



MANAGING VEHICLE SAFETY AT THE WORKPLACE

Leaflet for employers

INTRODUCTION

This leaflet is addressed to you as an employer. It offers simple advice and guidance to help you ensure that vehicle movements at the workplace, and activities such as loading, maintenance etc are carried out safely.

It applies to any vehicle or piece of mobile equipment which is used by employers, employees, self-employed people or visitors in any work setting (apart from travelling on public roads). This covers a very wide range of familiar vehicles, for example

cars and vans, lift trucks, heavy goods vehicles, dumpers etc, as well as less common vehicles and plant.

The leaflet should be useful for all workplaces where vehicles are used. For workplaces such as construction sites, quarries, farms, forestry operations etc, you should refer to specific guidance on dealing with the particular conditions and hazards in these industries (see page 12 for details).

ACCIDENTS - NUMBERS, COSTS AND CAUSES

Every year about 70 people are killed in accidents involving vehicles at the workplace. In addition, there are more than 1000 major injuries, ie accidents which result in broken bones,

amputations etc. These accidents usually involve people being struck or run over by moving vehicles, people falling from vehicles, people being struck by objects falling from

vehicles (usually part of the load) or vehicles overturning. Cars and other types of vehicle are extremely common, both on public roads and at workplaces. Consequently employers and employees often do not recognise - until a serious accident actually happens - that vehicle activities can be very dangerous, and need to be properly managed to ensure a safe workplace.



THE LEGAL DUTIES

- **Employers** have a duty to provide a safe workplace, to provide and maintain safe systems of work, and to take all reasonably practicable precautions to ensure the safety of their workers and members of the public who might be affected by their activities.
- To underpin this, **employers** must carry out a 'risk assessment'. They need to:
 - (a) assess the risks to their workers and anyone else, for example members of the public, arising from their work activities; and
 - (b) determine what measures they need to take to ensure a safe workplace and safe working practices and to comply with their legal duties.

- Where two or more employers share a workplace, each **employer** must co-operate with the other employers and take all reasonable steps to co-ordinate the measures they take to comply with their legal duties.

- All **employees** must take care of their own and others' safety and co-operate with management in meeting their obligations.

WHAT DO YOU ACTUALLY NEED TO DO?

The following paragraphs give advice on how you, as an employer, might carry out a risk assessment, with examples relating to workplace transport. (The checklist on pages 6 - 11

provides a guide to some of the main points to consider.)

Five steps have been identified to help you assess the risks systematically.



1 First, you need to identify the hazards associated with vehicle activities at the workplace. To do this, look at each of the work activities associated with vehicles, for example the arrival and departure of vehicles, their movement within the workplace, work on loading and unloading etc, and ask: What are the

dangers, and what is causing those dangers? For example:

- Is there a danger of people being struck or run over by vehicles and what is the cause?

- Is there a danger of people falling from vehicles, for example while gaining access to or alighting from the vehicle or while involved in loading/unloading or other activities, and what is the cause?

2 You should then identify who might be harmed by each of the hazards. This is likely to include drivers, other employees, customers and possibly members of the public.

3 Then, for each hazard, you should evaluate the risks, ie the likelihood that harm will occur and its severity, and assess whether existing precautions are adequate or whether more precautions are needed. In effect, you should ask: Have suitable measures been taken to reduce this risk, and are the

measures adequate? If you decide that some risks have not been controlled well enough you will need to take steps to reduce them so far as is reasonably practicable.

4 If you have fewer than five employees you do not need to record anything, but if you have five or more employees you must record the significant findings of your assessment. This means:

(a) recording, usually by writing down, the more significant hazards; and

(b) recording your most important conclusions, for example: Risk of collision as a result of blind bend: need to install fixed mirror on corner of building. You must also inform your employees of your findings.

5 Sooner or later you will introduce new vehicles or change the traffic routes, or the nature of the work activities relating to vehicles will change, possibly leading to new hazards. Where

there is a new hazard, the risk assessment will need revision. In any case, it is good practice to

review the risk assessment from time to time to check that it is still relevant.

CHECKLIST

The following checklist indicates things that you should look at when:

- (a) trying to identify the hazards associated with vehicle activities; and
- (b) assessing whether existing precautions are adequate.

It also gives some common-



sense ideas for reducing risks. The checklist will not necessarily be comprehensive or relevant for all work situations.

The workplace

1 Check that the layout of routes is appropriate for the vehicle and pedestrian activities at the workplace. For example:

- Are vehicles and pedestrians kept safely apart?
- Are there suitable pedestrian crossing points on vehicle routes?
- Are there suitable parking areas for all parking needs?
- Do the vehicle routes avoid sharp or blind bends?

- Is there scope for introducing a one-way system on vehicle routes within the workplace to reduce the risk of collisions?

2 Check that vehicle traffic routes are suitable for the type and quantity of vehicles which use them. For example:

- Are they wide enough?
- Are they well constructed, ie do they have firm and even surfaces?
- Are they free from obstructions and other hazards?
- Are they well maintained?

3 Check that suitable safety features are provided where appropriate. For example:

- Are roadways marked where necessary, eg to indicate the right of way at road junctions?
- Is there a need for direction signs, speed limit signs, and, where applicable, signs such as Give way, No entry etc?

- Is there a need for features such as fixed mirrors to provide greater vision at blind bends, road humps to reduce vehicle speeds, or barriers to keep vehicles and pedestrians apart?

