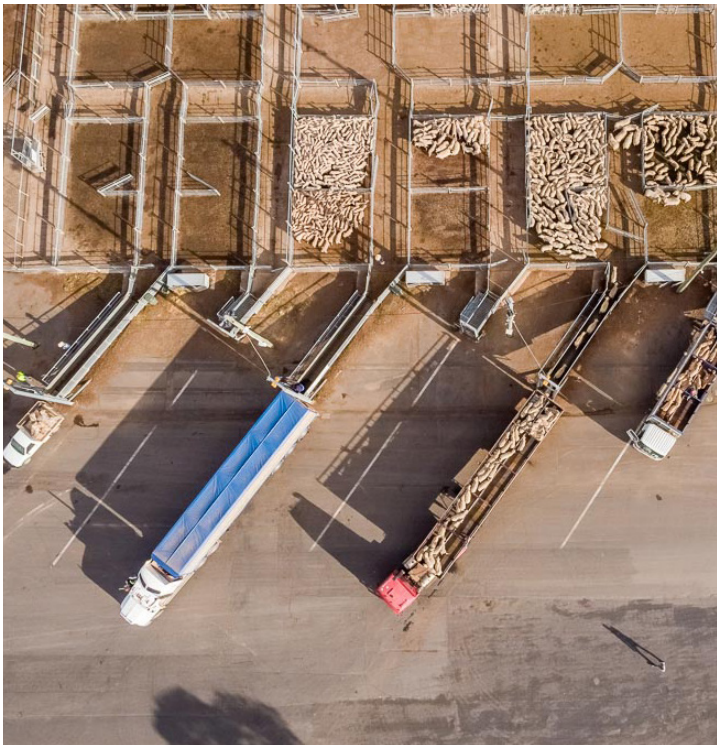
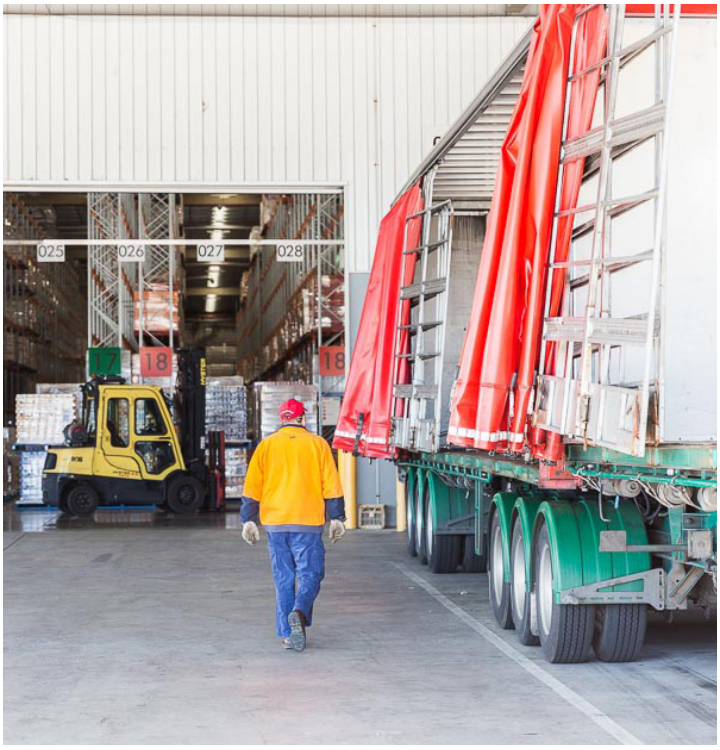
SafeWork

NSW GOVERNMENT

A guide to work health and safety

In the road freight transport industry





Contents

This guideline was developed following extensive consultation and feedback provided by key industry stakeholders and industry specific transport consultation workshops. Commitment from industry supported by SafeWork NSW will further enhance the delivery of a safer road freight transport industry to meet the demands of the growing NSW economy.

Introduction

This guide supplies work health and safety information for road freight transport operators, drivers and those in the supply chain. The transport industry is an essential service provider for all Australians, but unfortunately records a high rate of fatalities and serious injuries. Therefore, the industry is a focus area for SafeWork NSW under the Regulatory Priorities.

While road accidents are top of mind causes of fatalities and serious injuries, there are several high-risk activities for workers and others when the vehicle stops that contribute to incident and claims rates. Under the Regulatory Priorities SafeWork NSW continues to identify several key priority areas that cause serious injuries and fatalities in the transport industry. The key priority areas are:

- at risk workers
- musculoskeletal injuries
- working at heights
- access to and from vehicles
- mental and physical health
- traffic management
- ancillary non-driving tasks.

SafeWork NSW's Regulatory Priorities are informed by other key strategies including:

- At Risk Workers' Strategy 2018-22
- Mentally healthy workplaces strategy 2018-22
- Falls from heights: Data insights and action plan.

In February 2018, the NSW Government released the Road Safety Plan 2021. This was developed to set new road safety priorities and actions to help NSW work toward the State Priority target of a 30 per cent reduction in road fatalities by 2021 (compared to 2008–2010 levels).

In support of the 2026 Road Safety Action Plan an Employer Toolkit has been developed which provides workplaces with information about key road safety issues and risks, and ways to help you and your workers get around safely while using the road. It also supplies information to help you embed road safety within your workplace.

Download the 2026 Road Safety Action Plan.

Download the Employer Toolkit

Incident notification

If there is a serious injury or illness, a death or a dangerous incident, you must report it to us immediately on 13 10 50 as an urgent investigation might be needed.

Incidents can be notified 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by calling 13 10 50.

You must also:

- provide first aid and make sure the worker gets the right care
- take care not to disturb the incident site until an inspector arrives. You can help an injured person and ensure safety of the site.
- record it in the register of injuries
- notify your insurer within 48 hours.

What incidents need to be notified?

A 'notifiable incident' under the work health and safety legislation relates to:

- the death of a person
- a serious injury or illness of a person
- a potentially dangerous incident.

Examples of these incidents are available in the Incident notification fact sheet.

If you need further advice, call us on 13 10 50.

Embedding a health and safety landscape

SafeWork NSW encourages the concept of a work health and safety landscape, and advises all NSW transport sector workplaces to adopt the following:

- improve WHS systems and practices
- respond to changes in technology and practices in the workplace and environment
- recover from injury through improving work practices
- learn from incidents in the workplace.

What a health and safety landscape should look like in the transport industry

The ideal WHS landscape in the transport sector should include:

- workplace leaders who show commitment to health and safety through participation in safety meetings in the workplace and elsewhere
- safe systems of work implemented through consultation with workers
- clear and relevant communication in safety messages to aid workers from diverse backgrounds, including young and non-English speaking workers
- worker input into new safety practices. A safe environment takes into consideration: the physical and psychological (mental health) aspects of work practices
- both formal and 'on the job' developmental opportunities are used to develop worker capability
- adequate supervision provided for workers while they are developing capability in the workplace.

Consultation in the workplace

Duty to consult

Consultation is an essential part of managing work health and safety in your workplace. Businesses must consult with workers in situations when their health and safety is likely to be or is directly affected. Workers must have an opportunity to express their views and contribute to any decisions relating to their health and safety.

What is a consultation arrangement?

A consultation arrangement is the way that you consult with your workers. It can be as simple as talking to your workers regularly and considering their views when making health and safety decisions. Your workers must agree to the arrangement.

> Consultation provides an opportunity to use the knowledge and experience of your staff to achieve a safer and healthier workplace.
>
> See our Consultation Toolkit on the SafeWork NSW website.

Who to consult?

You must consult with workers who are, or are likely to be, directly affected by a health and safety issue in your workplace.

Your workers are affected by your decisions, so you must involve them in all work health and safety decisions. They can help you find better controls, improve decision-making and reduce incidents.

If you share work health and safety duties with another business or businesses, you must also consult with them and their workers.

How to consult

You can consult with workers in a variety of ways, including:

- holding regular formal or informal meetings
- electing a health and safety representative (HSR)
- appointing a health and safety committee.

HSRs are elected to represent workers on health and safety and matters have responsibilities under WHS legislation.

An HSR and deputy HSR play a pivotal role in gathering information about what the health and safety issues are for their work group. They can work out ways to resolve issues in consultation with business representatives such as managers, supervisors as well as committees and other HSRs.

You can use a mix of consultation arrangements. When deciding how to consult with your workers, take into consideration:

- the size of your business
- the way work is arranged
- what suits your workers.

Refer to the Consultation Toolkit for more information on how to consult.

When to consult

Consultation must be regular and ongoing. You must consult with your workers when:

- identifying hazards and assessing risks
- deciding how to eliminate or minimise risks
- proposing changes that may affect the health and safety of your workers
- making decisions about workplace facilities
- making decisions about how you will:
  - consult with your workers
  - resolve workplace health and safety issues
  - monitor your workers' health
  - monitor workplace condition
  - supply information and training to your workers.

Consult with other businesses

If you share work health and safety duties with another business, you must consult with them and their workers.

For example, if you have contractors or labourhire workers, you share a duty of care and you must consult with the businesses that supply their services.

Similarly, if you have contractors or labour-hire workers, you share a duty of care and you must consult with the businesses that supply their services.

What to consult on

- employer responsibilities
- procedures for consulting and resolving issues
- how work affects others and who is affected
- hazards, risks and control measures
- how controls will be checked and updated.

How to cooperate

- listen to and consider the views of others
- act upon your agreed commitments.

How to coordinate

- plan and work together
- check and assess control measures regularly to make sure they are working well.

Focus on key priority areas

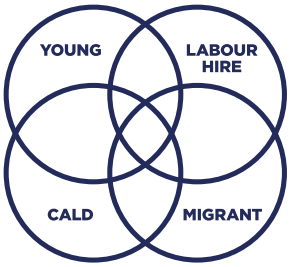
Top hazards within the transport sector

Transport is a diverse industry including outdoor work with heavy machinery and plant. Each workplace is different and work is undertaken at various locations along the supply chain. You need to know the hazards in your business so you can assess the risks they pose.

PRIORITY AREAS

Hazardous Manual Tasks

Mental Health



At risk workers

Traffic Management

Falls from trucks

Impact / Falls / Ancillary tasks / Immobilisation

Hazard prevention

Transport operators and supply chain businesses have legal obligations under the work health and safety laws to manage hazards and risks associated with work in the business or undertaking. You must:

1. identify hazards in the workplace

2. assess the risk those hazards create

3. then eliminate or minimise them as much as possible.

Hazard prevention includes:

- planning and scheduling to reduce risks
- regular maintenance and inspections of all vehicles, trucks, trailers and equipment
- ensuring all workers are adequately trained for the tasks undertaken
- safe systems of work and safety procedures are developed and implemented in consultation with other relevant duty holders and workers.

Risk Assessment

Businesses need to identify hazards and assess the risk of harm to someone in the workplace. To be compliant with health and safety laws, you must then take reasonable steps to limit the risk.

STEP 1 Hazard Identification

- identify all hazards that may contribute to a workplace incident
- businesses and parties in the supply chain should consult and develop a list of real and potential hazards that could arise during the course of work.

STEP 2 Risk Assessment

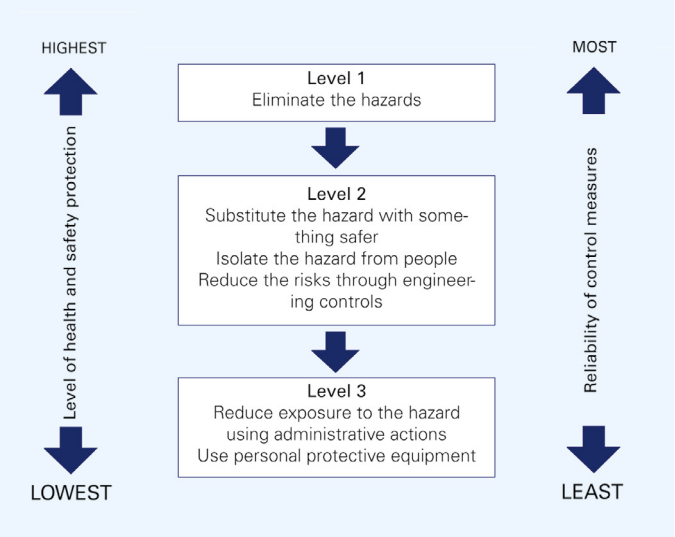
- assess each of the hazards identified for their likelihood of occurring and the expected consequences.

STEP 3 Risk Control

- eliminate the hazard so far as is reasonably practicable; or if that is not possible, implement the best control measures to manage the identified risk, in line with the hierarchy of control measures.

