European Bank
for Reconstruction and Development

BN14
Protecting the public

EBRD briefing note

November 2026

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Introduction

Work activities do not only put workers at risk. Construction sites, industrial facilities, utility works and the vehicles that serve them operate in and alongside living communities: next to homes, schools, shops, footpaths and roads used every day by people who have had no safety induction, wear no protective equipment and may have no understanding of the dangers. Members of the public, including children, older people and people with disabilities, are killed and injured every year by workplace transport, by falls into unsecured excavations and openings, by falling materials and by straying into work areas.

EBRD Environmental and Social Requirement 4 (ESR 4): Health, safety and security requires clients to identify and assess risks that project activities pose to affected communities and to put measures in place to prevent harm, with particular attention to vulnerable groups. This note focuses on two of the highest-risk interfaces: workplace transport and work activities close to pedestrian routes.

Risk assessment

A community safety risk assessment should be carried out before work begins and reviewed as the work and its related traffic movements change. The following hazards should be considered.

Workplace transport: delivery vehicles, tippers, mixers, excavators and other mobile plant entering, leaving and manoeuvring near the public. Reversing at site entrances is one of the most frequent causes of fatal accidents involving pedestrians.

Vehicle movements on public roads: heavy goods vehicles on unsuitable routes, near schools or at school travel times, and the particular danger large vehicles with restricted visibility pose to pedestrians and cyclists at junctions.

Activities close to pedestrian routes: excavations, openings and temporary works next to footways; loads lifted over or adjacent to public areas; falling tools and materials; scaffolding and hoardings; dust, noise and stored materials obstructing routes.

Unauthorised access: sites attract children and trespassers, especially outside working hours. Excavations, stacked materials, plant left unsecured, water bodies and stored fuels are all serious hazards to intruders.

Vulnerable road users: children, older people, wheelchair users, people with prams, and people with impaired sight, hearing or mobility need wider, step-free, well-surfaced diversions and clear information; a route that is merely "passable" may exclude or endanger them.

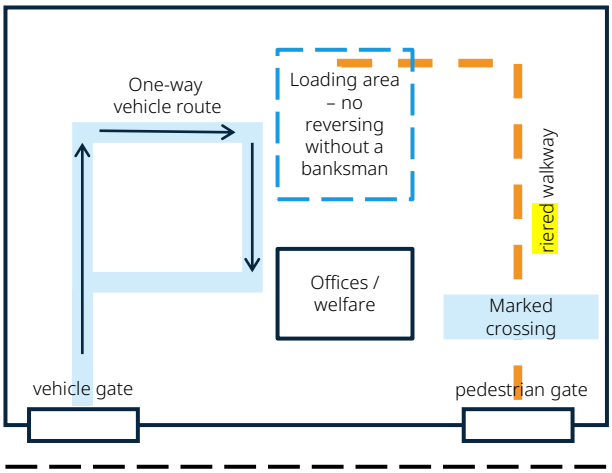
Managing workplace transport

The aim, in order of preference, is to **eliminate** vehicle-pedestrian interfaces, then **segregate** them, and only then rely on procedures and people.

- Plan deliveries to reduce vehicle numbers and avoid sensitive times, such as school opening and closing.
- Agree vehicle routes to site that avoid schools, markets and narrow residential streets, where practicable.
- Design site access so vehicles enter and leave in forward gear, using one-way systems and turning areas; where reversing is unavoidable, use a trained signaller (banksman) and exclude pedestrians from the area.
- Provide separate, clearly signed gates for vehicles and pedestrians, and physical barriers between them.
- Hold vehicles off the public highway; do not queue lorries on roads or across footways.

- Specify vehicle safety aids: audible reversing alarms, cameras or mirrors covering blind spots, and side underrun protection for goods vehicles.
- Keep public crossings of the site entrance well lit, surfaced and controlled during vehicle movements.

Figure 1. Segregating site transport from pedestrians: one-way route, separate gates and barriers



Work close to pedestrian routes

Secure physical separation: enclose work areas with continuous, robust hoarding or fencing that cannot be pushed over or climbed through, and ensure it is maintained daily. Netting, brick guards and fans (protective canopies) should be used to contain falling materials where work takes place above or beside public routes; loads must never be lifted over people.

Safe diversions: where a footway must be closed, provide a signed alternative route before the closure takes effect. Diversions should be step-free, firm, adequately wide for wheelchairs and prams, protected from traffic by barriers rather than cones alone, and lit at night.

Signage and lighting: provide signs that clearly identify the risks, prohibit unauthorised access, direct pedestrians and traffic, and are positioned according to local traffic rules. Illuminate hoardings, diversions and site entrances after dark.

