

Workplace Transport Safety Safe Driver

Information Sheet

To effectively control workplace transport risks, the vehicle, the driver and the working environment must be appropriately managed. This information sheet provides guidance on the selection and management of drivers and operators of vehicles and mobile work equipment. The information is aimed primarily at permanent fixed places of work, however some of the information may also be applicable to transient, temporary and mobile workplaces such as construction sites. The information is aimed at employers, self-employed people and employees.

Introduction

Every year a proportion of workplace transport accidents can be attributed to the vehicle or mobile work equipment being operated by untrained drivers or inadequately trained drivers. Poor driver attitude, horseplay and driver error also contribute to many workplace transport accidents. With appropriate driver selection, the provision of instruction, information and training and adequate supervision, workplace transport accidents and incidents can be significantly reduced.

Legal Provisions

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 (No. 10 of 2005), requires that the employer takes account of the employee's capabilities in relation to safety, health and welfare when assigning an employee to a specific task. For instance, when appointing workplace transport drivers, the employer must ensure that the employee is not put at risk by being given work they do not have the competence to undertake.

Under the Act, employers must ensure that their employees have the necessary information, instruction, training and supervision, as far as reasonably practicable to ensure their safety, health and welfare at work. Training must be provided to employees:

- ▲ On recruitment;
- ▲ On transfer of an employee;
- ▲ On change of task assigned to an employee;
- ▲ On the introduction of new work equipment, systems of work or changes in existing systems or equipment;
- ▲ On introduction of new technology.

In summary, people operating workplace transport vehicles must be trained and if for example, new attachments or in-vehicle technology are introduced the driver must receive training with respect to these.

Under the law, employees must not engage in improper conduct or behaviour that is likely to endanger themselves or others. Employees are also required to co-operate with their employer to ensure compliance with health and safety legislation.

Note the above is not an exhaustive list of legislation that is applicable to workplace transport. Other relevant legislation, for example the carriage of dangerous goods by road and construction legislation may also be applicable to your operations and may specify particular legal requirements for driver training.

Driver Selection

Careful driver selection is important so ensure that appropriate procedures are in place. When selecting people to drive workplace vehicles:

- ▲ Select employees who have the correct safe attitude to workplace transport and have the ability to perform the job in a responsible, competent manner. Appropriate selection will require an evaluation of age, experience, driving record and maturity, as well as attitude.
- ▲ Consider the employee's physical fitness, such as health, eyesight, hearing and mental ability to carry out the job. Where possible, match the particular vehicle requirements, the task and situation with the driver's fitness and capabilities. Do not allow anyone who is unfit due to drugs or alcohol to drive a vehicle.
- ▲ Carry out background checks; for instance, check the employee's driving licence background. Ensure that driver's licenses or certificates are appropriate for the vehicles they are driving.
- ▲ If the driver has previous experience, assess them to ensure that they are competent.
- ▲ Authorise drivers in writing. Assess the driver's competence to drive the vehicle and then authorise them for each vehicle type they use.

Use of Contractors

- ▲ When selecting contractors to carry out workplace transport operations on your behalf, investigate their attitude to health and safety. Obtain relevant safety documentation such as method statements, safety statements and training records in advance so that they can be reviewed prior to signing any contracts.
- ▲ If using contract owner drivers, specify your company standards for the vehicle safety features such as mirrors, CCTV and seat belts. Specify standards for maintenance and for driver training and experience.
- ▲ Ensure good communications systems are in place. Hold briefings for regular customers and contractors in order to familiarise them with your workplace and your traffic management system.
- ▲ Provide contractors with copies of site rules, maps, directions, hazard information and requirements for personal protective equipment in advance of their arrival on site.

Driver Training

- ▲ The driver must be trained and competent to drive the vehicle being operated. The level of training required will depend on the employee's experience and the type of work to be carried out. A comprehensive risk assessment will help establish the training needs and level of competence required for the job.

