

Wilkins Safety Group

Weekly Update Newsletter



Welcome to this issue - Friday 10th June 2011 - of our Update Newsletter

Please feel free to forward this newsletter to colleagues and friends.

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Moving things around.

Every year, a significant number of people are killed by accidents involving vehicles and equipment in the workplace, and many more people are injured. A lot of damage is also done to property and profit. Better planning, training and awareness, and the appropriate use of vehicles and the right moving equipment, can avoid most of these accidents.

This newsletter has been produced using the guidelines from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to help people involved in transport in the workplace reduce the chances of accidents happening. It is aimed at both managers and operators and identifies some of the safety problems for common vehicle operations. More detailed information can be found in Workplace transport safety: employers' guide [HSG136.1](#)



Responsibilities

By law, employers have a general duty to ensure that the health and safety of their employees and members of the public is not put at risk as a result of the work that they do. Employees also have a duty to look after their own health and safety, and that of anyone who might be affected by their work.

Reasonably practicable

The law requires that health and safety risks at work are controlled as far as is 'reasonably practicable'. For a control to be reasonably practicable, the cost must be sensible in proportion to the safety gain (reasonable) and it must be physically possible (practicable). Ultimately, only a court can decide whether what you did was reasonably practicable.



Workplace transport

Workplace transport means any vehicle that is used in a work setting, such as forklift trucks, compact dumpers, tractors or mobile cranes. It can also include cars, vans and large goods vehicles when these are operating off the public highway. It specifically excludes transport on the public highway, air, rail or water transport, and specialised transport used in underground mining. However, a goods vehicle that is loading or unloading on the public highway is regarded as 'workplace transport' in this guidance.

Risk assessment

Managing for safety is about reducing risks, not eliminating them. Think about what accidents might happen, and take steps to try and make sure they are avoided. This is called a 'risk assessment', and every employer has to do it by law.

The full HSE publication will help you recognise the special hazards from transport in the workplace. General guidance on risk assessment is available in the [HSE leaflet Five steps to risk assessment.2](#)



First, identify the work activities involving vehicles (including visiting vehicles) over a reasonable period (e.g. over the course of a week). Activities may include:

- arrival and departure;
- travel within the workplace;
- loading, unloading and securing loads;
- sheeting;
- coupling; and
- vehicle maintenance work.

Next, identify the risks associated with these activities. Ask yourself what the possible dangers are, and what is causing those dangers. For example, could someone be hit by a moving vehicle? Could someone fall from a vehicle, e.g. while getting in or out, or during loading? Or be hit by an object falling from a vehicle? Could a vehicle tip over?



When looking for hazards, include:

- The vehicles themselves. Are they safe and suitable for their use? Are they properly maintained? Do they need to be replaced with new, safer vehicles?
- The routes or roadways used by the vehicles. Are they safe and suitable for the type and number of vehicles using them? Are they properly maintained? Have you considered nearby obstructions, curbs or edges?
- What drivers are doing? Are there pressures on operators that might encourage them to work less safely? For example, do they have to rush to complete their work on schedule? Is there a risk of drivers becoming overtired? Are they working safely, e.g. when getting into or out of vehicles, during loading or unloading, and are they observing routes and speed limits? Look for 'short cuts' that drivers may be tempted to use in both routes and safety procedures.
- What other people are doing. Are other workers, customers, or members of the public kept clear of workplace vehicles wherever possible?

Ask drivers and any other workers at the site (including contractors and visiting drivers) for their views.

Remember, the risk assessment should always be kept up-to-date, regardless of any reviews that may be due 'soon'. If you introduce new vehicles, equipment or working practices, look at the risk assessment and see if it needs updating.

Organising for safety

All employees, contractors, maintenance personnel and visiting drivers must understand their responsibilities in the health and safety system. Include safety responsibilities in job descriptions and in training, raise safety issues in day-to-day contact with employees, and display safety notices and risk assessment results. Decide which methods best suit your business and monitor their use to make sure they are properly followed. The level of monitoring should reflect the seriousness of the risks involved, and the competence of employees to avoid them.

An accident reporting scheme is essential to enable employers to meet their legal obligations to report some accidents. Incidents and near misses that do not cause accidents should be included in the system. It can also be valuable when monitoring the effectiveness of safety measures. Make sure that safety problems, and solutions, can be reported up and down the management system, e.g. through regular safety meetings with employees or safety representatives, through safety newsletters, or by any other measures that suit your organisation. Report on good features as well as bad ones.

Communication

Good communication is essential for maintaining a safe workplace and helps ensure that safety information can be spread through the organisation and be put into use as effectively as possible. Managers should listen to the safety concerns of their employees and take appropriate action.

Contractors and subcontractors

The site operator should provide contractors with appropriate health and safety information, so that the work can be done safely. For example, share information about the workplace, routes to be used, vehicles and equipment on site, specific hazards, and other people on site, including other contractors or visiting drivers. The site operator should check the suitability of the contractor and (through the contractor) any subcontractor. Check the contractor's employee selection and training procedures, their safety record on previous contracts and the suitability and maintenance standards of their vehicles.

The contractor should also be made fully aware of the penalties of unsafe working (e.g. make unsafe working a breach of contract). Supervise the contractor's work. Informal licensing can be used to control how contractors and subcontractors work. For example, licences to operate on site can be issued for specified periods and only renewed if contractors have behaved properly. When a contractor takes on a subcontractor, the contractor should use similar checks and supervision to exercise control over their actions. The site operator will usually need evidence that adequate controls over subcontractors are in place.



Moving Goods Safely

The primary focus of Moving goods safely is to prevent injuries and ill health to delivery drivers, warehouse staff and others involved in the distribution or receipt of goods. The safe collection and delivery of goods requires the co-operation and exchange of information between everyone involved in the supply chain.

About moving goods safely

Moving Goods Safety (MGS) started out as a national project involving both the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and Local Authorities (LA) working in partnership. The project aimed to reduce injuries and ill health arising from the movement of goods from supplier, through haulier to the recipient and end user including any home deliveries, by focussing upon the delivery and collection of goods and the hazards this generates. It covered the main areas that cause the majority of injuries and ill-health to workers, including:

- Workplace transport;
- Slips & trips, and;
- Musculoskeletal disorders (MSD).

The movement of goods presents the HSE, as health and safety regulators, with the challenge of dealing with a huge variety of issues. The commercial organisations involved within the movement of goods are diverse including hauliers, third party logistics providers, pallet networks, retailers etc., with some very large companies, thousands of small businesses and the self-employed. The movement of goods is more than just trucks on the road with a large proportion of accidents happening at the delivery/collection sites that are often not directly under the control of the company making the delivery or collection. Communication and cooperation problems can arise due to the many organisations involved in the movement of the goods, and this can also lead to difficulties in effectively managing health and safety.

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Myth: You don't need to secure your load if you're just driving down the road

May 2010



The reality

If not properly secured, vehicle loads can become unsafe, even over a short distance.

Loads that haven't been firmly tied down increase the risk of vehicle rollover and spillage. They risk the lives of drivers and other road users, and can also cause annoying traffic disruption.

More than 1200 people a year are injured as a result of unsafe loads, and millions of pounds are lost in damaged goods.

Don't take the risk – make sure your load is restrained and contained!

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If you would like to discuss any of the issues highlighted in this newsletter, then drop an email to Jon on jon@jonwilkins.co.uk or call the office [01458 253682](tel:01458253682)



Your Business is Safer
Your Business is Safer in Our Hands