

Post winch (wind up) signs

Schools are required to remove, replace or rectify post winch (wind up) signs as per Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (WHSQ) Alert.

- Two incidents occurred in early 2019 when post winch signs dropped unexpectedly; one causing injury and one a near miss.
- Investigation by WHSQ identified that one incident occurred with a sign that had been previously upgraded with a new emergency braking mechanism and offset handle.
- A new issue has been identified with potential failure of the *clutch mechanism*. This is a separate issue to the original emergency brake issue.
- In September 2019, WHSQ issued a new [alert](#) detailing corrective actions to be undertaken to ensure post winch signs are safe.

Action

1. Principals are to **read the [WHSQ Alert](#)** and confirm if any post winch signs at the school are of similar design to those described in the Alert.
 - Space Age Signs are the primary supplier of signs in Queensland. Space Age Signs advise that they on-sell to other suppliers and these signs will not have Space Age Sign badging.
 - Schools should seek advice from their supplier about the design of the sign. The supplier should know the source supplier – e.g. Space Age Signs.
 - WHSQ advise that any similar sign design (to that identified in the Alert) could have the same issues and should be managed in the same way.
2. Principals are to decide what they are going to do with their post winch sign. The **hierarchy of control** is to be considered in this decision making with the options below in order of preference:
 - a) Have the sign **removed**; or
 - b) Have the sign removed and **replace** the sign with a different design (e.g. fixed); or
 - c) Keep the sign and **implement the actions** in the WHSQ [alert](#)
 - **NOTE:** Option c) includes the sign being upgraded (fitted with a revised emergency brake design and an offset handle) **and** new winch interlock device (manages clutch issue). Schools that have already upgraded their sign must also ensure the new winch interlock is installed to manage the clutch issue.
 - Costs are to be funded by schools. If signs are retained there will be parts, travel and labour costs. Indicative costs for **parts only \$820 + GST**; original upgrade (offset handle) \$730 + GST; winch interlock \$90 + GST.

3. Principals who are electing to have a **sign removed** are to engage an appropriate contractor to safely remove the sign.
 - **Signs are to be removed by the contractor.** WHS Regulations (including s198 and 199) apply to the sale of second hand plant.
4. Principals who are electing to remove a post winch sign and **replace it with an alternative** design are to use usual procurement processes to select an appropriate sign for the location.
 - **NOTE:** LED or electronic signs must be used in compliance with Transport and Main Roads guidelines. see [Small Electronic Devices \(<4m2 \) within School Zones General Location and Operation Fact Sheet](#)
5. Principals who are electing to **retain a post winch sign** and have mechanical controls installed are to implement all actions within the WHSQ Alert.
 - I. **Contact the sign supplier** of your sign about access service delivery for your location, timing and associated costs.
 - II. If the supplier **can complete** all the required actions at your location as per the WHSQ alert within a timeframe that meets your needs - arrange for this work to be completed. All costs are funded by each school.
 - III. If the supplier **cannot deliver service** to your location (e.g. outside south east corner)
 - a) Request postage of all parts and documentation for upgrade and winch interlock to your location
 - b) Contact your Regional Infrastructure Advisor or QBuild representative directly to arrange a competent person to complete the work as per the WHSQ Alert
 - The department has liaised with QBuild and provided supplier information to enable QBuild to identify appropriately skilled contractors to undertake the work.
 - c) Organise for the contractor to undertake the work. All costs are funded by each school.

If post winch sign/s are retained at the site – each sign is to be:

- upgraded (fitted with a revised emergency brake design and an offset handle) **and**
- fitted with new winch interlock device (manages clutch issue) **and**
- subject to a safety inspection conducted by a competent person who provides a signed statement that the sign is safe to operate, and state when a re-inspection of the sign is required.

All current (new) documentation is to be maintained and followed:

- Engineers certification (both mechanisms)
- Instructions/manual for completing the upgrade* (original upgrade)
- Instructions/manual for the installing winch interlock (clutch device)*
- Instructions/manual for how the sign is inspected to confirm it is safe to operate*
- Instructions/manual for servicing (e.g. detailed annual process)*
- Instructions/manual for maintenance (e.g. school grounds person)

*task to be conducted by a competent person



Use of signs

- Schools are to ensure they receive all new documentation about use, care, maintenance and servicing from the supplier when work is completed on their sign.
- All instructions have been recently updated by Space Age Signs and these articulate all manufacturer requirements.
- Schools are to ensure all relevant staff understand and follow the manufacturer's instructions including:
 - Only appropriate adults to access the sign
 - No one standing under the cross bar when the sign is being raised or lowered
 - Ensuring the padlock is fitted at all times except when the sign is being raised or lowered. This will help to ensure the interlock device is always used and will help to prevent unauthorised use of signs

Maintenance and Servicing

- Ongoing maintenance (local) and servicing (more complex) are required for the signs. The supplier is to provide the requirements for maintenance and servicing. This includes frequency, steps and criteria.
- Schools are to maintain records of prescribed maintenance and servicing.

For example:

- Prescribed **maintenance tasks** undertaken by schools officer can be recorded by using the [Equipment Maintenance Record](#) to record actions and outcomes and attaching the supplier's 'Visual Mechanical Inspection and Lubrication instructions' as evidence of tasks undertaken.
- Prescribed **servicing** undertaken by the competent person and can be recorded using the checklist template provided by Space Age Signs (or supplier).
- Allocation of budget for annual servicing needs to be managed by schools and workplaces with signs. Annual servicing is required as per the supplier/manufacturer instructions.

Competent person

While it is relatively straightforward to inspect the wire rope and gears for wear and rust, greater skill is needed to verify the sign cannot drop. Specialist knowledge of how these signs operate is needed. The skills and tasks are not part of the role of a schools officer.

Space Age Signs has supplied information to the department to enable the department to identify competent, external contractors.

Reference

Small Electronic Devices (<4m²) within School Zones General Location and Operation Fact Sheet
<https://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/-/media/Safety/Schoolroadsafety/Safe-school-travel-safest/VMSLEDSchoolsignsGuidelineFINAL.pdf?la=en>