STEP 4 Monitor and Review

- monitor and review the effectiveness of control measures and revise if necessary
- the control measures put in place should be reviewed regularly to make sure they work as planned. Don't wait until something goes wrong and an incident occurs
- a review is required:
  - when the control measure is not effective in controlling the risk
  - before a change at the workplace that is likely to give rise to a new or different health and safety risk that the control measure may not effectively control
  - if a new hazard or risk is identified
  - if the results of consultation indicate that a review is necessary, or
  - if a health and safety representative requests a review.



The hierarchy of control measures

Traffic management

Whenever vehicles, mobile plant such as forklifts and pedestrian traffic interact; there is the increased potential for injury or death if traffic management arrangements are not in place or are inadequate.

> A person hit by a forklift, moving vehicle or a shifting load will likely suffer serious injury or possibly death.
>
> If you or your workers are involved in loading and unloading activities in the workplace you are most at risk.
>
> Contractors and visitors to your workplace may also be at risk if traffic management systems are poor.
>
> See the Incident Information Release to understand what can occur.

Effective traffic management procedures should be developed to suit the unique requirements of each individual workplace. The nature of the workplace can determine not only the type and effectiveness of control measures that can be implemented, but also how often these control measures should be reviewed to ensure that they remain effective. These plans and procedures should be made available for contractors and be part of induction to site.

Safework Australia have information on developing and implementing traffic management plans.
SafeWork NSW have a traffic management guide for truck drivers.
SafeWork NSW have a safety alert working with or around mobile plant.

Traffic Control Work Training

On 1 July 2020, completion of Traffic Control Work Training (TCWT) became a requirement under the Work Health and Safety Regulation. This means that workers in varying industries such as manufacturing, retail and construction will now be required to obtain a TCWT.

Examples:

- a supermarket with a loading dock that is accessed via a public road. The supermarket worker will be required to hold a TCWT card to be able to direct traffic to allow the truck to reverse into the loading dock
- a worker may be required to hold a TCWT on a construction site where vehicles/trucks are accessing via a public road and traffic is needed to be stopped to allow vehicles in and out of the site.

A worker cannot be directed to undertake traffic control work without the appropriate TCWT card. You must ensure that the worker has been recently trained within the past two years if they have not undertaken any traffic control work during that period. You should also check that they have an issued TCWT card. Check a NSW issued licence.

For the specific laws about traffic control work training obligatons, see sections 184A - 184N of the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017.

There are also general work health and safety laws that will apply to you in any situation, including when supporting licensed workers.

Manage traffic management risks

Several business operators may be involved in loading/ unloading freight in the workplace such as:

- the transport operator
- the business where the freight is loaded/unloaded
- businesses that control mobile plant at the workplace.

Under work health and safety legislation, each business shares the responsibility for the health and safety for those involved in the work, to the extent of their ability to influence and control the work. You must work together to ensure risks are eliminated, or if this is not possible, minimised.

Separation of vehicles and people

Every workplace is different and will present different hazards and risks. The most effective way of ensuring persons and vehicles move safely around a workplace is to provide separate pedestrian and vehicle traffic routes. Ideally, the barriers used to separate people from plant will be permanently fixed, difficult to defeat and will be constructed to ensure all persons are protected. Where possible and practicable, introduce a one-way system as this will minimise the need for vehicles to reverse, and will help pedestrians and drivers.

Your circumstances might mean complete separation of vehicles and people is not possible or practicable. You may minimise the risks by:

- using presence sensing devices fitted to vehicles whereby the vehicle movement and speed is automatically controlled in the presence of pedestrians
- installing gates or temporary barriers to separate vehicles from people
- organising work and times so persons and vehicles are not in the same area at the same time
- supplying separate entrances and exits for vehicles where possible.
- installing mirrors and vision panels in pedestrian doors entering vehicle areas
- installing dropped kerbs, barriers, deterrent paving/tactile surfaces to clearly delineate crossing points where vehicles and people cross
- establishing exclusion zones and safety zones like forklift-only areas in loading bays or pedestrianonly areas in the vicinity of places like offices and amenities and their entrances
- locating delivery areas away from pedestrians or work activities
- clearly marking vehicle areas with signs or reflective paint to warn pedestrians
- clearly marking pedestrian walkways and crossings with paint or bollards
- ensuring adequate lighting is installed around entrances, driveways, pedestrian walkways, and vehicle access points
- installing stairs, ramps or walkways for pedestrians and drivers, away from the loading/ unloading area
- using signs for speed limits, hazards like forklift operating areas and exclusion zones
- ensuring traffic areas and loading/unloading areas are well lit
- ensuring workers wear high visibility clothing
- ensuring vehicles are fitted with warning devices e.g. flashing lights, audible reversing alarm
- install non-slip surfaces for pedestrians.
- providing adequate instructions to drivers on traffic management plans, exclusion zones and site specific rules for delivery and pickup locations.

Operation of forklifts

Ensure forklift operators are appropriately instructed, trained, supervised and hold a current high-risk work licence for forklifts.

SafeWork NSW have various fact sheets, guides and posters available to download

Traffic routes

It is important to select the most appropriate control as implementing the wrong control measure can increase the risk, for example, reducing vehicle stability.

The general principles for safe traffic routes within the workplace are as follows:

- eliminate the need for vehicles to reverse as much as possible
- make sure they are wide enough for the safe movement of the largest vehicle
- ensure surfaces are suitable and maintained for the vehicles and pedestrians using them
- avoid steep slopes
- avoid sharp corners and blind bends
- keep them clear of obstructions
- ensure they are clearly marked and signposted
- reducing vehicle speed and installing traffic control measures such as speed humps, chicanes and 'rumble strips' can reduce vehicle speed
- speed limits need to be appropriate, properly enforced and, where possible, consistent across the site
- to assess a suitable speed limit, consider the route layout and its usage. For example, lower speeds will be appropriate where pedestrians are present or where forklifts and vehicles share a traffic route.

Visibility in the workplace

Work areas should be suitably lit for drivers to see hazards and persons to see vehicles in the workplace. Good visibility for drivers relates to vehicle speed and the distance required to stop or change direction safely.

Install mirrors where sharp or blind bends are found on traffic routes.

Lighting in the workplace

The workplace should have suitable and sufficient lighting, in work areas where:

- vehicles manoeuvre, or pedestrians and vehicles circulate and cross
- loading and unloading takes place.

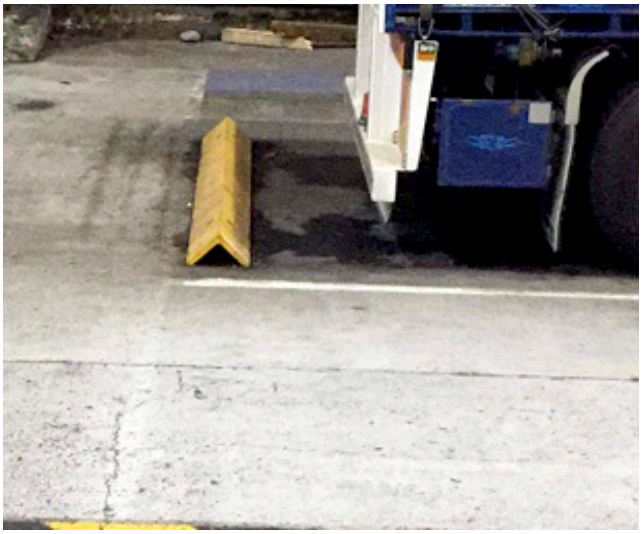
Provide levels of light to ensure there are no drastic and sudden changes which could lead to drivers being dazzled.

Reversing of vehicles in the workplace

The most effective way of reducing reversing incidents in the workplace is to remove the need to reverse by introducing one-way systems wherever possible.

Where reversing is necessary and unavoidable, consider the following:

- installing suitable barriers to prevent vehicles entering pedestrian zones
- identifying and clearly marking designated reversing areas
- restricting people from entering reversing areas and operations
- using appropriate and suitable communication systems
- installing equipment on vehicles to help the driver and pedestrians, such as reversing alarms, flashing lights and proximity-sensing devices.



Truck wheel stops can be installed and designed to withstand the weight of heavy vehicles and mobile equipment whilst driving into parking areas/loading unloading.

Loading/unloading procedures

Planning

Roadside delivery/pick-up introduces a number of hazards such as backing into busy streets, crossing footpaths, parking on public streets and interacting with the public. It should be avoided where possible but where this is not reasonably practicable, adequate control measures need to be implemented.

Consider the use of barriers, signs, cones, lights or a traffic control person. Also consider the ability of other road users to see the stationery vehicle and the loading/unloading operation and avoid contact

You should include these considerations as part of your planning for safe loading/unloading in consultation with the delivery/pick-up site.

When loading/unloading from trucks, ensure the work has been planned for safety in consultation with those who will be undertaking the work, such as any mobile plant operators.

Consider the work environment where the loading/unloading will take place and:

- ensure adequate lighting to work locations
- provide a safe loading/unloading surface area
- have workers wear appropriate personal protective equipment – e.g. high-visibility work gear.

It is also essential to put measures in place to ensure the truck cannot move during loading/unloading Consider:

- using dock locks, air-brake isolation-interlock devices, barriers or ‘stop’ signals
- prevention of unauthorised access to ignition keys and cabin
- what systems you have in place that alert the driver when it is safe to leave.

Before delivery/pick-up - Adequate information for drivers

Before delivery/pick-up, information on the following should be provided (where applicable) to drivers:

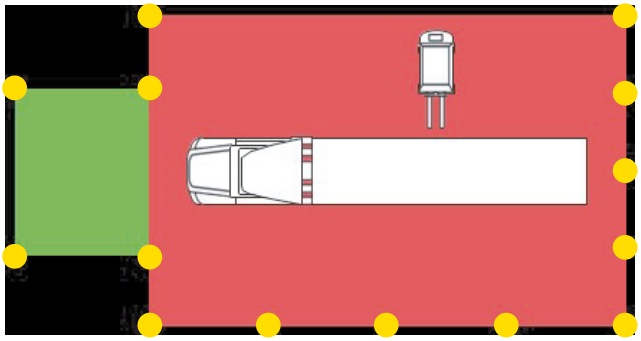
- any restrictions on the types of vehicles that can be accepted into the workplace
- delivery times
- site information, including loading/unloading area, parking facilities, reception, amenities
- traffic management plan if one is in place
- site induction
- reporting procedures on arrival and departure
- safety procedures on site, e.g. wearing high-visibility clothing, using mobile phones
- availability and use of equipment
- person in charge of loading/unloading
- incident notification and reporting requirements
- emergency contact details.

As the transport operator, you should also provide supply chain businesses with any necessary information on the vehicle being used. For example consider the dimensions of the vehicle in relation to the delivery/pick-up site.

Exclusion and safety zones

Exclusion zones to separate non-essential workers from the loading/unloading area should be clearly established. A safety zone for the driver should also be available and communicated. Exclusion zone and safety zone considerations:

- specify a pedestrian exclusion zone around the truck and areas where mobile plant operate
- specify a safety zone for the truck driver
- erect sturdy barriers, such as fences or gates, around the safety zone – or, if these are unavailable, use chains or tape
- no-one should enter the exclusion zone without the mobile plant operator’s approval (as the licensed person undertaking the work)
- the mobile plant operator should not begin loading/unloading until everyone is clear of the exclusion zone
- maintaining an exclusion zone around the truck while loading/unloading will also minimise the risk of anyone being hit by a falling load.



- Barrier, bollards, witches hats, painted lines
- Safety zone
- Exclusion zone-no pedestrians while mobile plant operating

Example of exclusion and safety zones

Communication

Clear and cooperative communication between workers loading/unloading is critical to prevent accidents. You should:

- use an effective communication system between the mobile plant operator and the truck driver – e.g. hand signals may be suitable in some workplaces, two-way radios in others
- use signs, lights, alarms and the like to indicate loading/unloading is in progress
- agree to the communication procedure prior to commencing the work.

When the light is green the handbrake is on. When the amber light is on forklift is operational.

Mobile plant:

The operation of forklifts, cranes and other mobile plant that are commonly used for loading/unloading operations may be categorised as a class of high risk work in the Work Health and Safety Regulation and require the operator to hold a high risk work licence.

A worker cannot be directed or allowed to carry out high risk work if they do not hold a licence for that class of work.

