

# Delivering safely: Co-operating to prevent workplace vehicle accidents

## Information sheet WPT06

If you specify delivery vehicles, oversee their maintenance, or manage operations involving loading/unloading goods, this information may help you and your workforce to work together and reduce workplace accidents.

## Introduction

Do vehicles visit your workplace to deliver or collect goods? Does your business use vehicles to deliver or collect goods from other businesses? If so, this guidance applies to you.

Deliveries and collections are essential to business, but can be some of the most dangerous activities you have to deal with. Risks may include manual handling injuries when moving the goods, being struck by a moving vehicle or simply falling off the vehicle. The drivers of these vehicles are often the victims.

Many delivery and collection accidents could be prevented if there was **better co-operation** between the parties involved. This information sheet describes how the people and organisations involved can co-operate to prevent workplace vehicle accidents.

## Scope

Risks from driving on the public highway are not covered in this guidance. It has limited application to deliveries and collections at domestic premises where the recipient has no duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. However, companies still need to take reasonable steps to prevent accidents during these deliveries and collections. This guidance is general and does not deal with specific risks related to particular loads such as chemicals, tank containers etc. Additional guidance is available for safe delivery and unloading of steel stock.<sup>1</sup>

## What's the problem?

Every year, about 70 people are killed and thousands suffer major injuries in accidents involving vehicles in and around workplaces. A significant number of these occur during deliveries and collections. Unless effective precautions are

taken, people are at risk from:

- being hit by moving vehicles;
- falling from vehicles;
- vehicles turning over;
- being hit by objects falling from vehicles;
- slips and trips in the general work area and on or from the vehicle; and
- handling injuries when moving the goods.

## Key responsibilities

Individuals are often unfairly blamed for accidents that could have been prevented if dutyholders had co-operated with one another. The three key dutyholders are:

- the **supplier** sending the goods;
- the **carrier** – the haulier or other company carrying the goods; and
- the **recipient** – the person receiving the goods.

A common factor in delivery/collection accidents is the **lack of any agreement** between supplier, carrier and recipient about 'who is responsible for what' in terms of safety. In most work situations the safety of an employee is primarily the responsibility of their employer, but to deliver or collect goods, employees have to visit premises controlled by others. The safety of everyone at these premises, including people visiting the site, is the responsibility of the organisation in charge of the site (the recipient or supplier), as they should control what takes place on site.

Irresponsible employers may use this overlap in responsibilities as an excuse for not doing more to protect those involved in deliveries. This overlap can cause dangerous misunderstandings unless all parties exchange information about the main risks involved, and agree who will do what to control risks.

Dutyholders must assess delivery and collection risks and reduce them as far as reasonably practicable. Current arrangements for preventing vehicle accidents during deliveries and collections should be reviewed in consultation with safety representatives, drivers and employees. Consider what further steps you could take in co-operating to reduce risk. The rest of this Information sheet outlines steps that are considered to be reasonably practicable.

## General principles of good practice

Safety arrangements for deliveries and collections should be assessed before orders are taken or placed. This should be considered at the contractual stage. Planning safety precautions reduces the risk of accidents and can save time and money. For instance, it should prevent deliveries being delayed or sent back because a site cannot handle the load or the vehicle carrying it.

Safety arrangements should be incorporated into order-taking documents so that the parties involved have to check that safety arrangements are adequate before authorising a particular delivery or collection. Even if orders are placed or taken at short notice, fax, e-mail and telephone will usually make it easy to agree safety arrangements before the delivery or collection.

The delivery vehicle driver plays a key part in delivery safety, and is often the person injured in delivery or collection accidents – the driver should receive adequate safety information for each delivery or collection beforehand.

The agreement about delivery or collection safety arrangements can take different forms, for instance:

- where a recipient regularly receives similar deliveries from a particular supplier or carrier, all parties should agree a written delivery plan. If something about a particular delivery may make it unsafe to rely on the usual plan, the delivery should not start until the ‘special’ precautions have been agreed by fax, e-mail or telephone; and
- when recipients, suppliers and carriers deal with each other on a ‘last-minute, one-off’ basis it will usually be reasonably practicable to exchange basic delivery safety information and agree on the main precautions at the time an order is placed.

In some situations other parties may be involved. For instance, a recipient may place an order with a supplier who arranges for a third company to provide the goods, who in turn arranges for a haulier to make the delivery. Such complex arrangements can easily go wrong due to misunderstandings and failures in communication. The dangers of this should be considered before entering into these arrangements. If a delivery accident occurs, all parties in the chain may be asked to show that they took all reasonable steps to co-operate to achieve safety.

The **three general principles** that suppliers, carriers and recipients should follow are:

- ❖ **send out safety information** on deliveries and collections to other parties in the delivery chain;
- **request safety information** on deliveries and collections from other parties in the delivery chain; and
- **agree a safe delivery plan.**

## How suppliers, carriers and recipients can co-operate

The purpose of exchanging information as set out in the three general principles above, is:

- to make expectations clear;
- to ask others in the chain whether they can meet these expectations; and
- to agree what to do if expectations cannot be met. If agreement cannot be reached on how significant safety issues will be dealt with, the delivery or collection should not take place.