Site security: secure the site outside working hours: lock gates, immobilise plant, remove ladder access to scaffolds, cover or fence excavations and openings, and store fuels and hazardous substances securely. Inspect fencing and signage regularly; the public may move and damage them.

Emergency arrangements: maintain access for emergency services, both to the site and past it, and plan how an injured member of the public would be helped.

Reversing vehicles at site entrances and unsecured excavations beside footways are among the most common causes of death and serious injury to members of the public from work activities. Both are entirely preventable by planning, segregation and daily checks.

Engaging the community

Community safety is not achieved by barriers alone. Prior to commencing work, engage with local residents, businesses, schools and community leaders to explain what will happen, when, and how risks will be controlled. Early engagement helps to: prevent the public from moving or damaging traffic management equipment and fencing; identify local concerns regarding issues such as school routes and market days; and build the trust needed to resolve problems quickly. Provide a visible contact point and grievance mechanism, so concerns and near misses reported by the community are recorded, investigated and acted upon, and share how they were resolved. Consider awareness sessions for local schools where sites operate near children.

Summary

Before work begins near the public, complete a risk assessment and confirm whether:

- risks to the community, including vulnerable groups, have been assessed
- vehicle routes, delivery times and site access have been planned to avoid the public
- vehicles can enter and leave in forward gear, with separate pedestrian and vehicle gates
- a trained signaller is used where reversing is unavoidable and the area is kept clear
- the site is enclosed by robust, maintained hoarding or fencing, with clear signs
- footway diversions are safe, step-free, barriered and lit
- falling material is contained where work is above or beside public routes
- the site is secured against unauthorised access, especially by children, outside working hours

- local communities have been engaged, with a contact point and grievance mechanism in place
- fencing, signage and lighting are inspected regularly.

References

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Health and Safety Executive (2009), *Protecting the Public: Your Next Move* (HSG151), London. Available at: https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg151.htm.

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International Finance Corporation (2007), *Environmental, Health, and Safety General Guidelines – Community Health and Safety*, Washington, D.C. Available at: https://www.ifc.org/content/dam/ifc/doc/2000/2007-general-ehs-guidelines-en.pdf.

International Labour Organization (1988), Safety and Health in Construction Convention, 1988 (No. 167), Geneva. Available at: https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx_en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C167.

See also:

- BN02: Safe excavations
- BN04: Safe working with mobile plant
- BN05: Setting up a safe site
- BN08: Working safely around workplace transport
- BN13: Safe and inclusive design in the workplace

Annex A: protecting the public checklist

This checklist helps project clients and contractors to assess how well work activities protect members of the public and local communities, with particular attention to **workplace transport** and **activities close to pedestrian routes**. It should be applied before work begins near the public and reviewed as the work, traffic and site boundary change. It accompanies EBRD briefing note BN08 and supports compliance with Environmental and Social Requirement 4 (ESR 4).

How to use this checklist

Complete this checklist with a competent person and involve the workers (and, where relevant, community members) affected. It supports, but does not replace, the full risk assessment described in the briefing note.

Mark each item Yes, No or N/A. Every "No" is a gap: record the action needed, an owner and a target date in the action column and carry it over to the site action plan. Review the checklist periodically and whenever the work, site or conditions change.

Assessment details

Project/client	
Site/location	
Activity or phase assessed	
Date of assessment	
Assessor (name, position)	
Persons/community consulted	

1. Planning, risk assessment and community engagement

No.	Assessment item	Yes	No	N/A	Action required/notes
1	A community health and safety risk assessment has been completed before work begins, covering risks to the public and affected communities.	☐	☐	☐	
2	Groups at greater risk have been specifically considered: children, older people, wheelchair users, people with prams, and people with impaired sight, hearing or mobility.	☐	☐	☐	
3	The assessment considers all interfaces with the public: site entrances, deliveries, pedestrian routes, adjacent occupied buildings and public roads.	☐	☐	☐	
4	Local residents, businesses, schools and community leaders have been informed, before work starts, of what will happen, when, and how risks will be controlled.	☐	☐	☐	
5	Local concerns (regarding school routes, market days, access to premises, events) have been identified and reflected in the plan.	☐	☐	☐	
6	A visible contact point and grievance mechanism are in place so the community can report concerns and near misses; reports are recorded, investigated and acted upon.	☐	☐	☐	
7	Traffic management arrangements comply with local traffic rules and regulations and, where	☐	☐	☐	