When mobile plant is being used for loading/unloading:

- you must ensure operators are appropriately licensed, where necessary. Check a NSW issued licence
- you must ensure workers have had suitable training, supervision and instruction to undertake the task
- you must ensure tyres, windscreens, mirrors, reversing sensors and the like are well maintained
- you must ensure workers use installed safety devices e.g. seatbelts
- you should fit speed limiting devices, where appropriate
- you should fit reversing sensors, cameras or audible warning devices
- you must ensure mobile plant is appropriate for the loads and workplace
- you should install active sensor systems (ultrasonic and radar) commonly used to reduce the risk of collision.

For the specific laws about high risk work licensing obligatons, see Part 4.5 of the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017.

For the general duties of a business involving the management or control of plant, see Part 5.1 Division 7 of the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017.

There are also general work health and safety laws that will apply to you in any situation, including managing risks associated with mobile plant.

Loading and unloading

Before loading or unloading, make sure:

- fasteners and load restraint systems are working as intended, and are in good condition – restraint systems should prevent loads from moving
- workers don't place themselves between the load and the truck, trailer, lifting equipment or any other pinch point
- workers don't work on the opposite side of the trailer (other than when seated in the cab of a backstop forklift).

Incident information release

A 65-year-old driver suffered fatal injuries when struck by two steel pipes as they were being unloaded from a heavy-vehicle trailer in Moorebank. A telehandler, operating from the opposite side of the truck, was used to unload the pipes.

Transport Incident Information Releases

Telehandler used in incident

A 71-year-old male sustained fatal injuries while loading a car onto a tilt tray truck in Singleton NSW. It is believed that the car came off the tilt tray causing the worker to fall and strike his head on the pavement.

Transport Incident Information Release

Tilt tray truck involved in incident

Immobilising heavy vehicles and trailers

Uncontrolled vehicle movements (or roll-aways) have been responsible for several deaths in NSW. SafeWork NSW has investigated incidents where workers have been crushed when appropriate control measures were not implemented to effectively immobilise a vehicle.

Considerations

A vehicle may be subject to uncontrolled movement when you:

- do repairs on the vehicle, including roadside repairs
- load and unload your vehicle
- couple and uncouple your truck and trailer
- park on an incline or uneven surface
- do not immobilise the vehicle properly.

Roll-aways can kill

Keep drivers and others safe by:

- parking on level ground
- always applying the handbrake properly
- using wheel chocks
- knowing how to use safety features such as handbrake warning systems
- providing adequate training and supervision
- only performing tasks that you have received appropriate training for.

See our safety alert for Immobilising heavy vehicles and trailers for more information.

Prevent uncontrolled vehicle movement

Before starting work, always identify the hazards and assess the risks.

Drivers should:

- park the vehicle on level ground and if this is not possible, be aware of the limitations of the vehicle including and what to do when parking on a gradient
- always switch off the vehicle and remove the key from the ignition to make the motor inoperable and the apply the brakes before getting out
- be trained on how to immobilise the specific vehicle they are driving
- be trained on what to do if the vehicle breaks down i.e. emergency protocols and assistance
- chock the wheels before conducting inspection or maintenance activities
- be trained on how to correctly and safely couple and uncouple trailers.

Truck owners should:

- consider installing a parkbrake warning system that alerts the driver if the parkbrake is not applied
- ensure competent workers undertake maintenance on your truck and use suitable jacks, hydraulic hoists or a vehicle pit when inspecting or maintaining your vehicle
- ensure inspection and maintenance of your vehicle is done according to the manufacturer's instructions
- know how to correctly and safely couple and uncouple your trailer.

Use of Maxi brakes and wheel chocks

Maxi brakes and wheel chocks should be fitted and used to prevent unintentional movement or rolling when parked or positioned on inclined surfaces.

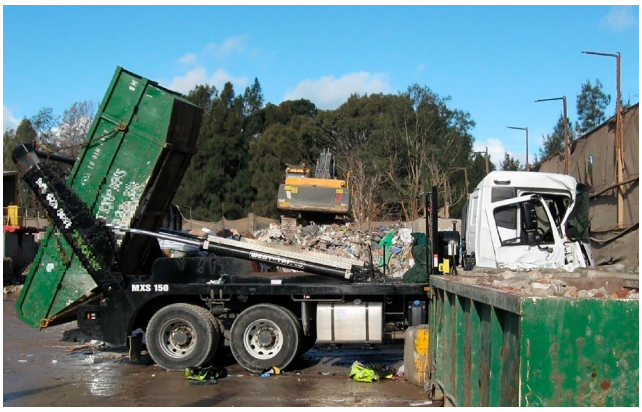
Maxi brakes have two chambers; one that acts the same as a standard brake chamber, and a second chamber that contains a very powerful mechanical spring that acts as a fail-safe should the air brake system lose air pressure. The Maxi brake also serves as a mechanical parking brake to prevent a trailer from rolling when parked on inclined surfaces.

Wheel chocks are designed to be used to prevent a vehicle from rolling backward or forward while parked, or while parked for maintenance work, unloading, loading, etc. Because there are a range of vehicle and trailer types and tire sizes, they're manufactured in a variety of styles and from different materials. They are inexpensive and should be used to provide safety for those working around the vehicle.

Incident information release

A 58-year-old truck driver was fatally injured at a waste recycling facility at Camellia when, after exiting the cabin of a truck, he was pinned between the cabin and the door of the truck as it rolled into concrete blocks.

Rolling truck crush fatality June 2019



The truck involved in the incident

Securing loads

Loads that aren't properly secured can injure or kill people and cause significant property damage. This can happen on the road or during loading and unloading work.

The Load Restraint Guide 2018 provides users with the basic safety principles that should be followed when designing an appropriate load restraint system. The Guide includes technical information, detailed diagrams and worked examples to assist users in determining the suitable restraints method.

What are the risks during loading/unloading?

Injuries are caused when:

- handling side-gates on trucks
- opening and closing side-curtains on trucks
- placing load restraints and corner protectors over loads
- using tensioning devices with chains and webbing.

Handling side gates on trucks

To eliminate the risks associated with handling gates, consider whether you need them. There may be more suitable alternatives, such as:

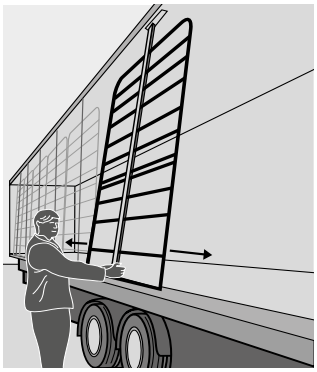
- vehicles with folding sides or sliding panels
- vehicles custom designed for loads – e.g. some pallet loads may suit a vehicle with an internal side and middle expanding wall, an inward sloping floor, and load-rated curtain
- load-rated curtains – follow the manufacturer's instructions about weight, placement and type of load
- chains or webbing.

Folding sides

If it's not reasonably practicable to eliminate the use of gates, consider gates that don't need to be removed during loading/unloading (and can be retrofitted to the vehicle), such as:

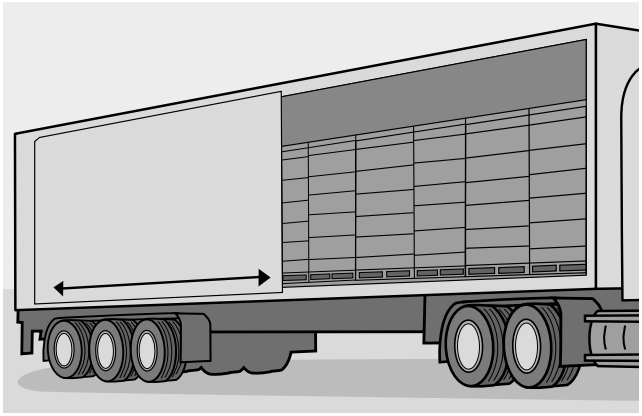
- swinging gates
- sliding gates
- hanging gates – use a hanging system that prevents the gates from falling completely if any part fails.

Clean the tracks and rollers regularly.



Sliding gate

Hanging gate



Sliding panel

The use of gates that can be removed from the vehicle involves a greater degree of manual handling and therefore should be avoided where possible. If used, these gates should be removed and installed from a solid platform that is a similar height to the truck tray, to ensure the gates are handled between shoulder and knee height. If the gates are tall and heavy, a minimum two people should remove and install them.

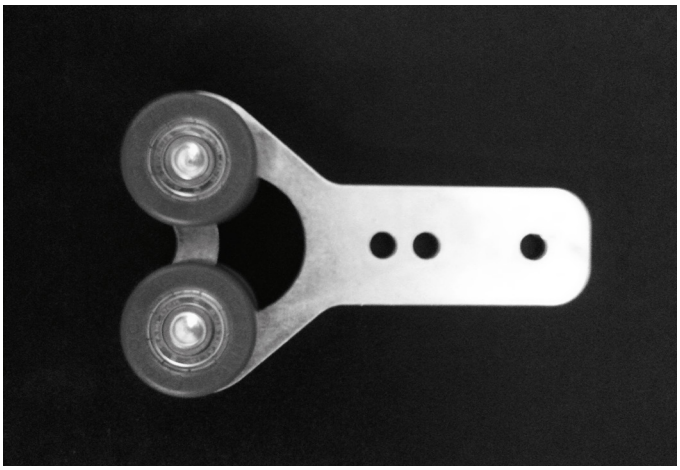
A minimum of two people should be used if the gates are removed or installed from ground level, unless the gates are short and light. Advise the delivery site in advance should the driver need help removing the gates. Team handling should only be used until a more effective control can be implemented or for tasks that are undertaken rarely.

Opening and closing side-curtains

When opening and closing side-curtains:

- check if the load is resting against the curtains before opening them; look up and check for deformity or pressure marks in the curtain, particularly at the top; stand clear at the rear when releasing the curtain tensioner
- use automatic curtains that are self-opening and closing
- follow the manufacturer's instructions for load characteristics and placement in transit if side curtains are load-rated
- use curtains with a securing system that does not involve buckles – it reduces the risk of pinched fingers and repetitive strain to the hands and fingers
- use load tensioners that operate outside the curtains so they don't need to be opened as often to check restraint tensions – e.g. winches attached to the coaming rail or under-floor track can be re-tensioned without opening the curtains
- use safe procedures
  - check for trip hazards before opening/closing curtains
  - grab two buckle straps, one in each hand, keep hands close to the body and below shoulder height, and walk back slowly so the curtain moves smoothly
  - be aware of the buckle locations to reduce the risk of buckles becoming tangled.

Ensure the curtain track and rollers are regularly maintained and follow manufacturer instructions for lubrication; keep the track clean by using air, water or vacuum to remove dust; be aware of increased curtain resistance, as it means the track or rollers need maintenance.



Curtain track roller on plate with double bearings

If the curtains or tracks need repairing, but the truck needs to be used in the short-term:

- clean the track and use dry lube to help rollers move along the roof track
- pull the curtains in sections – when opening, pull back a section of the curtain near the rear of the truck, move forward, pull another section, then repeat until the curtains are fully open.

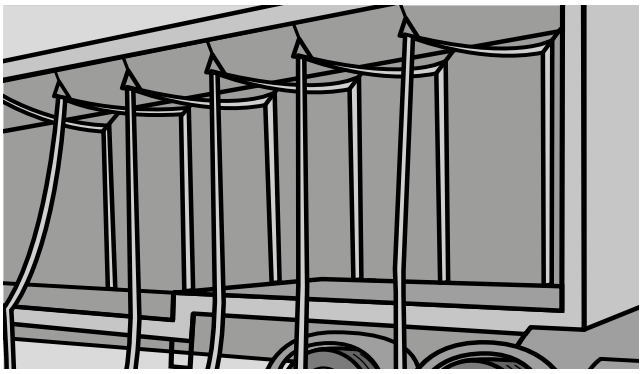
In windy conditions:

- open the curtain by undoing most, but not all, curtain buckles before releasing the curtain ratchet (it will reduce the chance of the curtains billowing as the ratchet is released); keep two or three buckles attached along the length of the curtain and only unbuckle these as the curtain is pulled back slowly
- when the open curtain is bunched at the rear of the trailer, secure it to the trailer to prevent the wind from catching it – e.g. clip a section of the curtain with a buckle to the rear of the trailer, or pass a rope through the buckle.