The vehicles

4 Check that vehicles at your workplace are safe and suitable for the work for which they are being used. For example:

- Do they have suitable and effective service and parking brakes?
- Are they provided with horns, lights, reflectors, reversing lights and other safety features as necessary?
- Do they have seats and, where necessary, seat belts that are safe and allow for driver comfort?
- Are there guards on dangerous parts of the vehicles, eg power take-offs, chain drives, exposed exhaust pipes?



- Do drivers need protection against bad weather conditions, or against an unpleasant working environment, eg against the cold, dirt, dust, fumes, and excessive noise and vibration?

- Is there a safe means of access to and exit from the cabs and other parts that need to be reached?

- Is there a need for driver protection against injury in the event of an overturn, and to prevent the driver being hit by falling objects?

5 Check that the vehicles are subject to appropriate maintenance procedures.

For example:

- Do drivers carry out basic safety checks before using vehicles?

- Is there a regular preventive maintenance programme for each vehicle, carried out at predetermined intervals of time or mileage?

Drivers and other employees

6 Check that your selection and training procedures ensure that your drivers and other employees are capable of performing their work activities in a safe and responsible manner.

For example:

- Do you check the previous experience of your drivers and test them to ensure that they are competent?

- Do you provide training on how to do the job and information about particular hazards ?

- Do you have a planned

programme of refresher training for drivers and other employees to ensure their continued competence?

7 Check what your drivers and other employees actually do when undertaking their work activities. For example:

- Do your drivers drive with care, eg use the correct routes, drive within the speed limit at the site and follow any other site rules?

- Do they park safely, and in safe locations?

- Are your employees using safe working practices, eg when loading/unloading, securing loads, carrying out maintenance etc?

- Do your drivers and other employees have to rush to complete their work on time, or is there a risk of accidents caused by fatigue as a result of excessive working hours?

8 Check, in consultation with

your employees, that your level of management control/supervision is suitable. For example:

- Are your supervisors, drivers and other employees, including contractors and visiting drivers, aware of the site rules and aware of their responsibilities in terms of maintaining a safe workplace and safe working practices?

- Is everyone at the workplace supervised and held accountable for their responsibilities, and is a clear system of penalties enforced when employees, contractors etc fail to maintain standards?



Vehicle activities

9 Check that the need for **REVERSING** manoeuvres is kept to a minimum, and where reversing is necessary that it is undertaken safely and in safe areas. For example:

- Is there scope for introducing one-way systems on routes to reduce the need for reversing manoeuvres?
- Is there a need to identify and mark 'reversing areas' so that these are clear to both drivers and pedestrians?
- Can you exclude non-essential personnel from areas



where reversing is common?

- Is there a need for a signaller (banksman) to direct reversing vehicles?

- Are there external side-mounted and rear-view mirrors on vehicles to provide optimum all-round visibility?

- Do the vehicles have reversing alarms?

10 Check that drivers take care when **PARKING** their vehicles, including their own private cars, and that they park in safe locations. For example:

- Do your drivers use the designated parking areas?

- Do they always ensure that their vehicles and trailers are securely braked and secured before leaving them parked?

11 Check that **LOADING AND UNLOADING** operations are carried out safely. For example:

- Are loading/unloading

operations carried out in an area away from passing traffic, pedestrians and others not involved in the loading/unloading operation?

- Are loading/unloading activities carried out using safe systems of work on ground that is flat, firm and free from pot-holes?
- Are the vehicles braked and/or stabilised, as appropriate, to prevent unsafe movements during loading and unloading operations?
- Is the loading/unloading carried out so that, as far as possible, the load is spread evenly to avoid the vehicle or trailer becoming unstable?



- Are checks made to ensure that loads are secured and arranged so that they cannot move about, eg slide forward if the driver has to brake suddenly, or slide off if the vehicle has to negotiate steep inclines?
- Are there checks to ensure that vehicles are not loaded beyond their capacity?

FURTHER INFORMATION

More comprehensive guidance is given in *Workplace transport safety* (HSG136, ISBN 0 7176 0935 9) available from HSE Books. It provides detailed advice to help those concerned with all forms of workplace transport to secure a safe workplace for vehicles and for pedestrians, and to comply with their health and safety responsibilities (see page 15 for order form).

Further advice and guidance is also available in the following HSC/E publications:

Management of health and safety at work Approved Code of Practice L21 *Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999*. Approved Code of Practice and guidance 2000 ISBN 0 7176 2488 9

Successful health and safety management HSG65 1997 ISBN 0 7176 1276 7

Five steps to risk assessment INDG163 (single copies free; ISBN 0 7176 1565 0 for priced packs of 10 copies)

Tractor action INDG185 1995 (single copies free; ISBN 0 7176 0920 0 for priced packs of 10 leaflets and a wallchart)

Safety in working with lift trucks HSG6 2000 ISBN 0 7176 1781 5

Health and safety in motor vehicle repair 1997 HSG67 ISBN 0 7176 0483 7

Reversing vehicles INDG148 1993 (single copies free; ISBN 0 7176 1063 2 for priced packs of 15 copies)

Health and safety in retail and wholesale warehouses HSG76 1992 ISBN 0 11 885731 2

Workplace health, safety and welfare: A short guide for managers INDG244 1997 (single copies free; ISBN 0 7176 1328 3 for priced packs of 10 copies)

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This leaflet contains notes on good practice which are not compulsory but which you may find helpful in considering what you need to do.

This leaflet is available in packs of 10, £5.00/pack, from HSE Books, ISBN 0 7176 0982 0. Single copies are also available free from HSE Books.

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