



# SAFETY ALERT

DATE: 30<sup>th</sup> Sept 2025

SA: 0011

TITLE:

Vacuuation tanker crush incident near miss

INDUSTRY SECTOR:

Drainage and Industrial cleaning

TARGET AUDIENCE:

Vacuuation tanker and jet vac tanker operators

ORIGINAL SAFETY ALERT ISSUED BY

Ausjet

## WHAT HAPPENED

A vacuuation operative suffered neck strain after he was struck by the tank door of a vacuuation tanker as it was being closed by a work colleague.

The operative had 5 years' experience, was trained in vacuum loading. He had also been trained in working at heights, confined space, and held an HGV licence.

The incident occurred at 3.30pm, seven hours into a work shift.

The operative had been working in a two-person team. They had unloaded material, washed out the tank, then cleaned the wash-bay interceptor.

The operative's colleague then went to the front control panel to lower the vacuuation tank and close the tank's door.

The operative had left the rear control panel and was out of line of sight of his colleague when he placed his head between the door and tank for a final inspection.

At that point, the colleague started closing the door, which struck the back of the operative's head.

The operative shouted for him to stop, which the colleague did, reopening the door before a significant crush injury could happen.

## ACTION TAKEN

- The incident was reported internally and to the client and regulator.





## PREVENTATIVE ACTION

Elimination	If the vacuumation tanker is fitted with a rear control panel always use the rear control panel. Maintain line of sight between team members at all times. If line of sight is not maintained <b>STOP</b> operations immediately.
Substitution	N/A
Isolation or barriers	Use the door prop for any access required between the vacuum loaders interceptor door and the interceptor.
Engineering	If the unit is fitted with a remote control, the operative should position themselves at the rear of the unit to enable clear vision of the door closing functions.
Administration	Undertake a toolbox talk with all vacuumation operators and share this alert.
PPE	N/A

## KEY LEARNING POINTS

- Maintain line of sight with team members during any hydraulic movements of vacuumation components.
- If line of sight is lost - stop operations immediately.
- Establish and maintain good communications between operators at all times.
- Use rear controls or a remote control, if available, and position yourself where you can view all hydraulic operations of the vacuumation tanker.