



# Communication Could Save a Life



When two or more people are given a task to perform, communication is always an **important aspect**. Without a clear plan and effective communication execution of the task may be more difficult and will put people at risk of being hurt. **Effective communication means that which is clear and understood**. The communication may take the form of hand signals and/or verbal indication.

## SOME EXAMPLES OF SITUATION WHERE COMMUNICATION IS REQUIRED INCLUDE:

*Safety is about  
caring.*

- Lifting operation with the use of a crane-a signal person is required to provide signals to the crane operator
- Manual handling of heavy objects-good communication and coordination is required to prevent unexpected movement of a load
- Pulling a flange, motor, valve, etc. with the assistance of a co-worker
- Using a pneumatic device with the assistance of a co-worker
- Spotting a haul truck in a mining pit
- Loading a haul truck using an excavator
- Operating a high-pressure device (steam, water, air) driven and having another person apply pressure
- Coordinating an emergency rescue operation

**The case below exemplifies how tragic lack of clear and effective communication can be.**

We are informed that a 53-year-old Georgia truck driver was killed when he was accidentally struck by a semi driven by his wife. He was killed at about 11:30 p.m. while preparing to unload a tractor-trailer in the parking lot of an Industrial Park, according to police. He was working on the pin that connects the cab of the truck and the trailer, his wife thought he had signaled her to move the truck, and she accidentally struck him, police said. A preliminary autopsy indicated that he suffered from multiple blunt force trauma injuries to his chest and neck.



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The couple had been married for 33 years, police said. All the details on the cause of this fatality are not yet known, but certainly, communications appear to play a part in this. Clear and concise communications between co-workers are a must and even in this married couple of 33 years, something broke down.



## WHEN COMMUNICATING DURING MOMENTS CRITICAL TO SAFETY:

- Ensure you don't rely on solely hand signals or shouting but explore ways to improve the method used
- Where possible avoid the use of multiple persons making the communication
- Ensure everyone knows the "plan" and their responsibilities ahead of time and ensure communications are not only heard but understood
- If the job or environmental conditions change, stop and re-evaluate the communication method. Take into consideration factors such as noise and the visibility of co-worker
- Be absolutely sure that you are ready to act when the communication is received

**Don't guess or assume what the signal or message is.**

