

Innovative Keypad Enhances Machine Operator Safety

Site safety continues to be a major challenge and frustration in the industry with 39 construction fatalities reported in 2010/11 in Australia alone.¹ Although accidents caused through sheer negligence are rare, operator complacency and inattention are the most pressing issues requiring more support. When it comes to operating quick hitch couplers, safety is paramount therefore innovative safety systems such as the Snaplock+ Keypad are just the type of workable solution the industry is seeking.

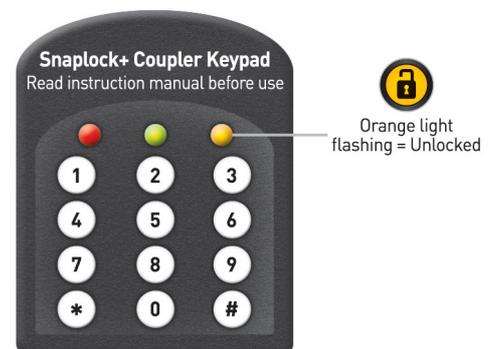
Developed by Doherty Couplers and Attachments, the Snaplock+ Keypad is an important tool being made available to machine operators. Designed to replace the traditional “missile” style or toggle switch, the digitally operated keypad lock/unlock system effectively eliminates the possibility of knocking the release switch accidentally.

“The unique Keypad has a four digit code locking system which prevents this accidental activation,” says managing director, Jeremy Doherty. “We’ve also incorporated the ability to have unique codes for each operator for added security. Once in use the Keypad runs a self-check on start-up, and a warning buzzer and flashing light activates when in unlock mode.”

Based in New Zealand with a wholly owned subsidiary in Australia, Doherty is also one of the few manufacturers globally to offer quick couplers fully-compliant to Australian standard AS4772-208, European EN474 standard, expecting forthcoming ISO international standards and all major contractor policies. The Snaplock+ Coupler feature is its Dual Pin Locking (DPL) system ensuring attachments remain securely engaged on both pins in the event of loss of engagement force. A system further enhanced with the addition of the Keypad control.

With safety being a top priority for this world-leading earthmoving equipment manufacturer, Doherty have also recommended a safety operating system with the Keypad which can be easily incorporated into a business’s existing health and safety procedures.

“The manual provided with the Snaplock+ Keypad is suitable for incorporating into any standard safety systems,” says Doherty. “We recommend a unique locking code only be supplied once the manual is read and signed-off by the operator.”



Doherty highlights that fatalities are still occurring worldwide due to buckets being accidentally released from work equipment during operation. Therefore the draft position paper recently released by WorkCover NSW for public comment on the supplying or installing of semi-automatic quick couplers being phased out in NSW by 31st December, is a welcomed one.

“Subject to approval, WorkCover will commence action from 2014 to secure compliance with these requirements which also applies to quick couplers imported into NSW,” says Doherty. “This is great news for the safety of our industry.”

Even without the new legal measures in place, products that help to reduce site fatalities is certainly good news for the industry. The fact the Snaplock+ Keypad is inexpensive and suitable for retrofitting to any electrically switched coupler, makes the decision even easier for our earthmoving businesses.

ENDS

Reference Information:

¹<http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/SWA/about/Publications/Documents/730/WorkRelatedTraumaticInjuryFatalities2010-11.pdf>