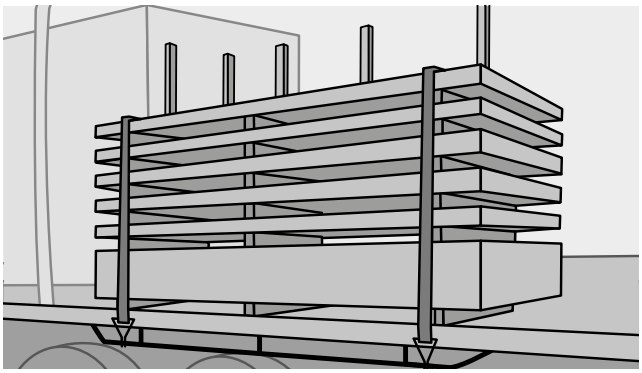
Placing load restraints and corner protectors over loads

- don't throw over loads anywhere near overhead powerlines
- keep pedestrians away from vehicles when restraining loads – e.g. use barriers
- use a system to apply and remove lashing and corner protectors while standing on the ground, such as:
  - a purpose-built lightweight extension pole, especially one that grips the lashing or corner protector
  - a system designed for a curtain-sider that retracts the webbing straps to the roof of the trailer when not in use-this will eliminate the need for drivers to climb onto the truck to position and pull straps over the load

- reach tools
  - work from a platform ladder or elevating work platform.
  - when using chains, use a lead rope to throw and drag the chain over the load – this will reduce the risk of shoulder strain from throwing the chain, and will cause less damage than a chain if it hits someone.



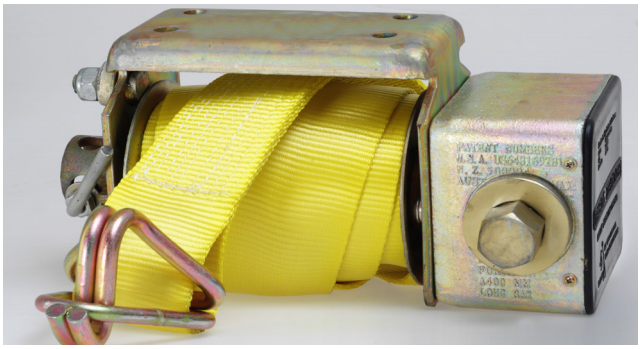
Retractable webbing-strap system



Removable posts that helps restrict the movement of the load

Using tensioning devices with chains and webbing

The incorrect use of tensioners has resulted in severe injuries to workers and near misses. Ensure your workers have received training and instruction on the safe use of tensioners and always follow manufacturer's instructions. Refer also to the requirements outlined in the National Transport Commission load-restraint-guide



A geared winch

A geared winch

Tensioners include:

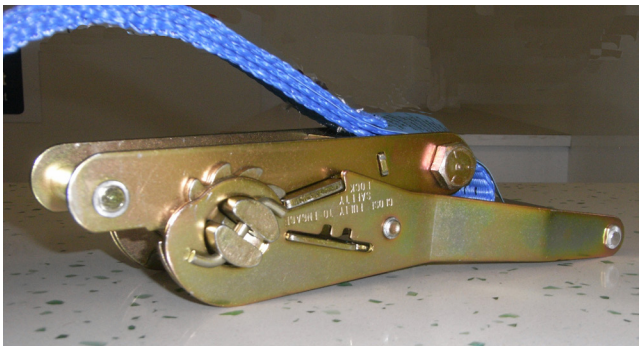
- webbing hand ratchets
- under-vehicle webbing winches
- chain dogs
- other chain tensioners.

Always consider the safety of your workers when choosing the type of tensioner. For example, a pull down webbing ratchet does not require repeated pushing up and can reduce the risk of shoulder injuries. If using a winch, ensure it doesn't require the removable handle to be reinserted with every turn; use a geared winch.

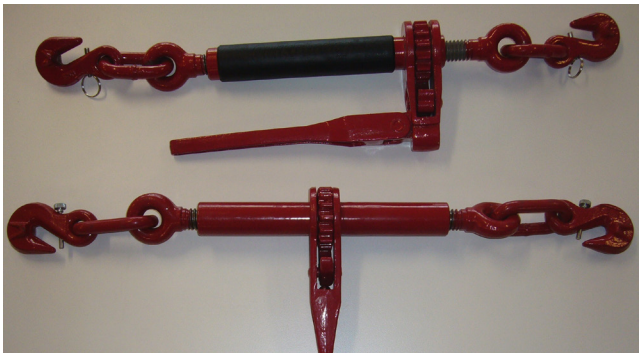
Minimise the use of chains and webbing by using:

- an alternative system, such as a containment system, pins, pegs, posts, headboards, or a gooseneck on a drop-deck trailer to help block the load
- a custom-built truck with expanding walls, sloping floor and load-rated curtains.
- ensure heavy vehicle loading performance standards are still met if any equipment is substituted.

If webbing is being used, consider webbing straps as an alternative to chain webbing. This has the advantage of being lighter and can reduce the risk of injury.

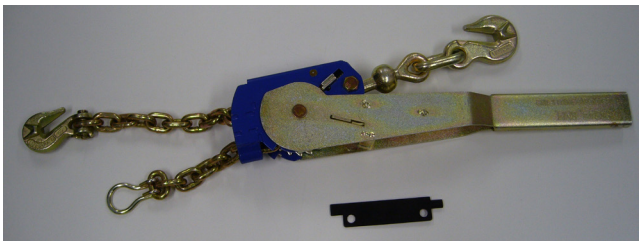


A pull-down ratchet handle ratchet



Ratchet turnbuckle chain tensioners

Chain tensioner



Chain tensioner

Chain tensioner

A type of chain tensioner that eliminates the risk of kickback

Cheater bars on dogs are dangerous

When binders are used for securing loads, the risks must be eliminated or controlled. It is strongly recommended that cheater bars (extension bars) are not used on over-centre load binders, or 'dogs' as they are commonly known. The use of cheater bars on dogs is a dangerous practice and has resulted in many serious injuries.

Worker using dog and cheater bar

The risks include:

- using a cheater bar to tension a dog creates a risk of the bar flicking up and hitting the worker when the tension is released
- others in proximity are in danger of being hit if the worker loses control of the bar
- the tension on the dog varies according to the length of the bar.

Possible solutions include:

- using something other than an over-centre load binder, such as ratchet or turnbuckle binders
- don't use cheater bars on dogs
- providing information, training and instruction about using load binders safely.

See Cheater bar on dogs safety alert.

Working at heights

Falls are a major cause of death and serious injury in Australian workplaces. Most people who are seriously injured or killed, fall from a height of four metres or less.

In the transport industry, workers engaged in loading/unloading and maintenance tasks are placed at risk if working from the tray or trailer, including climbing over or around loads.

Certain work tasks introduce fall from height hazards and require risk management. Examples include:

- entering and exiting the cabin
- loading or unloading goods or livestock
- arranging and restraining loads
- checking the load at a loading bay or enroute to the destination
- tarping or un-tarping
- undertaking maintenance.

Several businesses and workers may be involved in loading and unloading freight, such as:

- the transport operator
- the business operating the workplace where freight is being loaded/unloaded
- the business(es) controlling mobile plant at the workplace.

Under the work health and safety laws, each business shares responsibility for the health and safety of those involved in the work, to the extent of their capacity to influence and control the work. Everyone must work together to ensure the risks associated with working at heights are eliminated, or if this not possible, minimised.

Legal obligations

There are specific laws about working safely at heights: See clauses 78 – 80 of the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017.

There are also general work health and safety laws that will apply to you in any situation, including when working at heights.

A fact sheet has been developed using the Code of practice – Managing the risk of falls at workplaces

Simple safety tips for working at height fact sheet

Plan the work

Whether it's a routine task or a one-off job, you and your workers should stop and plan the work to eliminate or control the risk of a fall. Wherever possible, perform the work from ground level. When planning the work, look for alternatives that eliminate or minimise working at height.

Hazards and risk controls

If the need to work from a height cannot be eliminated, you must manage the risk of a fall. Use measures to prevent a fall, such as:

- cabin access equipment e.g. hand rails, steps
- reduce the risk of injury when accessing or exiting the cabin by:
  - training drivers to maintain three points of contact and face the cabin when climbing in and out
  - keeping soles clean and replacing footwear when tread is worn (consider lace-up boots, as they provide better ankle support)
  - parking in well-lit areas, with an even surface
  - placing handrails/handles on both sides of the cabin opening
  - installing, maintaining and when necessary replacing non-slip surfaces on steps
  - ensuring steps and handrails are within easy reach
  - ensuring steps have consistent dimensions – e.g. same distance apart, same treads
  - installing lights in steps to aid visibility.

You must consult with your workers when:

- identifying hazards and assessing risks
- deciding how to eliminate or minimise risks
- proposing changes that may affect their health and safety.

Listen to your workers views on how to safely perform the work and draw on their experience and ideas.

When buying a new or used vehicle, ensure that its design supports all the risk controls above.

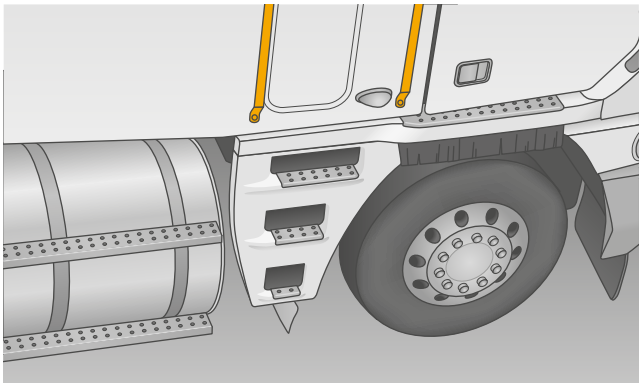
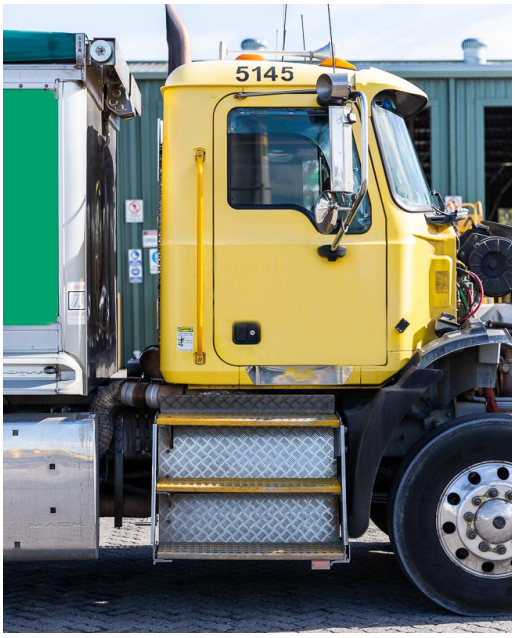
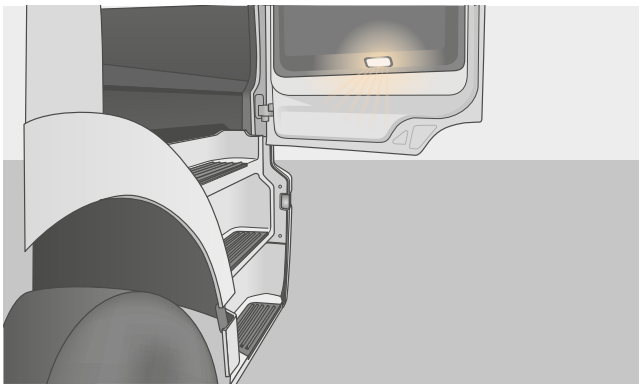


Image shows trucks steps with duel handrails installed



Truck access solution



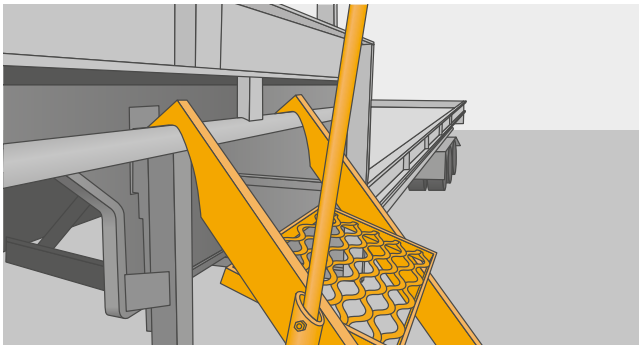
Cab lighting to illuminate entry/exit point

Getting in and out of truck cab safely video

Decal on cab showing 3 points of contact required

Access to and from vehicles

To reduce the height at which drivers need to access a load and to allow access to anchor points, some trucks are fitted with retractable or foldaway steps. They reduce the risk of sprains, strains and falls at lower levels. Portable step platforms are also available for use.



Retractable steps to access a tray

Truck access solution

Work on the ground or with a safety solution

Wherever possible, enable your workers to work from the ground as this is the best way to prevent falls from height

- Provide suitable equipment to load and unload from the ground
- Pre-configure the load to suit the equipment
- Pre-sling the load where possible
- Use load restraints that enable access from the ground or use aids such as a lead rope or pole to assist reaching loads.

