

PF Olsen Toolbox Safety Alert 89

Date: July 2025 (updated from issue # 40)	Focus Group: Establishment Workers
Topic: Planting Pods in High Winds	Issued by: Nic Steens

Background: Strong southwest gusts hit the site from 3:00 PM, peaking around 4:00 PM. Contractors had left early; by next morning, several pods with empty planting boxes were found blown down the hillside from beside the farm track.

Injury Details: No injuries, but had workers been present, serious harm was possible.

Risk Awareness: Strong wind gusts can destabilise large, lightweight objects like planting pods, especially in exposed areas. Once mobile, they can endanger people, vehicles, or equipment downslope. Wind-damaged pods also pose risks during helicopter transport and may require costly repairs. Working near [‘raised and falling objects’](#) is a *particular risk* requiring specific planning and controls. If elimination isn’t possible, minimise the hazard using engineering controls (e.g., anchors, strops) or safer alternatives — e.g., substitute pods with fadges (large sacks) while flown by helicopter.

Safe (and Wise) Behaviours: To reduce risk and prevent damage:

- Consult (especially helicopter pilots) to determine the safest placement locations – choose areas that offer shelter from prevailing winds.
- Conduct a pre-site inspection to confirm the site is suitable and assess whether additional securing (e.g., strops, anchors) is required.
- Never work below unsecured or near-empty pods that lack sufficient ballast.
- Inspect pod security regularly; remove from service if damaged after any incident.
- Consider using fertiliser fadges, which are less hazardous if caught by wind.

For Site Manager:

Print and complete the following:

1. Discuss with employees/operators:
2. Place on-site notice board or in file:

Site Manager: _____ **Date:** / /
(initials)

