



Workplace transport

Every year, about 70 people are killed and more than 1000 seriously injured in transport-related accidents in the workplace. Commonly, accidents involve people being hit or run over by vehicles such as forklift trucks, cars, lorries, vans and grounds-maintenance equipment. Managers, workers and even members of the public can be at risk when vehicles are moving in your workplace, be it a supermarket, builders' suppliers, warehouse, sports ground or general manufacturing premises.

Following the simple but essential steps below should help you to control the risks associated with transport, of whatever kind, used in your workplace. You may find them useful as a safety checklist.

Step 1 Risk assessment

To begin with, identify the dangers associated with vehicle activities. These activities might include vehicles arriving and departing, moving within the workplace, goods being loaded or unloaded. The dangers could include:

- people being hit or run over by vehicles;
- people falling from vehicles;
- people being struck by objects falling from vehicles; and
- overturning vehicles.

Next, you need to decide if the risks are well enough controlled, and if not, you need to consider steps 2 to 8.

Step 2 The workplace

Make sure that the design and layout of the workplace allows you to separate vehicles and pedestrians where possible. Provide, where possible, one-way traffic systems which are clearly marked using direction, give-way and no-entry signs, and avoid sharp or blind bends on vehicle routes.

Step 3 Reversing

Try to remove the need for reversing. Where this is not possible, make sure there is a safe system of work. For example, identify and mark 'reversing areas' so that they are obvious, do not let pedestrians into these areas, and fit easy-to-hear warning alarms and flashing beacons to vehicles. Fit any other aids that are necessary such as mirrors or rear-view cameras which can help drivers see all round the vehicle. If a person guides the vehicle, make sure that they wear high-visibility clothing, do not stand behind the vehicle, use clear agreed hand signals and switch off their mobile phone during these activities. You should tell drivers to stop if the guide goes out of view at all.

Step 4 Traffic control features

Where appropriate, provide traffic control features such as:

- clearly marked pedestrian crossing points;
- mirrors at blind corners;
- speed ramps to reduce vehicle speed (especially close to pedestrian points); and
- pedestrian barriers (especially at exits onto traffic routes).

Make sure drivers can see clearly by providing mirrors, effective lighting, and consider other aids such as reflective lenses in back windows and closed-circuit television (CCTV). Always tell visiting drivers of your system for managing traffic.



Step 5 Loading and unloading

Make sure items are loaded and unloaded in areas away from passing traffic and pedestrians. The ground in these areas should be flat, firm and free from potholes. All vehicles should have their brakes on and be stabilised to prevent unsafe movements during loading and unloading. No vehicle should be loaded beyond its capacity or beyond the legal weight. You should always check the floor of the vehicle to make sure that it is safe to load. Loads should be properly secured or arranged so that they are safe to be transported and will not slide forward if the driver has to brake suddenly. Provide a safe system of work for loading and unloading, which clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of vehicle drivers and site staff.

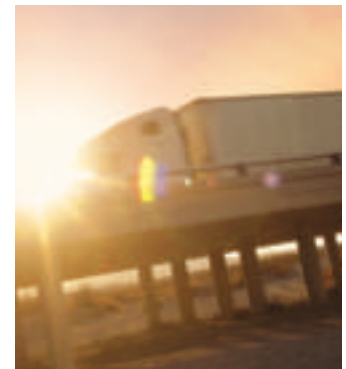
Step 6 Vehicles

Make sure that vehicles at your workplace are safe and suitable for the work for which they are being used by making sure that they have horns, lights, reflectors, reversing lights, seat belts and equipment to help drivers see all round the vehicle. Make sure there are safe systems of work for activities such as coupling and uncoupling trailers, covering and uncovering vehicle loads, and accessing the top of vehicles, for example, oil and petrol tankers.

Put in place arrangements for regularly maintaining all vehicles, particularly for braking and steering systems. Develop a system for reporting faults and for making sure repair work is carried out. Make sure that tail lifts are examined by a competent person, such as an engineer, every six months or in line with a thorough examination scheme. Make sure that the weight of the load is not more than the safe limit for the tail lift.

Step 7 Drivers

Restrict the driving of all vehicles to people who are trained and authorised. Provide training on how to do the job and information about particular dangers. Develop a planned programme of refresher training for drivers and other employees involved with workplace transport. Check that your drivers drive with care, for example, use the correct routes, drive within the speed limits, obey load limits, follow site rules and do not drive for too many hours while at work. Provide high-visibility clothing for all those people working in areas where vehicles move around.



Step 8 Parking

Make sure that suitable parking areas are provided for all parking needs, for example, for employees' own private cars, for cars and vehicles belonging to members of the public and for work-related vehicles (both permanent and visiting). These areas should be clearly laid out and be big enough for the number and type of vehicles that are likely to use them. All workplace parking should be carefully monitored. Make sure that drivers take care when parking their vehicles, that they use the parking areas and that their vehicles are parked with the brake on before being left unattended.

Case Study

A customer was seriously injured while visiting a local timber and building supply company when his van was hit by a forklift truck. The forks pierced the side of the van and trapped him for over an hour.

For more information

Workplace transport safety HSG 136, ISBN 0-7176-6154-7 HSE Books at www.hsebooks.com