Use load restraints from the ground video

If unable to work from the ground, then a safe way to access and work upon the trailer must be provided. This can include safety equipment such as guard rails, work platforms, retractable ladders or steps with handrails.

Many vehicles today have been designed or modified so that drivers do not have to work at heights. For example, some fuel trucks and bulk-liquid tankers have valves, fittings and hoses located so that filling and dispensing can be carried out from ground level. Many tip trucks and trailers are now fitted with tarping systems that are operated from ground level. Tarping of general cargo can also be undertaken from ground level by using tarping gantries or tarp spreaders mounted on a forklift.

Automated tarp controlled from cab

Use a fall prevention device

If working at height is unavoidable, you need to manage the risk of a fall. A fall-prevention device is best because it will prevent your workers from falling. Examples include temporary work platforms and guard rails installed on vehicles.

Some guard railing designs can fold flat until required.

Pneumatic stainless guard railing installed on tanker

Mobile truck access platform

Work-positioning systems

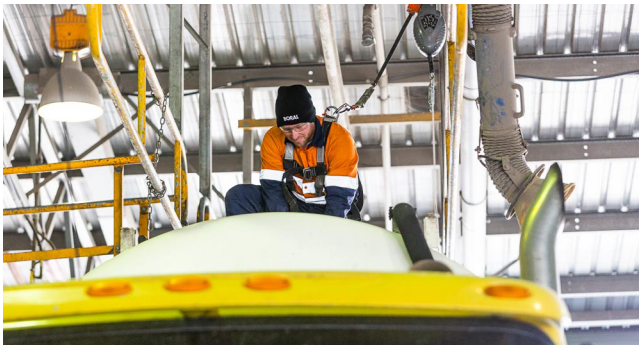
Work-positioning systems with harnesses are common. Some workplaces have installed overhead frameworks that provide anchor points or cables, to which the fall protection device is attached before accessing the tops of vehicles.

These structures are very effective but only if drivers and workers are trained in these systems. Anchor points or cables in the containers or on the trailer are also popular. They allow drivers to clip a harness on and undertake inspections of their load with reduced risk of falling to the ground. Some are work-positioning systems, others are only fall arrest systems.

Work-positioning systems, such as travel-restraint systems, are preferred as they substantially reduce the risk of a fall by not allowing the person to move beyond a designated point.

Fall arrest system

A fall arrest system restricts the distance a person can fall but does not prevent the fall. Only use a fall arrest system if a work-positioning system, guard rail or elevated work platform is not practicable – and only if a person can be rescued immediately. If a fall occurs, a person using a fall arrest system could suffer suspension intolerance from being suspended in a harness. Workers must be provided information training and instruction in relation to the use of these systems and related equipment.



Fall arrest system

Emergency and rescue procedures

Whenever there are risks from working at height, emergency procedures must be established, and first aid equipment provided. Typical injuries from falls can include unconsciousness, blocked airway, impalement, serious head or abdominal injuries and fractures.

The procedures must be tested so they are effective. Workers must be provided with suitable and adequate information, instruction and training in relation to the emergency procedures.

Emergency and rescue may be more straightforward at a fixed location such as a depot or loading facility, but can be difficult if the driver has stopped on the side of the road. In this instance, procedures should be in place so that, where possible, the driver stops at a location with other people in attendance, to assist in case of fall. All drivers should have accessto a mobile phone, a pager, or some other device or procedure for alerting emergency services (or someone) when help is needed.

Working at height – key points

- plan loading and unloading work activities to avoid the need to work at height on the vehicle
- provide safe and secure access to loads
- look for good, well designed access when buying vehicles
- retro-fit equipment on existing fleet if necessary and practicable
- provide protective equipment such as slip-resistant safety footwear
- keep vehicles and equipment in good working order
- inspection and maintenance of equipment (e.g. harnesses) must be undertaken by a competent person in line with manufacturer's recommendations
- equipment must be within service date and inspected prior to use
- respond to ideas from workers for preventing falls from vehicles
- ensure supervisors check how workers are getting on and off vehicles.
- harness-based systems should only be used where a fall prevention device is not reasonably practicable.

Use of mobile work platform

Ancillary (non-driving) tasks

Non-driving tasks performed by drivers and those involved in maintenance of vehicles can involve serious risks to health and safety.

Roadside maintenance

Checking loads or performing maintenance on the roadside creates serious risks to both the driver and other road users. Persons have been killed and sustained serious injuries as a result of undertaking inspection and maintenance work on the side of the road.

All vehicles should be regularly inspected and maintained by a competent person to ensure they are safe and roadworthy. This keeps drivers safe and minimises the risk of a driver needing to undertake 'unscheduled maintenance'.

Incident Information Release:

Truck crush fatality

A truck driver was fatally injured when he was trapped between the bottom well deck and the chassis rail of a heavy vehicle transport trailer in a carpark at Kirrawee.

The transport trailer involved in the incident

Working under truck cabins

When working on or under vehicles implement 'reasonably practicable' control measures to managethe risks associated with working under an elevated truck cabin, which includes developing safe systems of work. Ensure that:

- before undertaking work, you read the owner's manual and follow all safety instructions
- only a competent person carries out maintenance work under the cabin, according to manufacturer's instructions
- a mechanical stop, such as a safety bar, or suitably designed prop or stand, is locked in position so that it won't move accidentally
- controls for raising and lowering the cabin are clearly marked and can't be accidentally operated
- the system is isolated – e.g. the truck is turned off and the keys removed from the ignition
- hydraulics and mechanical parts are regularly inspected and maintained by a competent person
- worn or damaged parts are repaired or replaced

- workers involved have appropriate training, supervision and instruction
- all safety mechanisms are engaged and checked before work commences.

You must supply the necessary information, training and supervision to all your workers so they can perform their work safely. Training should be an ongoing process. When young workers are involved, there are other factors to consider. See At Risk Workers section.

Incident Information Release:

Apprentice auto electrician fatality

An 18-year-old apprentice auto electrician died after becoming trapped between the cab of a truck and its engine, at a workshop in Brocklehurst, north of Dubbo.

Truck involved in the incident

Hydraulics safety

A potential hazard when working on vehicles with hydraulics is being crushed.

Contributing factors can be:

- broken or bypassed controls in the truck cabin
- entering the crush zone (i.e. leaning over the chassis rail)
- working under the tipper body without a back-up prop.

Examples of hydraulic risks are outlined in the following document:

Hydraulics safety – WorkSafe Queensland

Working under heavy vehicles and trailers

If undertaking any work under heavy vehicles and trailers, ensure appropriately designed and engineered load supports are used (e.g. stands or lifting devices).

Before beginning work, always identify hazards and assess risks associated with working under andaround heavy vehicles or trailers. Where appropriate:

- establish an exclusion zone that is clearly marked only allowing authorised persons into this area
- develop and implement safe work procedures for inspection, maintenance and repair work, and ensure that workers are trained in these procedures
- ensure worker training, experience and competency is consistent with the nature and complexity of the task.

Similar risks exist for light vehicles and a risk assessment should be conducted before beginning work.

Tyre Safety – General

Air-filled tyres can explode when over pressurised or defective and have caused serious injuries and deaths.

Whether new or used, tyres need to be checked for defects before fitting onto a rim or wheel.

Defects may include:

- perishing on tyres more than five years old
- de-lamination inside or outside
- wavy tyre walls
- side wall damage, which may lead to zipper failures.

All defective tyres should be should be disposed of appropriately.

You may not be able to see all defects during inspection, take care when inflating. If a tyre has been overloaded, or the pressure has dropped below 80 percent, deflate the tyre, remove the tyre from the rim and inspect it before refitting and inflating it.

Running with pressure below 80 percent (or overloading) can lead to fatigue failures, like zipper failure (a circumferential fracture of the side wall of the tyre). For dual-wheel assemblies, it is hard to see if the pressure of one tyre has dropped below 80 percent of the recommended pressure, so always use a gauge to measure the pressure.

When inflating:

- always use appropriate PPE in line with established workplace procedures (eg. eye protection, hearing protection)
- don't inflate tyres beyond the maximum cold pressure recommended by the manufacturer (this information should be available on the vehicle)
- use airlines fitted with adjustable pressure regulators to prevent exceeding maximum pressure
- all airlines should have an inline gauge to check tyre pressure and a dump valve capable of rapidly deflating the tyre if an unsafe situation arises

- always keep away from the sidewall (e.g. the flat area on either side of the rolling direction of the tyre), even when the wheel is restrained
- use a long air hose with at least three metres of length after the gauge and trigger and a clip on air chuck to keep at a safe distance
- place the wheel in a cage before inflating. If a cage is not available use straps or other appropriate measures to control the risks.

Tyre Safety – Compressed air

Compressed air is used for inflating tyres.

Air receivers can explode and cause serious injuries or death if they are not properly inspected and maintained, or if they have been used above the design pressure.

The Safe Work Australia compressed air and air receiver information sheet, provides further guidance for workers who use large or small scale air compressors and air receivers.

Tyre Safety – Split rims

Multi piece split rim

Split rim ring and wheel

Split rims are different from regular wheels found on most cars. Most cars we drive have wheels that have a single piece of metal with the rubber tyre inflated around it (which is then secured to your vehicle). Spilt rims are multi-piece-or-divided rims and wheels that are held together by bolts or a lock ring. Split rims are generally used in large trucks.

If you have split rims, it's very important you deflate the tyre before removing it from the vehicle and take care when inflating, otherwise they can explode causing serious injury or death.

Remind your workers about the dangers of split rims by placing warning stickers above each of the tyres on your vehicles.

The Safe Work Australia guide for split rims provides more information on how to manage the risks associated with split rims.

You can also watch our split rims video safety alert

Safe use of low loader ramps

If you operate and maintain low loader trailers, make sure:

- you assume a loading ramp can fall on someone at any time, unless properly restrained
- you don't rely on hydraulics or other lowering devices to prevent a ramp falling
- those involved in the task are properly informed, trained and supervised
- pre-start checks are done, including inspecting and testing the hydraulic system
- measures are in place to prevent anyone being in the 'swing arc' area when ramps are lowered, raised or unsecured
- procedures are in place to deal with hydraulic malfunctions, loss of hydraulic oil, hydraulic oil leaks, damage to hydraulics or structural failures
- ramps are used according to manufacturer's instructions
- ramps and other equipment are regularly inspected and maintained by a competent person
- there are signs at the rear of the vehicle, warning people to stay clear of ramps
- workers can't be struck by a falling ramp.

Incident information release

Low-loader-ramp-crush-fatality

In April 2020 a 54-year-old truck driver was crushed by a loading ramp and died, while unloading earthmoving equipment from a low loader.

Vehicle with low loader ramp involved in the incident

Safety and breakdown events

Significant safety issues are attributed to broken down vehicles along the roadside which is presenting considerable safety risks; challenging the road freight transport industry and the general public. Potential safety issues arise when vehicles break down and where vehicle and people interactions occur including towing arrangements.

When undertaking work on a public road, your work health and safety obligations still apply, but you must also adhere with the requirement and framework of the Australian Road Rules.

Breakdown events and their locations are usually unforeseeable, but actions can be taken to minimise the risks to the driver and the public. Elimination of any breakdowns in the first instance is the best option. Truck inspections and the required maintenance is fundamental in reducing the likelihood of a vehicle breaking down. If you are required to stop the truck because of a situation this usually can be undertaken by the driver with minimal risk.

Other considerations for the breakdown location include:

- the surface hardness and gradient
- sufficient room to stop a truck on the shoulder of the road, away from traffic lanes
- proximity to members of the public and possible risks (e.g. shops or schools)
- the visibility of oncoming traffic (line of site, especially around corners)
- the nature of the load (e.g. dangerous goods or livestock that shouldn't stop in certain locations).

It is also important to secure the scene once a truck has come to a stop. The truck driver should take reasonable steps to ensure neither they nor the truck are in danger. Consideration also needs to be given to the surrounding environment and measures should be taken to minimise the impact on other road users, nearby premises and the public.

Planning for breakdown events

Ensure workers are prepared for a roadside emergency. Workers should be trained (including refresher training) and fully equipped to work safely in the event of a breakdown.

Workers should be trained in:

- first aid
- traffic management procedures.
- communications systems adopted by the business
- risk assessments.

Communication options include:

- two-way radio
- GPS tracking
- panic/emergency alarm
- mobile phones.

conditions and the behaviour of other road users can only be minimised as far as reasonably practicable.

Breakdown location

Ideally any breakdown location should allow 3 metres or greater of clearance from passing traffic.

Drivers need to assess the location to ensure that any inspection and repair work can be undertaken safely.

