arm is lowered the Traffic Controller can be mobile, allowing them to perform other duties like spot vehicles and communicate with worksite.
- PORTABOOM® units are operated by the Traffic Controller using a single remote-control button. They are swiftly lowered when the Traffic Controller presses the button, thereby eliminating time delays and manual handling issues caused by the manual expandable barriers.
- It enables the Traffic Controller to be more attentive of their surroundings as they can quickly lower the PORTABOOM® boom arms ensuring ready for unimpeded site entry.
- Traffic Controllers can give advance warning to pedestrians who are approaching the secured driveway as they no longer need to hold pedestrians back with their arms. It also reduces the Traffic Controllers exposure to aggressive pedestrians.
- One Traffic Controller can operate multiple PORTABOOM® units presenting significant cost savings to a project.

### Want to improve pedestrian safety on your building construction site?

Traffic & Access Solutions provides complimentary demonstrations and advice on how to effectively implement the PORTABOOM® system of work to mitigate pedestrian safety risks on construction sites. Implementation training is also available to teach Traffic Controllers on the best practice use of PORTABOOM®.

**Want to trial PORTABOOM®? Hire it now from Coates Hire or Kennards Hire**  
**Want to purchase PORTABOOM®?**

- In NSW, VIC, ACT and NT contact Jaybro
- In QLD, WA, SA and TAS contact Artcraft

To further enhance safety, PORTABOOM® units can be fitted with the LED Boom Light accessory to boost visibility of the boom arm. In addition, Louder alarms can also be used to alert pedestrians by sound of the boom arm being lowered.



On worksites where building and construction hours are Monday-Saturday, the PORTABOOM® units are usually charged at the end of the shift on Saturday so that they are ready for use on Monday morning.

The latest pedestrian management methods using PORTABOOM® have been successfully implemented on major construction sites, a Building Construction Project in the busy heart of North Sydney, at Sydney's Central Station and bustling Bourke Street in Melbourne.



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