All parties involved in deliveries should, so far as reasonably practicable, exchange and agree information to make sure goods can be delivered and collected safely. In particular, consider:

- any restrictions on the type or size of vehicle the site can safely handle, eg visiting lorries may be required to have CCTV or other reversing aids fitted;
- any restrictions on when goods should be delivered or collected;
- best approach routes to the site, especially if nearby one-way systems, low bridges, narrow roads, awkward access etc could cause problems for visiting vehicles.
- a site plan or sketch showing parking, location of reception, route to take through the site, designated turning/reversing areas, rest facilities, location of loading/unloading area etc;
- where visiting vehicles should park on arrival, where and whom to report to. Generally, parking and subsequent loading/unloading should be off the road and pavement and well away from members of the public. If articulated vehicles are coupled/uncoupled, drivers should have been instructed on how to park each vehicle type they use, as there can be significant differences and misunderstandings are common. Trailer parking and cab hand brakes should always be used – there have been a number of fatal accidents recently caused by not using these;
- the loading/unloading area should be in a designated, adequately lit area where people and vehicles not essential for loading/unloading are excluded;
- any procedures the visiting driver needs to follow, eg wearing high-visibility vest, limits on use of mobile phones, prohibitions on reversing or conditions for reversing such as the use of a banksman;
- who will be in overall charge of the loading/unloading of visiting vehicles;
- what visiting drivers or site staff should do if they are not satisfied with safety arrangements for the delivery or collection (who to report concerns to etc);
- contact details for the other parties in case of problems;
- what to do if a load appears to have shifted dangerously in transit;
- when the visiting driver will ‘give permission’ for his vehicle to be loaded/unloaded, and how this hand-over will be clearly understood by all. Before this time site staff should keep clear of the vehicle, and after this time the driver should keep clear of the vehicle;

- the method of loading/unloading – what equipment is available, what is the capacity of the lifting equipment. The method of loading/unloading is often overlooked or the driver has received insufficient information regarding access etc when deliveries are made to a domestic premises;
- where the driver should be during the loading/unloading of their vehicle. Drivers are often the victims of delivery accidents. It is often unrealistic and sometimes unsafe to expect drivers to stay in their cab throughout loading/unloading of their vehicle. A designated safe area for visiting drivers with easy, safe access to toilet and refreshment facilities reduces risks considerably. A safe area may be needed for drivers to observe loading;
- the delivery vehicle driver should not use a fork-lift truck (FLT) at a delivery site unless this has been agreed in advance and steps taken to make sure that the FLT is well maintained and the site suitable. The driver must also be trained to drive FLTs in accordance with the Approved Code of Practice;<sup>2</sup>
- if access onto the vehicle is likely, how will falls be prevented or fall risks reduced? If the load has to be sheeted/unsheeted, consider whether an on-vehicle sheeting device should be provided or find out if a sheeting gantry is provided on site;
- ❖ to reduce the need for people to go up onto vehicles or the load itself, all parties should consider removing the need for sheeting whole loads solely for weather protection during transit (eg by using curtain-sided vehicles rather than flatbeds, or by shrink-wrapping individual pallets or packs of goods). Shrink-wrapping may also result in cost and time savings, eg reduced turnaround times and reduced product wastage through weather damage at the recipients' premises;
- ❖ all parties should set up simple, well-understood systems for reporting any vehicle accidents, incidents, near misses and other safety concerns during deliveries and collections, and exchanging information with the other parties. All should be encouraged to report incidents and concerns and appropriate action taken;
- where deliveries or collections will take place regularly and special risks are likely, or at sites where visiting vehicles have had problems before it may be necessary for a manager to visit the site before sending further vehicles, to assess in more detail the risks involved and agree precautions;
- are drivers able to understand English or does the plan need to be available in translation? Use pictograms where possible.

### Suppliers and recipients – organising your site for safe deliveries and collections

You can find detailed advice on controlling workplace vehicle risks in *Workplace transport safety*<sup>3, 4</sup> and on our website at: [www.hse.gov.uk/workplacetransport/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/workplacetransport/index.htm).

**It is not acceptable for a site owner to try to discharge their legal duties by sending a driver off site to carry out high-risk activities such as trimming a bulk load, manual sheeting or dealing with a load that has shifted and become unsafe during transit.**

### Carriers – making collections and deliveries safely

Drivers may face unexpected situations:

- Carriers should train drivers in general safety precautions to take when visiting sites, in particular concerning the risks involved in loading/unloading delivery vehicles, and give them clear instructions on what to do if they are not satisfied with the arrangements for ensuring safety at a particular site. Drivers should be authorised to refuse or halt the loading/unloading of their vehicle on safety grounds.
- In addition to training, providing drivers with simple delivery safety checklists may help them check that reasonable precautions have been taken, and help them decide if it is reasonable for them to refuse to continue with a particular delivery or collection.
- Carriers should make sure that any agency drivers they use are familiar with the carrier's arrangements for delivery safety.