> If safe clearance cannot be achieved and other control measures are not effective, consider:
>
> - calling the Police, Transport for NSW (previously RMS) or suitable service providers to provide traffic control
> - having the vehicle towed to a safe work area before repairs are made.

Breakdown event – Warning others

In the event of a truck breakdown, the driver and truck must be seen by passing motorists and other road users.

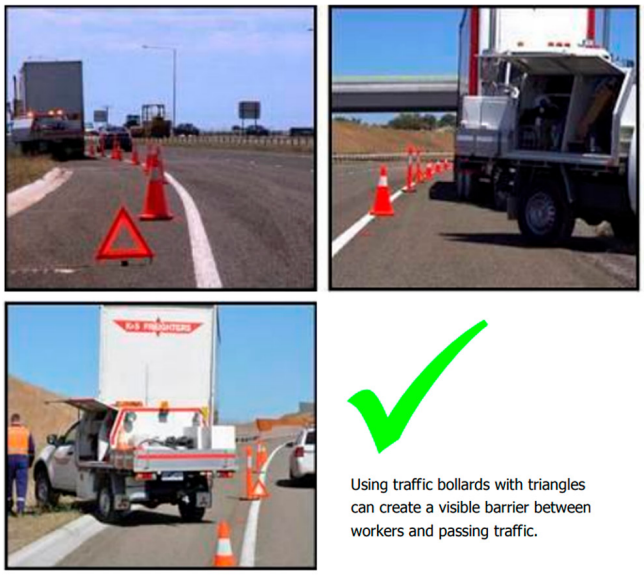
Drivers should ensure they are wearing high visibility clothing and PPE if leaving the cabin of the vehicle.

It is recommended to exit the truck cabin from the left side door.

There are road safety requirements relating to warning other drivers. This may include turning on hazard warning lights and displaying warning triangles at required intervals for the road type. Use of emergency equipment such as triangle and portable warning lights will also reduce the driver's exposure to passing traffic.

Refer to WorkSafe Victoria's' Truck emergency breakdown and roadside safety for more information.

In addition, drivers should follow any breakdown policies and procedures the business has in place.



Using traffic bollards with triangles can create a visible barrier between workers and passing traffic.

Isolation of broken-down vehicle

Inadvertent starting or movement of the vehicle must be prevented.

The truck should be properly immobilised through use of park brake and wheel chocks.

> Do not attempt to gain access to the vehicle if the vehicle starts to roll.
>
> See vehicle immobilisation section for more information.

Use of wheel chocks

Breakdown event – Hazardous loads

Dangerous goods, hazardous chemicals/materials and livestock can bring additional hazards to the driver and persons nearby in a breakdown event. These additional hazards should be considered in your ongoing risk assessment for breakdown events, and control measures should be tailored to manage these risks. Your business should be prepared for any roadside emergency and clear instruction available on what steps to take.

After the break down event

Debris created by a breakdown event can pose a significant danger to other road users. Prior to leaving the site, any remaining materials such as tyre tread should be removed if it is safe to do so and properly disposed of.

Breakdown events in remote and isolated areas

In an emergency, workers need to be able raise the alarm and be contactable.

Truck drivers often work remotely or in isolation, where they may be unable to get immediate attention from rescue, medical or emergency services.

You must have a safe system of work that includes effective communication with the driver which allows them to call for help in the event of an emergency.

Monitor your workers regularly, with phone calls or periodic visits. Have a check-in process whereby workers are required to contact 'home base' at a nominated time and have an emergency response plan when workers do not report in at allotted times.

> ### More information
>
> For the specific laws about doing remote and isolated work safely, see clause 48 of the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017.

Musculoskeletal disorders

Work-related musculoskeletal disorders (WMSDs) are common among workers in the road freight transport industry, with drivers being one of the most at risk occupations. WMSDs consist of injuries to muscles, tendons, ligaments, the nervous system, blood vessels, joints and bones.

Workers are exposed to a risk of a WMSD from manual tasks, repetitive movements, forceful exertions, awkward postures, prolonged sitting, exposure to vibration and psychosocial hazards (such as high job demand, low job control, pace of work etc).

The best course of action is for businesses to adopt a risk management approach to eliminate and minimise the risk of a WMSD occurring. As workers are exposed to a variety of risk factors, control measures and systems of work that address these multiple factors are needed to protect workers from harm.

Not all manual tasks are hazardous. It is therefore necessary to identify those tasks that are hazardous and ensure they are adequately managed.

A hazardous manual task is a task that requires a person to lift, lower, push, pull, carry or otherwise move, hold or restrain any person, animal or thing involving one or more of the following:

- repetitive or sustained force
- high or sudden force
- repetitive movement
- sustained or awkward posture
- exposure to vibration.

Some of the most common sources of WMSD risk within the transport industry are:

- manual handling of freight
- securing loads
- driving
- psychosocial hazards.

Each business needs to adopt a systematic, risk management approach to managing WMSDs risks.

For the above to be effective, consultation with your workers is paramount. Your workers are the best source of information about the risks they are exposed to daily. They can provide valuable insights about discomfort, muscular aches and pains that can signal potential hazards. They can also provide valuable information on how to fix the problem.

Legal Obligations

There are specific laws about managing WMSD: See clauses 60 - 61 of the Work Health and Safety Regulations 2017.

There are also general work health and safety laws that will apply to you in any situation, including when managing WMSD.

Manual tasks – Manual handling of freight

When workers must perform a manual task (such as handling freight), there are certain risk factors that make it hazardous. These are:

- repetitive or sustained force
- high or sudden force
- repetitive movement
- sustained or awkward posture
- exposure to vibration.

When workers are exposed to these risk factors, there is a greater risk of WMSDs.

Drivers are at an increased risk due to the unique nature of their work. They may be exposed to long bouts of static postures and vibration (whilst driving their vehicle), followed by intense hazardous manual tasks (handling freight, securing loads, handling gates, curtains etc.)

hazardous-manual-tasks-overview

Worker attempting to place a load into truck. No tail gate lifter is installed, significantly increasing manual handling risk

Worker operating pallet jack loading truck fitted with tail gate lifter, at loading ramp at premises

When the manual task becomes hazardous, you need to understand why. To do this, you need to identify the source of the risk associated with the hazardous manual task.

These sources of risk are outlined below, and a business has a legal obligation to consider these when determining control measures. Businesses must consider all relevant matters that may contribute to a WMSDs. These may include:

- postures, movements, forces and vibration relating to the hazardous manual task
- the duration and frequency of the hazardous manual task
- workplace environmental conditions that may affect the hazardous manual task or the worker performing it

- the design of the work area
- the layout of the workplace
- the systems of work used
- the nature, size, weight or number of persons, animals or things involved in carrying out the hazardous manual task.

Several businesses may be involved in loading/unloading freight, such as:

- the transport operator
- the business where freight is loaded/unloaded
- the business that controls mobile plant at the workplace where freight is loaded/unloaded
- the consignor or consignee of the freight.

Under workplace health and safety laws, each business shares responsibility for the health and safety of those involved in the work, to the extent of their capacity to influence and control the work. Everyone must work together to ensure manual handling risks are eliminated, or if this not possible, minimised.

The transport operator should:

- eliminate or reduce the need to manually handle freight – particularly heavy, awkward or bulky items – by making available fit for purpose, well-maintained equipment, such as forklifts, trolleys, pallet jacks or tailgate lifters
- work with the business where freight is loaded/unloaded to ensure the distance from the pick-up/drop-off point to the vehicle is as short as possible. Obtain as much information as possible about the site conditions and inform the driver of any potential hazards
- configure the load to ensure items are easily accessible when unloading, and ensure work is undertaken at a safe pace and avoid high workloads where possible
- consult with those involved in loading/unloading about:
  - the physical demands of the job
  - the time required to perform it safely and effectively
  - plant and equipment requirements
  - any site specific issues
- provide workers with stable non-slip footwear, high-visibility vests and, if required, suitable protective clothing such as overalls and gloves
- provide instruction and training on the systems of work for handling freight and using equipment safely
- select equipment the user can push rather than pull – it involves less pressure on the lower back and fewer awkward postures, maximises use of body weight and allows better vision for the worker
- check the integrity of the pack or unit and use pallets for bulk deliveries and unstable items (e.g. grain)
- ensure vehicles can be loaded and unloaded as close as possible to where the freight is found
- ensure goods can be moved along clear, wide routes
- ensure the loading/unloading area is free of clutter and designed so workers are not placed in awkward positions – e.g. reaching above shoulder height, bending over.

The business where freight is loaded/unloaded should talk to:

- the manufacturer/supplier of the freight, to ensure the shape and design of freight allows for safe loading/unloading
- the transport operator (before dispatch), to ensure they are aware of the weight and shape of the load and any particular risks associated with handling the freight and the equipment needed to load and unload.

Physical influences on WMSDs

The physical toll of sitting in and operating the vehicle must be identified, assessed and controlled.

Vehicle design:

- ensure the vehicle and cab are designed to fit the driver and reduce MSD risks
- features within and outside of the cab should be fit for purpose and adjustable (where required) to achieve this. This should be a part of your vehicle procurement procedure.

Vehicle maintenance:

- is integral for road worthiness of the vehicle and also for certain WMSD risks such as vibration.

Selection and use of in vehicle equipment:

- ensure any equipment that is purchased and installed does not increase postural and cognitive demands on the driver.

Use of pallet lifter attached to vehicle loading crane to unload materials from a truck

Driving and psychosocial hazards

It used to be thought that WMSD risk arose only from the physical demands of work, particularly 'manual handling' tasks requiring forceful or highly repetitive actions.

It is now known that WMSD risk is also strongly influenced by the physiological effects of stress from workplace factors known as psychosocial hazards.

Some examples of psychosocial hazards that impact WMSD in the transport sector are:

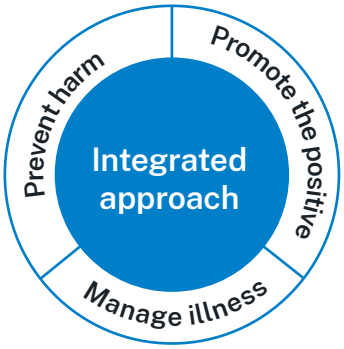
- fatigue
- tight scheduling
- exposure to a traumatic event (e.g. road accident)
- work related harassment and/or workplace bullying.
- isolation and remote work.

Effective management of psychosocial hazards can assist in minimising WMSDs in your workplace.

Work-related psychological (mental) health

There are many benefits to having a mentally healthy workplace and these extend to workers, the business and the wider community. When a business is proactive and prevention focused they can see a return on investment for every dollar spent to improve mental health at work.

Manage risk through increasing resources and reducing demands of the work



Promote good mental health with resilience training, stress management, gym program, RUOK

Manage illness through EAP/ workplace counselling, RTW programs, Mental Health First Aid

Mentally healthy workplaces will also consider mitigating factors for all workers (including for example injured workers or workers who have disclosed mental illness to the workplace) to be able to connect workers with early support and help their recovery at work.

The key to creating a mentally healthy workplace is identifying psychosocial hazards in the organisation's work practices, work environment and work activities, and assessing and consulting with your workers about the best way to manage the risk of these hazards. Businesses must also consider the cumulative effect of work demands and risk factors over time.

The benefits of taking a risk management approach to psychosocial hazards include:

- preventing harm
- the ability to intervene at the earliest opportunity
- ability to support recovery at work if a psychosocial injury/illness arises (see Recover at work section).

The most effective way to get started is to have a conversation with your workers and talk through any concerns they may have. If there are psychosocial hazards at work this is a good opportunity to offer support. Other ways to identify psychosocial hazards include staff surveys, hazard and incident reporting.

It is important to remember that you have legal obligations relating to managing psychosocial hazards that include work health and safety as well as preventing discrimination and protecting privacy.

Supported workers have increased confidence, a feeling of belonging, financial security, a sense of purpose, achievement and social connections and networks. These benefits can flow back into the business in many ways including increased productivity, reduced injuries and positive workplace culture.

Your workers may benefit from access to an employee assistance program (EAP) or the opportunity to speak with trained professionals, such as counsellors or psychologists, who can provide support and help build skills to stay mentally healthy. Some larger workplaces may be able to provide these services in the workplace, while smaller businesses may choose to refer their workers to external professionals.

Support services and tools are available to help you and your team to stay mentally healthy and recover at work.

A mentally healthy workplace has the following principles and behaviours:

- mental health is everyone's responsibility and is led by business leaders
- mental health is considered in every way you do business
- everyone contributes to a culture where people feel safe and supported to talk about mental health
- mental health support is tailored for individuals and teams
- everyone can see you're finding better ways to support worker mental health.

