SBAS Construction Site Safety Trial Holds Promise

Safe Work Australia found that 31% of construction workers' injuries on the job were from being hit by an object and have trialled the use of SBAS (satellite-based augmentation system) technology to help improve worker safety on construction sites. According to participants, it has noticeably improved both productivity and safety.

The solution allows you to know the location of any machinery, vehicle or person with a 10cm accuracy and has the potential to transform the industry's safety record.

"Many construction contractors work in close proximity to heavy vehicles and other machinery, so knowing where people and machinery are is essential to ensuring the health and safety of workers," said James Millner, a spokesperson for Position Partners, who helped facilitate the safety trial.

The trial was recently completed by the University of New South Wales (UNSW) and Position Partners, on behalf of Geoscience Australia, who are implementing the SBAS industry trials ahead of its AU$160.9 million national rollout.

"This was the first time the new generation positioning technology has been used in construction and we expect uptake once the test-phase is complete. The technology used [is] worn on workers' hard hats or arm-bands and also put on the machinery," said Professor Chris Rizos of UNSW. "This information is then fed to the machine and a control room, where an alarm goes off if machinery like excavators or even people are too close to proximity sensors at geo-fenced exclusion areas. We trialled this in a busy construction site in Melbourne and found the high accuracy of the information being relayed really helped to improve productivity."