No.	Assessment item	Yes	No	N/A	Action required/notes
	required, have been agreed with the relevant authority.				
8	Access for emergency services to and past the site is maintained at all times.	☐	☐	☐	
9	Out-of-hours and emergency contact details have been agreed, kept current and shared with the local community, relevant authorities and emergency services, where appropriate.	☐	☐	☐	
10	Potential community impacts from noise, dust, vehicle idling and exhaust fumes have been assessed.	☐	☐	☐	

2. Workplace transport and vehicle movements

No.	Assessment item	Yes	No	N/A	Action required/notes
11	Vehicle numbers and delivery times are planned to reduce movements and avoid sensitive times, such as school opening and closing.	☐	☐	☐	
12	Vehicle routes to and from site avoid schools, markets and narrow residential streets, so far as practicable.	☐	☐	☐	
13	Site access is designed so vehicles enter and leave in forward gear (one-way systems, turning areas), avoiding the need to reverse near the public.	☐	☐	☐	
14	Where reversing is unavoidable, a trained signaller (banksman) is used and pedestrians are excluded from the area.	☐	☐	☐	
15	Separate, clearly signed gates are provided for vehicles and for pedestrians, with physical separation between them.	☐	☐	☐	
16	Vehicles do not queue on the public highway or across footways; waiting vehicles are held without obstructing the public.	☐	☐	☐	
17	Vehicles and mobile plant are fitted with appropriate safety aids: reversing alarms, cameras or mirrors covering blind spots, and side under-run protection, where relevant.	☐	☐	☐	
18	Any point where the public crosses the vehicle route is controlled, well-lit and clearly marked.	☐	☐	☐	
19	Drivers and plant operators are briefed on the site rules, speed limits and pedestrian arrangements.	☐	☐	☐	

3. Work close to pedestrian routes

No.	Assessment item	Yes	No	N/A	Action required/notes
20	Work areas are enclosed with continuous, robust hoarding or fencing that cannot readily be climbed through or pushed over.	☐	☐	☐	
21	The boundary, fencing and signage are inspected regularly and repaired promptly (the public may move and damage them).	☐	☐	☐	
22	Falling materials are contained where work takes place above or beside public routes (netting, brick guards, fans/protective canopies).	☐	☐	☐	

No.	Assessment item	Yes	No	N/A	Action required/notes
23	Loads are never lifted or swung over members of the public; exclusion zones are enforced during lifting.	☐	☐	☐	
24	Where a footway must be closed, a signed alternative route is provided before the closure takes effect.	☐	☐	☐	
25	Diversions are step-free, firm, adequately wide for wheelchairs and prams, and protected from traffic by barriers rather than cones alone.	☐	☐	☐	
26	Excavations, openings and temporary works beside public routes are guarded and, where required, covered.	☐	☐	☐	
27	Materials, plant and spoil are stored so they do not obstruct or overhang public routes.	☐	☐	☐	

4. Signage, lighting and site security

No.	Assessment item	Yes	No	N/A	Action required/notes
28	Signs clearly identify the risks, prohibit unauthorised access, and direct pedestrians and traffic to safe alternative routes.	☐	☐	☐	
29	Signs are positioned in accordance with local traffic rules and are legible, including for those with impaired sight, where practicable.	☐	☐	☐	
30	Hoardings, diversions, crossings and site entrances are adequately illuminated after dark.	☐	☐	☐	
31	The site is secured outside working hours: gates locked, plant immobilised, ladder access to scaffolds removed.	☐	☐	☐	
32	Excavations and openings are covered or fenced, and fuels and hazardous substances are stored securely, to protect intruders, including children.	☐	☐	☐	
33	Attractive nuisances (water bodies, stacked materials, height access) are secured against children and trespassers.	☐	☐	☐	
34	Fencing, signage and lighting are checked at the start of each shift and after events likely to affect them.	☐	☐	☐	

5. Emergency and ongoing arrangements

No.	Assessment item	Yes	No	N/A	Action required/notes
35	Arrangements are in place to help a member of the public who is injured or affected by the work.	☐	☐	☐	
36	Emergency access and egress routes for the public are maintained throughout the works.	☐	☐	☐	
37	Control measures for community protection are recorded in the risk assessment and reviewed when the work or conditions change.	☐	☐	☐	
38	Lessons learned from community complaints, near misses and incidents are captured and used to improve controls, and outcomes are shared with those affected.	☐	☐	☐	

Assessment sign-off

Assessment completed by (name)	Position
Signature	Date
Reviewed/approved by (name)	Position
Signature	Date
Number of actions raised	Target close-out date
Next review date	Related risk assessment ref.

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