By adopting a risk management approach to workplace mental health you are:

- leading change to reduce stigma
- identifying and managing risk factors
- raising awareness for your workplace and community
- connecting workers to support inside and outside of the business.

The NSW Mentally healthy workplaces strategy 2018-2022 sets out a long-term vision to create mentally healthy workplaces across NSW.

Download the mentally healthy workplaces strategy

Support is available to help create a mentally healthy workplace.

Visit the Mental health at work website for more information and resources on promoting, managing and supporting workplace mental health and your duties go to:

Useful resources

Managing work-related psychological health

How to create a mentally healthy workplace

Healthy Heads in Trucks & Sheds Foundation promotes prevention and understanding of mental health issues across the road transport and logistics industries in Australia. The Foundation aims to ensure industry specific resources are made accessible right across the industry. For more information visit https://www.healthyheads.org.au/

Crisis support

The following organisations provide crisis support and help:

- Mental Health Line on 1800 011 511
- Lifeline 13 11 14
- beyondblue 1300 224 636
- Headspace 1800 650 890
- Mensline 1300 789 978
- QLIFE 1800 184 527
- Suicide Call Back Service 1300 659 467.

Psychosocial hazards

> Psychological and physical health are inter-connected. One may lead to the other

Recognising and managing risks in the workplace that may lead to physical or psychological injury is an essential part of creating a safe, healthy and productive workplace.

Work in the transport industry, typically includes working alone, tight scheduling, and demanding customer expectations and these are factors that may contribute to poor psychological and physical health.

Psychosocial hazards or factors are anything in the design or management of work that increases the risk of work-related stress. A stress response includes the physical, mental or emotional reactions that occur when a worker perceives the demands of their work exceed their ability or resources to cope. Work- related stress if prolonged and/or severe can cause both psychological and physical injury.

By knowing what these hazards are and how to identify them in your workplace you can identify and implement controls that look after the psychological and physical health of your workers.

Psychosocial hazards can arise from organisational factors (work organisation, job design and poor workplace culture), environmental factors and individual factors (e.g. at-risk workers).

Below are the types and some examples of psychosocial hazards:

Low job control:

- limited choice of shifts or hours worked
- limited choice over the way work is performed or undertaken
- limited choice over work deadlines and allocated time slots for deliveries, particularly when faced with unavoidable delays (e.g. traffic, incidents)
- rosters can inhibit a worker's control over the hours they work and ability to take scheduled breaks.

High and low job demands:

- demanding time pressures to meet deliveries and pick-ups within short time periods
- potential for monotonous or dull work in some instances and work roles
- driving for extended periods without adequate rest, inducing fatigue.

Exposure to traumatic events:

- workers may witness or experience traumatic events (such as road accidents or near misses) on route
- workers may be exposed to violence or aggression.

Poor support:

- drivers can feel isolated feel they havel limited access to support
- geography and hours of work may mean workers have less access to their supervisor and peer support.

Lack of role clarity:

- role conflict is likely to occur with attempting to meet client expectations, particularly where they differ from contractual agreements
- inconsistencies in WHS systems and requirements between the employer and client organisations (e.g. having to undergo multiple site-specific inductions).

Low levels of recognition and reward:

- due to remote and isolated work, there are limited opportunities for feedback, reward or recognition of any work undertaken.

Poor change consultation:

- communication of changes may be difficult given drivers often work remotely
- lack of effective consultation due to remote and isolated work.

Poor organisational justice:

- potential for feelings of unfairness in the allocation of shifts for shift workers
- differing work standards, time slot allocation and WHS requirements across the supply chain may introduce perceived unfairness.

Poor workplace relationships:

- potential for interpersonal conflict leading to poor communication and poor working relationships.

Remote work:

- work at locations where access to resources and communications is difficult and travel times may be lengthy.

For more information see:

SafeWork NSW Code of Practice: Managing psychosocial hazards at work

The how to manage work health and safety risks code of practice provides guidance on risk management for physical and psychological hazards.

For specific guidance on risk management for psychological hazards refer to the Safe Work Australia guide for work-related psychological health, a systematic guide to meeting your duties.

At risk workers

The transport industry is diverse, made up of people of different skills and experience who work under different employment arrangements.

There are some workers who might be at greater risk of injury or illness while working and they may need extra support and consideration to stay healthy and safe at work.

There are four groups of workers who are most at risk of being injured at work:

- culturally and linguistically diverse workers
- migrant workers
- young workers
- labour hire workers.

At Risk Groups

At risk groups	Highest risk factor
Young Workers	Inadequate supervision and training
Culturally and linguistically diverse workers	Language barriers hinder understanding of work health and safety rights and worker obligations
Migrant workers	Language barriers hinder understanding of work health and safety rights and obligations
Labour hire workers	Commonly assigned higher risk work

You must look after the physical and psychological health and safety of all workers:

- ensure that someone suitably skilled and knowledgeable trains workers how to do the job safely
- make sure workers understand the instructions they have been given. You may have to consider additional tools such as posters, audio training or publications in community languages
- ask the worker to demonstrate their understanding of safety and business procedures
- make sure workers are supervised by a competent person
- workers who operate equipment or vehicles may require a licence, e.g. Heavy Vehicle Licence or a High-Risk Work Licence. Ensure workers have current and valid licences where required and retain records of these licences and their expiry dates
- ensure that all workers have the right tools and equipment to do their job safely
- provide all workers the safety equipment needed to do their job, such as personal protective equipment (PPE) and high visibility workwear, hard hat, safety glasses
- undertake health assessments for relevant roles, including heavy vehicle drivers, to screen for and assess workers' fitness for duty
- ensure that workers understand that if they see any unsafe or damaged plant or equipment, they should raise it with a supervisor at once including isolating, and installation of lock out tags
- ensure that workers know the work health and safety consultation arrangements and how to report incidents and hazards in the workplace
- encourage workers to report unsafe conditions and practices
- consult with labour hire workers and their labour hire agency before making any changes to the scope or location of their work.

Download the At Risk Workers' Strategy 2018-22 to find out more.

When young workers are involved, make sure you consider their:

- work experience and prior training
- ability to cope with unexpected, stressful situations
- knowledge and understanding of workplace rights and responsibilities
- willingness to speak up when they have an issue.

You can visit our young workers eToolkit to access a range of resources that have been specifically developed to support young workers' safety.

SafeWork NSW has produced a fact sheet 'Your Rights At Work Fact Sheet' which explains the basic responsibilities of the worker and the employer. This fact sheet and other resources are available in multiple languages including Arabic, Korean, Hindi, Filipino, Chinese, Punjabi and Malay.

Fatigue

Fatigue can affect safety in the workplace and is a significant risk in the transport industry, particularly for drivers. It can impact on workers psychological and physical health, as well as the health and safety of those around them, such as co-workers, customers and members of the public.

Fatigue can increase the likelihood of incidents and injuries, particularly when doing safety critical tasks where significant consequences may arise if errors occur.

Fatigue can result in reduced productivity and an increase in near misses, incidents, injuries and fatalities, even when the signs of fatigue may not be obvious. Some workers and particularly drivers are at a higher risk because their work involves many factors that contribute to fatigue.

Fatigue can be caused by:

- physically demanding or monotonous work
- mentally or emotionally demanding work
- hot, cold or noisy workplaces
- shift and night work
- long commuting times
- poor sleep and other lifestyle factors.

Symptoms of fatigue include:

- tiredness and irritability
- headaches and dizziness
- blurred vision
- memory loss and inability to concentrate
- repeated mistakes at work.

How fatigue affects your performance at work can be likened to how alcohol affects your performance. If you're awake for 17 hours your performance at work would be impaired to the same level as having a 0.05 blood alcohol content. If you're awake for 20 hours, it's the same as having a 0.1 blood alcohol content. The long-term health effects of fatigue can include high blood pressure, heart disease, type 2 diabetes and depression.

Early warning signs of fatigue while driving include:

- yawning
- poor concentration
- sore/tired eyes
- restlessness
- drowsiness
- slow reactions
- boredom
- oversteering.

What causes fatigue?

Fatigue can be caused by work or non-work related factors or a combination of both. Work related fatigue may result from:

- excessive work hours
- insufficient time to recover between shift, including rotating shifts
- irregular hour
- monotonous work
- night work
- the impacts of energetic and exhausting or mentally or emotionally demanding work
- sedentary work.

Non-work related fatigue for example could include fatigue due to long transit times or poor quality sleep due to family demands or street traffic noise.

The human body clock

Generally, workers are most active and productive during daytime. The circadian rhythms (the body clock) cause regular variations in individual body and mental functions that regulate sleeping patterns, body temperature, heart rate, hormone levels, digestion and many other functions.

These rhythms influence job performance and quality of sleep. Most of the body's basic functions show maximum activity by day and minimum activity by night. The body rhythms affect the behaviour, alertness, reaction times and mental capacity of people to varying degrees.

Fatigue and the transport industry

Driver fatigue is one of the top three contributors to the road toll. Research has shown that fatigue can be as dangerous as other road safety issues, such as drink driving.

Fatigue may increase the risk of incidents because of a lack of alertness. It may result in a slower reaction to signals or situations and affect a person's ability to react, and make good decisions, particularly when:

- driving vehicles
- undertaking critical tasks that require a high level of concentration such as working at heights and securing loads
- undertaking driving at night or shift work when a person would normally be sleeping.

If operating a fatigue-regulated heavy vehicle, ensure daily work activities and rest periods are accurately recorded in accordance with legislative requirements.

For a definition of a 'fatigue-regulated heavy vehicle' visit the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator website

Fatigue management

Businesses must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of workers while they are at work. This means if fatigue is identified as a risk to work health and safety, then suitable control measures must be implemented in consultation with workers to eliminate or minimise the risks.

The Guide for managing the risk of fatigue at work provides practical guidance for businesses and other duty holders on how to manage fatigue to ensure it does not contribute to health and safety risks in the workplace.

Transport for NSW has a fact sheet on managing fatigue

These tips to avoid driving tired may help you and your workers plan ahead to ensure fatigue is managed.

Stop Revive Survive can help your drivers to detect the early warning signs of fatigue when driving and locate rest areas in NSW.

Driver Reviver sites operate throughout Australia during school/university holidays with places to take a break.

Interactive rest area maps allow you and your drivers to plan rest stops, while a Trip Time Calculator provides a quick guide to journey lengths. Remember to add extra time for sufficient breaks for your drivers.

Incident Information Release:

Heavy vehicle changeover fatality. A 52-year-old truck driver was fatally injured in northern NSW at a changeover location. The driver was crossing the road at night which at the time of the incident was lined with trucks on either side. A heavy vehicle driving in the middle of the road struck the driver who was not wearing high visibility clothing at the time.

Workplace facilities

Businesses must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that adequate facilities are provided for workers, including sufficient toilets, drinking water, washing and eating facilities. In the transport industry, drivers are often reliant on offsite facilities and those available at other workplaces.

When managing your drivers' ability to access suitable facilities, consider the following:

- general rest areas are often not suitable for heavy vehicle drivers. When planning trips, drivers need information about rest areas (including the size and number of parking bays, the availability of facilities, shade and other details)
- specific engagement with female drivers should be undertaken on the provision of toilet and washing facilities at rest area locations
- consult with your supply chain to ensure your drivers will be provided with adequate facilities when they arrive to load/unload
- ensure your drivers have access to provisions in circumstances where they are unable to access suitable facilities eg. hand sanitiser, drinking water, sunscreen/shade, air conditioning.

These provided facilities (amenities) must be in good working order. This includes access to amenities which are clean safe, have accessible toilets, clean drinking water, hand washing facilities, eating and break facilities, first aid equipment, and may include secure storage for personal items.

Additional guidance can be found in the Code of Practice Managing the Work Environment and Facilities.

First aid

You must provide workers access to first aid equipment and facilities. Keep first aid kits close to areas where there is a higher risk of injury or illness, such as the amenities, warehouse and inside all work vehicles. Additional first aid requirements vary depending on the nature of the work, type of hazards, workplace size and location, as well as the number of workers. To identify your requirements, see the Code of practice for first aid in the workplace.

Alcohol and other drugs

Drugs (including pescription drugs), alcohol and other substance abuse in the workplace and within the transport industry is, as with any health and safety risk, everyone's responsibility.

Driving under the influence of a drug or alcohol is an offence under section 112 of the Road Transport Act 2013 (NSW).

Under NSW work health and safety legislation, workers need to ensure they take reasonable care of their own health and safety and not put others at risk. This includes complying with drug and alcohol laws and co-operating with any reasonable business policies.

