

TRANSPORT SAFETY AT WORK

Your Practical Guide



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Introduction

Up to a quarter of fatal accidents at work involve transport, and many more transport accidents result in serious injury or in damage to plant and materials.

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act places a duty on you as an employer to ensure that any type of transport within your premises is used safely.

Transport operations should be assessed, and procedures should be set in place that will minimise the risk of injury or damage. For example, drivers or operators should be appropriately trained, and equipment should be adequately serviced and maintained.

Policy

The types of transport that you use in your business should be specified in your Company Safety Policy. This should include and detail the following:

- the responsibility of management to instigate safe systems of work that will govern the use of any vehicle
- an efficient method of personnel selection that takes safety requirements into account
- the provision of training and refresher training
- preventive maintenance procedures.

Once your transport safety policy has been determined, the systems you have decided upon must be implemented and regularly reviewed to ensure that the procedures remain in place and that they are still effective.

Risk Assessment

The first stage in implementing your transport safety policy is to assess the risks that are inherent in your business.

All transport operations must be assessed, including:

- safe use of forklift trucks
- loading, stacking and un-loading
- sheeting-up operations and haulage activities
- on-site refuelling and re-charging of vehicles
- fuel storage requirements
- vehicle reversing – taking into account the required amount of space, use of warning alarms and the need for a lookout or banksman
- length of time spent driving, particularly for a sales force if you have one, and rest requirements
- ability of pedestrians and vehicles to move safely, and without risk to their health.

Remember that you will need to review your assessment whenever any of the relevant circumstances change.

The following sections provide some guidance for the procedures you may need to introduce in three key areas.

Traffic and Pedestrian Segregation – Safe Traffic Routes

Any door or gate used by pedestrians (or intended for use by them) that leads on to a vehicle traffic route should be sufficiently separated from that route. The intention must be that pedestrians can see any approaching vehicle or plant from a place of safety.

This may include viewing panels or barriers that prevent pedestrians from coming straight out into the path of vehicles. Safe pedestrian crossing places may also be necessary. The crossing should be of sufficient size and suitably positioned, and in some situations signs may be needed to make its purpose quite clear.

More specifically, floors and traffic routes should be of sound construction and of adequate strength and stability. Surfaces should be free from any holes, and they should not be sloping, uneven or slippery if this is likely to cause people to slip or trip or fall, or to drop or lose control of anything they are lifting or carrying.

Traffic routes must not cause a vehicle to become unstable, or cause the driver to lose control of the vehicle or its load.

Any blind corners must be eliminated by use of mirrors or removed entirely. You may need to consider a one-way system, sufficient road markings, speed limits and other signs and the use of adequate lighting. Vehicle movements should always be properly supervised.

Driver/Operator Training

All personnel involved in transport activities must be trained and authorised for the particular vehicle they are operating. All drivers should be in possession of current and valid licences. HGV drivers should have a current and valid licence for the class of vehicle they drive. It is good management practice to inspect licences annually.

Safety training is particularly important for fork-lift drivers and should consist of three elements:

- 1 Basic training – the basic skills and knowledge required for safe operation

- 2 Specific job training – concentrating on your particular workplace, and any special needs that arise from your business, and any handling attachments the driver will need to use
- 3 Familiarisation training – giving the driver closely supervised experience of using the forklift truck at your premises.

The first two must be carried out by a qualified instructor whilst off the job, and the third should take place on the job with close supervision.

Remember that any new employee joining your company as a trained FLT operator will still need specific job training and familiarisation training.

You shouldn't allow personnel to operate forklift trucks (FLT) without written authority. This should restrict employees to the type of trucks for which they have satisfactorily completed all three stages of training.

Vehicle Safety – Testing and Maintenance

Regular scheduled maintenance must be undertaken for all vehicles.

Daily start-up checks appropriate to the vehicle class and type are also necessary. You should have a system in place for reporting vehicle faults which ensures that, where appropriate, the vehicle is assessed for safety before it is operated again.

All servicing and maintenance records should be kept for all vehicles, along with any required tachygraphs.

Roll over protection or a safety cab must be fitted to FLT and similar plant. Such vehicles should be both seen and heard, necessitating an amber flashing light and a reversing alarm. Seat belts are essential.

FLT must also undergo a statutory examination and testing of the lifting mechanism, as required by the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations.

An independent competent examiner must undertake this, and the testing and examination certificates must be retained for safe keeping.

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