



We're on your radar – and much more

Ainsley Fraser looks at the sensors, sights and sounds of site safety.

Four flights of steel stairs and we are standing on a plant gantry walkway with a bird's eye view of a major waste site. Yes, we are clad in full safety kit including Hi-Vis jacket and trousers, hard hat with visor and reinforced rigger boots ... and it's brass monkeys (it's late April!). Below, the site is busy – and noisy, characterised by those essential (if sometimes ear-splittingly irritating) reversing beepers, some of which sound like a half strangulated duck.

There are skip loaders and hook loaders, some with drawbar trailers, queuing to tip, but most of the activity is loading shovels, hydraulic excavator-loaders with big waste grabs – and a couple of off-highway dump trucks. Add to that a collection of high visibility and very conspicuous people. This is a safety critical environment – and the majority of the plant and equipment which is moving never leaves the site and never goes on the road – so a whole different raft of safety equipment and systems – and procedures apply.

With the pressure on, the machinery is not hanging about – this site is routinely handling eighty plus tonnes per hour ... and it has an exemplary safety and accident record. How?

There are basic audible and visible warning systems on all equipment – strobe and LED amber lighting and reversing beepers. But there is a lot more too. The machine operatives and drivers sit in the comparatively isolated safety of their cabs. They are all highly professional, experienced operatives who have been through rigorous training and regularly do refreshers. They are all highly alert to their surroundings, with their eyes wide open all of the time... but this is where a range of technology can help to take that awareness to a completely new level.

Today's hazard detection proximity sensors, cameras and

in-cab display systems can provide the operative with pretty much 360° visibility around his machine, including any blind spots. This is crucial, particularly as, in some cases, the physical height and size of the machine may mean that those blind spots can be in immediate proximity to the machine itself.

Currently, there are a number of different options, some stand alone and some combined. They all contribute to enhance safety and compliance – particularly in the



