

Workplace Transport Safety – Risk Assessment

Information Sheet

This information sheet provides basic information on conducting a workplace transport risk assessment. The information is aimed at employers, people in control of places of work, self-employed people and safety representatives. The information may also be of interest to employees.

What is a Workplace Transport Risk Assessment?

A workplace transport risk assessment is the process of evaluating the risks to a person's safety and health from any vehicle or piece of mobile equipment that is used by an employer, employee, self-employed person or a visitor, in the workplace. It is the systematic examination of all aspects of work that may be affected by workplace transport and looks at the specific hazards associated with the use of vehicles and mobile equipment in the workplace. The principle purpose of carrying out a workplace transport risk assessment is to reduce risk. The process forms part of the overall legal duties for employers and persons in control of places of work to conduct a risk assessment on all activities that introduce risk.

Conducting the Workplace Transport Risk Assessment

When conducting the risk assessment follow the three step process:

1. Identify Hazards: Look at what could cause injury or harm;
2. Assess the risks of injury or harm: consider who could be harmed, how and to what extent;
3. Control the risks: put in place control measures to eliminate or reduce the risk to as low a level as reasonably practicable.

Conduct the assessment over a reasonable period of time, such as a full working week, in order to capture the complete picture of workplace transport activities on your premises. Ensure that a competent person carries out the risk assessment in consultation with employees.

Step 1: Identify Hazards

A hazard is anything with the potential to cause harm such as work materials, equipment, work methods/practices, poor work design or exposure to harmful agents such as chemicals, noise or vibration.

- ▲ Identify and list the **types of vehicles** that use your premises, for instance, employees' cars, forklift trucks, security vehicles, delivery vans, postal vans, large goods vehicles. Consider less common vehicles that may have to access your premises such as emergency vehicles or waste collection vehicles.
- ▲ Identify and list the **vehicle activities** and **work activities** associated with the vehicles. Look at:
 - How vehicles arrive and depart from the premises. Are there certain times when vehicles arrive?
 - Who drives the vehicles? Are there passengers?
 - How vehicles travel around the premises.
 - How vehicles manoeuvre when on the premises. Where do they park? Do vehicles reverse?
 - Areas where people work around moving vehicles or work at height on vehicles.
 - Work activities such as vehicle maintenance, loading and unloading, coupling and uncoupling and load securing activities.
 - Normal operation and emergency activities such as vehicle breakdowns.
- ▲ Use a site plan or map: mark and identify in different colours where vehicular and pedestrian movements occur on site. Where the vehicles and pedestrian activities intersect, these areas will be high risk and need to be addressed as a high priority.

Step 2: Assess the risks of injury or harm

A risk is the chance, high or low, that somebody may be harmed by the hazard.

- ▲ Identify the risks with each vehicle and activity. Think about what could go wrong.
- ▲ Identify the people who may be harmed such as employees, customers, contractors, members of the public or visitors to the workplace. Consider how often and how frequently people may be exposed to the hazard.
- ▲ Think about the three elements of workplace transport safety: **the vehicle, the driver** and **the workplace** – The Authority's workplace transport checklist and associated Information Sheets may be of assistance here.
- ▲ Consider could someone:
 - Be hit, run over or crushed by a vehicle?
 - Fall from a vehicle?
 - Overturn a vehicle?
 These are the some of the most common causes of workplace transport fatalities.
- ▲ Are there:
 - Overhead obstructions on site, such as electrical cables or pipes, could a vehicle hit these?
 - Overgrown trees on site which could affect load stability on a vehicle?

- ▲ Take account of certain periods of the day when the number of vehicles and pedestrians moving along routes changes such as shift changes or delivery times. Do you need to restrict vehicle or pedestrian movements at these times?
- ▲ Consider different times:
 - Day time versus night time: Is signage visible at night time? Is the site well lit?
 - Summer versus winter: Are there icy or slippery areas on site in winter?
- ▲ Consider are the vehicles being used for the correct purpose, for instance, a person using a pallet on a forklift to access heights is not correct use of the forklift and such unsafe practices must be prohibited.
- ▲ Consider how likely it is that the hazard will cause harm and how serious that harm is likely to be. This will help prioritise the risks.
- ▲ Don't just think of physical injuries to people think about long term health effects also, such as the effects of:
 - Noise;
 - Vibration;
 - Poor ergonomics;
 - Exposure to vehicle fumes.
- ▲ Consult with people like drivers, employees, contractors and visitors during the risk assessment process. They may recognise problems or solutions that you do not see.
- ▲ Take account of any accidents, incidents or near misses – look at the accident book to see if there have been any previous problems with workplace transport.