### What the law requires

Employers have duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety at work of their employees and others who may be affected by their work activities (such as drivers).

Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, where two or more employers share a workplace, even on a temporary basis, they must co-operate with each other to make sure they both comply with their legal duties. These Regulations also require employers to carry out a risk assessment of the hazards involved and to identify measures needed to comply with health and safety legislation.

The Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 require employers to make sure that all lifting operations are properly planned by a competent person, appropriately supervised and carried out in a safe manner. Lifting equipment needs to be suitable for the use to which it is being put, properly maintained, marked with its safe working load and periodically thoroughly examined and inspected. These Regulations cover vehicle tail lifts and FLTs.

The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998<sup>5</sup> applies to mobile work equipment, eg large goods vehicles (LGV) and FLTs. The Regulations require employers to provide work equipment that is suitable for purpose, maintained in a good condition, is operated by suitably trained employees and has suitable roll-over protection and restraint systems. While LGVs fall within the scope of these Regulations, more specific road traffic legislation takes precedence when these vehicles are used on public roads or in a public place.

## References

1. *Safe delivery and unloading of steel stock* National Association of Steel Stockholders available free from <http://www.nass.org.uk>
2. *Rider-operated lift trucks. Operator training. Approved Code of Practice and guidance* L117 HSE Books 1999 ISBN 978 0 7176 2455 3
3. *Workplace transport safety: An employers' guide* HSG136 (Second edition) HSE Books 2005 ISBN 978 0 7176 6154 1
4. *Workplace transport safety: An overview* Leaflet INDG199(rev1) HSE Books 2005 (single copy free or priced packs of 5 ISBN 978 0 7176 2821 6) Web version: [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg199.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg199.pdf)
5. *Simple guide to the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998* Leaflet INDG291 HSE Books 1999 (single copy free or priced packs of 15 ISBN 978 0 7176 2429 4) Web version: [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg291.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg291.pdf)

## Further reading

- Health and safety in road haulage* Leaflet INDG379 HSE Books 2004 (single copy free or priced packs of 15 ISBN 978 0 7176 2765 3) Web version: [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg379.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg379.pdf)
- Driving at work: Managing work-related road safety* Leaflet INDG382 HSE Books 2003 (single copy free or priced packs of 4 ISBN 978 0 7176 2740 0) Web version: [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg382.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg382.pdf)
- Five steps to risk assessment* Leaflet INDG163(rev2) HSE Books 2006 (single copy free or priced packs of 10 ISBN 978 0 7176 6189 3) Web version: [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.pdf)
- Coupling or uncoupling and parking of large goods vehicle trailers* SOE/IRTE available from [www.soe.org.uk](http://www.soe.org.uk)
- Simple guide to the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998* Leaflet INDG290 HSE 1999 Web only: [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg290](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg290)
- Safety of loads on vehicles* Code of Practice DfT 2002 ISBN 0 11 552547 5

*Preventing falls from vehicles An industry guide 2005*, Freight Transport Association guidance, free download via: [www.fta.co.uk](http://www.fta.co.uk)

*A guide to the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 L73* (Second edition) HSE Books 1999 ISBN 978 0 7176 2431 7

*Preventing slips, trips and falls from vehicles: The basics* WPT01 Information sheet HSE 2007 [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/wpt01.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/wpt01.pdf)

*Safe access to road-going vehicles: Specifying the right equipment* WPT02 Information sheet HSE 2007 [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/wpt02.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/wpt02.pdf)

*Selecting flooring materials to avoid falls from vehicles* WPT03 Information sheet HSE 2007 [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/wpt03.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/wpt03.pdf)

*Selecting the right footwear to avoid falls from vehicles* WPT04 Information sheet HSE 2007 [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/wpt04.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/wpt04.pdf)

*Managing work to avoid falls from vehicles* WPT05 Information sheet HSE 2007 [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/wpt05.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/wpt05.pdf)

## Further information

HSE priced and free publications are available by mail order from HSE Books, PO Box 1999, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 2WA Tel: 01787 881165 Fax: 01787 313995 Website: [www.hsebooks.co.uk](http://www.hsebooks.co.uk) (HSE priced publications are also available from bookshops and free leaflets can be downloaded from HSE's website: [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk).)

For information about health and safety ring HSE's Infoline Tel: 0845 345 0055 Fax: 0845 408 9566 Textphone: 0845 408 9577 e-mail: [hse.infoline@natbrit.com](mailto:hse.infoline@natbrit.com) or write to HSE Information Services, Caerphilly Business Park, Caerphilly CF83 3GG.

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

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