In some occupations including road and rail transport, maritime, aviation and mining occupations, the law sets down a legal blood alcohol level and requires testing of workers. You need to manage the work- related risks associated with alcohol and other drugs.

Some companies have explicit policies to test their workers for alcohol and illicit substances. This is particularly important if a worker could kill or seriously injure themselves, another worker, or a member of the public.

It is dangerous for drivers to take stimulants and other illegal drugs. Cannabis, cocaine and similar drugs affect driving skills and concentration, even though you may think you are driving well.

This includes the misuse of medicines prescribed by a doctor or available from a pharmacy. If a worker is impaired at work, the business needs to address the situation. It should be raised with a supervisor or manager or a safety representative.

It is the workers responsibility to notify the business if they are taking medication that may affect their ability to safely perform tasks.

A formal alcohol and drugs policy makes it clear to all workers what behaviour is acceptable.

How to manage the risks of alcohol and other drugs in the workplace

The alcohol and other drugs in the workplace guide has information on how to create a policy for managing the misuse of alcohol and other drugs in the workplace.

The Safe Work Australia website has information on Work-related alcohol and drug use.

The National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA) has also produced a series of data and information sheets to assist workplaces respond to alcohol and other (AOD) drug related harm in the workplace.

Sedentary work

Sedentary work, such as prolonged sitting, poses significant health risks in the transport industry, with drivers sitting for most of their shift.

> Australian workers spend approximately 76% of their time at work sitting (or 5hrs per day).
>
> A quarter of the population say they spend 8hrs a day sitting.

Sedentary work and long working hours can result in a low level of wellness, as it may lead to workers having a poor diet, low levels of exercise, increased alcohol and drug use, or fatigue. Interestingly, exercise performed outside of work does not negate the risks factors of prolonged sitting. Safe Work Australia has identified sedentary work as a priority issue which can affect workers' health and safety.

The Sedentary Work: Evidence on an emergent work health and safety Issue report focusses on sedentary behaviour in the workplace – not just among office workers, but also in the manufacturing, transport and storage, construction, agriculture forestry and fishing, and health and community services sectors.

The report suggests occupational sitting is likely to be a common hazard in Australian workplaces. Occupational sitting is linked to significant negative health and work outcomes and is increasingly being recognised in the community and by international authorities as an important issue that needs attention.

Sedentary work can increase the risk of:

- cardiovascular disease
- some cancers
- type II diabetes
- musculoskeletal disorders.

When sitting for long periods, workers report feeling tired, less productive and unhealthy.

What can be done in the workplace?

There are several initiatives you can bring to the workplace to enhance the mental and physical wellbeing of your workers, such as:

- demonstrating a top-down commitment to health programs
- introducing flexible work hours to allow for meal breaks and exercise on the road
- nominating one driver to promote the health message among other drivers
- implementing a mental and physical health policy that includes fatigue management
- having pre-employment health checks.

A successful workplace health program can have many benefits, including:

- increased engagement at work
- job satisfaction
- improved staff retention
- enhanced efficiency
- better corporate image.

> **More information**
>
> - Get Healthy at Work
> www.gethealthyatwork.com.au
> - Move More Sit Less
> www.movemoresitless.org.au
> - Comcare – sedentary work
> https://www.comcare.gov.au/virtual_workplaces
> - Heart Foundation – active workplaces
> Website: www.heartfoundation.org.au
> Phone: 13 11 12
> - Healthy Heads in Trucks and Sheds
> www.healthyheads.org.au/

Distracted driving

Use of mobile phones and communication devices

The reliance and use of technology and social media in recent years has led to the increased use of smart phones and associated technologies in road transport. In NSW, using a hand-held mobile phone while driving is illegal. This includes when waiting at traffic lights or stopped in heavy traffic. Road Transport legislation prohibits the use of certain hand held communication devices. Technology should be assessed to ensure it is safe and lawful for use.

Find answers to common questions about mobile phone road rules on the Transport for NSW website.

Transporting hazardous chemicals

Hazardous chemicals transported on the road must also meet the packing and labelling requirements of the Australian Dangerous Goods Code. More information about safe transport of hazardous chemicals is available from the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA).

Dangerous goods: NSW overview

The EPA regulates the transport of dangerous goods in NSW. Dangerous goods are substances and objects that pose acute risks to people, property and the environment due to their chemical or physical characteristics. The EPA regulates the transport of dangerous goods in NSW.

> When transporting dangerous goods you need training and may need a licence for both the driver and the vehicle
>
> If you are transporting waste, you may also need a waste transporter's licence.

All licence holders are listed in the dangerous goods public register,on the EPA website. You must also follow certain procedures to ensure the goods are transported safely. There are penalties for not following these legal requirements.

Transporting explosives

Explosives transported on the road requires an explosives licence in NSW. Explosives licences are administered by SafeWork NSW under the NSW Explosives Regulation. The regulation provides for the licensing of corporations or individuals who wish to transport explosives and/or security sensitive dangerous substances (SSDS). Under the NSW Explosives Act, if the NSW Explosives Regulation requires a licensed person to handle explosives and explosives precursors, it is an offence for an unlicensed person to handle such material.

For additional information about applying for a transport explosives and/or SSDS licence, contact SafeWork NSW on 13 10 50 or visit the website at www.safework.nsw.gov.au

Road safety

Almost 30% of workplace fatalities in NSW are the result of road crashes at work, while about 26% of the state road toll involves a vehicle being used for business.

Road Safety and Your Work: A Guide for Employers will help your organisation establish internal policies and practices for safe work-related travel.

- employers have a primary duty of care to provide and supervise a safe system of work under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- a vehicle used for business is considered to be a workplace
- a business must provide workers with the information, instruction, training and supervision necessary to ensure their health and safety, this includes when driving for work
- road safety is a shared responsibility between you and your workers.

In February 2018, the NSW Government released the Road Safety Plan. This was developed to set new road safety priorities and actions to help NSW work toward the State Priority Target for reduction in road fatalities.

In support of the Road Safety Plan a guide has been developed which provides workplaces with information about key road safety issues and risks, and ways to help you and your workers get around safely while using the road. It also provides information to help you embed road safety within your workplace.

To further support employers, an online Towards Zero workplaces portal has been developed that consists of an online employer toolkit to aid your organisation in embedding road safety in your workplace. This portal also contains an interactive eLearning course for your workers, supporting case study videos that showcase good practice employers, toolbox talks for delivery by your leaders, checklists, templates, as well as fact sheets targeted at your workers.

Resources

- download the Road Safety and Your Work: A Guide for Employers
- click through to Road Safety in Your Workplace to complete the road safety employer toolkit.

Further supporting resources have been developed to help organisations to embed road safety in the workplace:

- Road safety in your workplace fact sheet – this fact sheet provides an overview of the main responsibilities of employers, the benefits to employers of adapting a positive road safety culture, and some ways to help employers on engaging with their workers
- Guide for Developing a Road Safety Policy – provides a structure that can be adapted to the specific circumstances and requirements of your organisation
- Online Employer Toolkit TfNSW

Improved recovery at work practices

On average, injured or ill workers in the transport industry are taking longer than most other industries to recover at work. There needs to be improvements in practices to better support injured or ill transport workers to recover at work.

Recover at work

Helping workers recover at work can benefit both employers and workers. Benefits can include:

- reducing the cost of hiring and/or training a replacement worker
- reducing the costs/financial impact associated with each claim
- maintaining the skills and knowledge of an experienced worker
- maintaining good employer-employee relationships
- reducing pain symptoms and helping workers resume their usual work and home activities earlier
- reducing the risk of longer-term disability.

Having a planned and consistent approach to support injured or ill workers is good for business, and a legal requirement known as a 'return to work program'. A return to work program is the policy and procedures for handling any work-related injury or illness. It represents your commitment to the health, safety and recovery of workers following an incident.

All employers in NSW must have a return to work program within 12 months of starting a business.

Your program must follow the State Insurance Regulatory Authority's (SIRA) guidelines for workplace return to work programs.

The SIRA website has detailed information on what is required in a return to work program and how to set one up.

Extra support for small business

If you have five or fewer workers and a workers' compensation premium of $30,000 or less, SIRA has a program to assist.

The Return to work assist program for micro employers helps businesses who find it difficult to provide suitable duties for injured workers.

SIRA also provide several vocational rehabilitation programs and a useful fact sheet on supporting workers to recover at work.

Work is an important part of rehabilitation. It is therapeutic intervention and should be used as part of a worker's treatment when they are recovering from a workplace injury.

The longer a worker is off work, the less chance they have of ever returning. Research has shown that after a workplace injury, the injured worker has:

- 70% chance of returning to employment after 20 days off
- 50% chance of ever returning to work after 45 days off work
- 35% chance of ever returning to work after 70 days off work.

Employers within the transport industry can assist their injured workers to recover at work by providing suitable duties. Depending on the injury and medical capacity, recovery, work and suitable duties can include:

- performing pre-injury duties on fewer days (e.g. driving for 3 days a week instead of 5-6 days)
- performing local delivery runs rather than interstate driving
- working at the depot, assisting with loading, and unloading of trucks
- working with an assistant who can help with loading and unloading the truck if the driver has lifting limitations.

Assessing the truck operated by the driver can help identify alternative strategies for recovery at work dependent upon the barriers for recovering at work.

Some examples may include the injured worker's ability to:

- get in and out of the truck
- lift truck gates to secure a load
- pull the truck curtains closed.

Solutions could include an ergonomic assessment with recommendations for an alternative seat, hanging truck gates and temporarily changing the injured workers truck with another truck while the injured worker undergoes rehabilitation.

For some injuries there may be a delay in starting suitable duties. During this time it is important to stay in contact with your injured worker so that they know they are supported to recover at work when their medical capacity supports this.

For psychological injury there is a web-based toolkit for workplaces that offers easy, practical help which is evidence informed and guided by the voice of lived experience.

recovery @ work toolkit

Case Study

Job title: Interstate truck driver.

Driver responsible for driving a truck from Sydney to Brisbane, the Depot was located between Sydney and Brisbane.

Injury: Injured worker twisted his knee and sustained a knee injury while walking backwards and pulling truck curtains.

Pre-injury days and hours worked per week: 6 days a week, Monday to Friday 12 to 14 hours per day and Sunday 6 to 8 hours per day.

Employer: The employer was supportive of return to work. The employer was concerned about the impact of the claim on workers compensation premiums and was willing to support a progressive return to work. The employer requested the aid of a Rehabilitation provider who through liaison with the injured worker's nominated treating doctor and treating physiotherapist established the injured workers capacity, recovery time frames and return to work times frames.

A progressive suitable duties/recover at work plan was developed and agreed to by the injured worker, employer and treating doctor following a workplace assessment. The worker was able to gradually return to work as per the progressive recover at work plan below.

Recover at work plan:

Stage 1

Hours worked: 5 hours per day, 3 days a week

Number of weeks: 2 weeks

Suitable duties to be performed:

- working at the Depot
- stocktake
- helping with office work
- contacting and liaising with other truck drivers on the radio.

Stage 2

Hours worked: 8 hours per day, 3 days a week

Number of weeks: 2 weeks

Suitable duties to be performed:

- driving a forklift to load and unload stock at the Depot
- short local drives
- stocktake
- helping with office work
- contacting and liaising with other truck drivers on the radio.

Stage 3

Hours worked: 8 hours per day, 5 days a week

Number of weeks: 3 weeks

Suitable duties to be performed:

- driving a forklift to load and unload stock at the depot
- stocktake
- short local drives
- changeover driving which requires driving from Depot to destination or driving from stop over to final destination and back as required (3.5 hours driving each way).

Stage 4

Hours worked: Pre-injury hours and days

Number of weeks: 2 weeks

Suitable duties to be performed:

- driving a truck from Depot to Sydney (overnight stay) and then back to depot (7.5 hours each way) X 1 week
- driving a forklift to load and unload stock at the Depot
- stocktake.

Commenced pre-injury duties and pre-injury hours.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SAFETY AROUND YOUR VEHICLE
GLOVE BOX GUIDE

Disclaimer

This publication may contain information about the regulation and enforcement of work health and safety in NSW. It may include some of your obligations under some of the legislation that SafeWork NSW administers. To ensure you comply with your legal obligations you must refer to the appropriate legislation.
Information on the latest laws can be checked by visiting the NSW legislation website www.legislation.nsw.gov.au
This publication does not represent a comprehensive statement of the law as it applies to particular problems or to individuals or as a substitute for legal advice. You should seek independent legal advice if you need assistance on the application of the law to your situation.

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