Step 3: Control the risk

- ▲ Consider what controls are already in place (if any). Are they good enough or should more be done to prevent accident or injury? Review your workplace, the vehicles, the drivers and your systems of work and compare your controls with existing good practice.
- ▲ Take account of the general principles of prevention (Schedule 3 of the 2005 Act) and how they may be applied to workplace transport. For example:

Avoid the risk

- ▲ Stop vehicle movements on your premises or in areas where pedestrians work.
- ▲ Stop reversing manoeuvres on your premises.

Evaluate unavoidable risks

- ▲ Where vehicle movements or work activities involving vehicles cannot be eliminated, evaluate the risk.
- ▲ Consider are your existing precautions adequate or should more be done to prevent accident or injury.

Combat risks at source

- ▲ Segregate vehicles and pedestrians as soon as they enter your workplace. Make pedestrian only or vehicle only areas.
- ▲ Change the layout of the workplace, consider putting in a one way traffic system and remove the need for reversing.
- ▲ Provide the right vehicle for the right job. Maintain the vehicle.
- ▲ Ensure that drivers are appropriately trained and competent and where applicable have the correct licence/card for the vehicle being driven.

Adapt work to the individual

- ▲ Ensure that the vehicle and the driver are compatible.
- ▲ The driver has good all round visibility.
- ▲ The vehicle is ergonomically suitable for the driver.
- ▲ The driver is not put under unnecessary pressure or time constraints to complete tasks.

Adapt place of work to technical progress

- ▲ Review your premises, for instance can you put in new engineering controls, such as vehicle turntables which eliminate reversing or speed restricting devices, cameras etc. on vehicles.

Replace dangerous articles/systems of work

- ▲ Replace unsafe vehicles, loading facilities, road signage, surfaces or systems of work with safer ones.
- ▲ Ensure all obstructions (overhead and ground level) are clearly visible.
- ▲ If you have a small site consider do you need to restrict the size of vehicles entering your site?

Collective protective measures

- ▲ Put in place protective measures that protect everyone not just an individual.
- ▲ For instance, install pedestrian barriers, handrails, separate access ways for pedestrians and vehicles.

Develop prevention policies

- ▲ Document your traffic management system (traffic management plan, workplace transport risk assessment, safe systems of work etc.)
- ▲ Introduce work practices that reduce the risk such as restricting pedestrian access at times when there is a lot of vehicle movement.
- ▲ Enforce speed limits.

Train & Instruct

- ▲ Train & instruct all employees about the dangers of workplace transport.
- ▲ Provide High Visibility clothing and equipment and instruct and train employees about the care and use of such equipment.
- ▲ Also ensure that visitors to your premises are aware of the dangers of workplace transport.

Remember, in some circumstances, a combination of control measures may be required.

- ▲ If your existing control measures are already effective there is no need to change them, just document them in the risk assessment and keep monitoring them to ensure that they still work.
- ▲ If your existing controls are inadequate and there is still an unacceptable degree of risk, decide on what additional suitable control measures need to be put in place and document them. Set priorities for action with suitable timeframes and ensure that the control measures are implemented. Always address the highest risks first, then the medium risks and finally the lowest risks.
- ▲ Ensure that the risk assessment is documented. This risk assessment will form the basis for your **traffic management system**.
- ▲ Review the risk assessment on a regular basis and especially when there are changes, for instance if personnel or vehicles change or new work practices are introduced. If an accident or near miss occurs review your risk assessment as part of the investigation process. It may be that the initial assessment failed to identify a hazard or that the control measure identified was inadequate or not implemented.
- ▲ Finally, mark on your site map, the routes that pedestrians and vehicles must follow whilst on your premises. This is your **traffic management plan**.

Where can I get further information?

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