- ▲ For new employees provide induction training which should include information about traffic route layouts, who is authorised to drive and information about particular hazards.
- ▲ Provide on the job training and information about workplace policies such as speed limits and parking procedures. Ensure that drivers are trained in safe driving practices, basic safety checks, proper use of safety features and how to report defects. Ensure drivers are trained in how to safely secure loads and how to access and egress vehicles safely.
- ▲ Reassess the driver's training at regular intervals and provide refresher training as appropriate to ensure driver competence. Supplementary or refresher training should be provided, for instance, if there has been a lapse in safe driving standards.
- ▲ If there are technological changes to the vehicle ensure that the driver receives training in such changes.
- ▲ Keep records of training provided and update as required. The records should include details of the vehicles that the employee is competent to operate.

Driver Instruction and Information

- ▲ Ensure that the driver has a clear job description detailing their role and responsibilities.
- ▲ Provide the driver with a driver's handbook which details the safe systems of work and provides all the site and company policies and rules relevant to driving. Policies may cover issues such as the use of mobile phones, in-vehicle technology, drugs and alcohol, fatigue, parking, smoking, seat belt usage, driving hours and carriage of passengers.
- ▲ Provide appropriate personnel protective equipment (PPE), for instance High-Visibility jackets, safety boots or gloves, where appropriate. Ensure that drivers have instruction in use of the equipment.
- ▲ Ensure that all drivers including visiting drivers are aware of the site rules and information on any restrictions on the type of vehicle that the workplace can handle. Provide copies of site rules, maps and directions on the back of order forms or invoices. Consider non-Irish nationals and provide site rules in pictogram form or other languages as appropriate.

Monitoring and Supervision

- ▲ The use of a driver authorisation or licensing system will assist in monitoring drivers.
- ▲ Consider keeping a central register of who in the workplace is competent to drive which vehicles. This will assist in allocating tasks and keeping track of driver's abilities.
- ▲ Where seatbelts are provided they should usually be worn at all times. In certain circumstances the workplace transport risk assessment may identify limited situations where the risks are very low and the seatbelt need not be worn. Consider high-visibility seatbelts to aid monitoring of usage.

- ▲ Monitor whether drivers are following the site rules and if not investigate why not. Challenge and investigate unsafe behaviour and systems of work.
- ▲ Ensure that there is adequate control of drivers including visiting drivers. Ensure they drive at appropriate speeds for the site conditions and that authorised drivers do not lend keys to unauthorised drivers.
- ▲ Supervisory staff must have adequate training in order to carry out monitoring activities.

Safe Systems of Work

- ▲ When assigning work to the driver, consider the workload and the job design as these can have a major influence on driver behaviour. Unrealistic deadlines may put pressure on drivers and encourage them to work less safely or take short cuts.
- ▲ Only authorised drivers should be allowed to hold vehicle keys. Put key control systems in place. Instruct drivers to turn off their vehicle and remove the key when they leave the vehicle.
- ▲ Passengers must not be carried in workplace transport vehicles unless there is purpose built passenger seating. Children should not be carried in workplace transport vehicles.
- ▲ Encourage drivers to improve their visibility to pedestrians by driving with the vehicle lights on.
- ▲ Ensure that there are documented safe systems of work such as for loading and unloading, securing loads, vehicle defect reporting and accident and incident reporting. Provide safe areas for visiting drivers during loading and unloading procedures.

Basic Driver Rules

- ▲ Follow the designated vehicular traffic routes. Know and adhere to site rules and safe systems of work. Always park safely.
- ▲ Do not drive when abilities are impaired for example, due to fatigue, ill health or poor vision. If you feel you are not competent or fit to drive a vehicle, don't drive it. Inform your employer.
- ▲ Ensure that you understand the operating procedures and safe operating limits of your vehicle.
- ▲ Wear any PPE provided. Keep PPE such as High-Visibility jackets to hand so that you do not have to step out of the vehicle to retrieve such equipment.
- ▲ Report any defects in vehicles or safe systems of work that you are aware of to your manager.
- ▲ Do not interfere with, misuse or damage anything provided under health and safety legislation. Do not engage in horseplay or unsafe behaviour. Never attempt to climb onto a moving vehicle or lift people up on pallets on forks of lift trucks.
- ▲ Keep vehicles as clean and tidy as possible.

Further Information

Further information on safety and health in the workplace is available on our website at www.hsa.ie or by contacting the Workplace Contact Unit at **1890 289 389**.