

Prior to using any vehicles or mobile plant on a worksite, information about the hazards and risks associated with the particular vehicle/plant must be determined and suitable control measures identified.

This can be done by;

- Consulting with manufactures and suppliers - they have a duty to provide information about the vehicle/plant and the associated hazards and controls for safe operation
- Conducting a Risk Assessment - the Plant & Equipment Risk Assessment on the Contractor Essentials Portal can be used for this process
- Consulting with workers - through experience, workers will have knowledge about the hazards involved

Variables that need to be considered during the risk management process include but are not limited to;

- The design and intended use
- Compliance with legislation and relevant standards
- The work environment / location where it is to be used
- Operators/drivers (including capability, skill and experience)
- Operation and inspection activities
- Maintenance and testing activities
- Any potential interaction with external factors (i.e. other plant or people)
- Whether the item will introduce new hazards (i.e. noise)

Where there is the opportunity, it's important to assess the risks associated with vehicles /plant prior to purchase so that those items most suitable for the task can be purchased.

Hiring Plant

When plant is hired, both the hirer and the supplier of the plant are responsible for ensuring that the plant is safe to use. Before hiring the plant, make sure that the plant is suitable for its intended use it has been inspected and maintained by the supplier in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications. This may involve checking the log book or maintenance manual. Ensure that the supplier provides the manufacturer's information about the purpose of the plant and its use.

Vehicle / Plant Maintenance & Inspection

In order to keep vehicles and plant fit for purpose and in a safe condition, regular maintenance and inspections should be carried out by a competent person. Mobile plant must be inspected daily prior to use on site (The Plant & Equipment Pre-Start Checklist on the Contractor Essentials Portal can be used for this process). Documented records of inspections must be maintained and able to be produced when requested. There must be a process in place to manage faults/defects that are identified during inspections ensuring that the item is removed from service and only returned to service following repairs/checks by a competent person.

Competency

Drivers/operators must be competent and hold the appropriate licences for the vehicle/plant they are operating. Licences must be carried at all times where applicable.

Using Mobile Plant on Site

Work tasks involving the use of mobile plant must be risk assessed to identify the hazards associated with using the plant for the specific tasks on site - The SWMS/JSEA template on the Contractor Essentials Portal can be used to assist with this process.

Mobile plant includes but is not limited to:

- cranes
- forklifts and order pickers

- elevating work platforms
- earthmoving equipment
- delivery vehicles
- prime movers

There are many risks associated with using mobile plant that must be considered when planning works. Risk can include;

- plant operating near people or utilities
- plant operating on an uneven or unstable surface
- plant reach not taken into consideration
- high speed or reversing plant
- unauthorised or uncontrolled worksite access/egress (i.e. exclusion zones)
- competency of plant operators
- Non-use of taglines
- noisy or traffic congested work areas
- unfamiliar worksites
- inadequate communication between those working around mobile plant
- restricted vision or operator blind spots
- poor space planning

Serious or fatal incidents can occur when working around mobile plant including during;

- pedestrian movement near vehicles or plant
- reversing or manoeuvring
- loading or unloading
- hitching or unhitching trailers
- lowering ramps
- securing of loads
- movement of materials
- maintenance work

In order to control risks, work crews must plan and review work activities to ensure that;

- any traffic hazards are identified and traffic management plans implemented to control areas of interaction between people and mobile plant, using measures such as exclusion zones, spotters and traffic controllers
- mobile plant movement plans are communicated to all site workers and visitors
- Vehicles/mobile plant are fitted with appropriate warning devices such as flashing lights, sensors and reversing alarms. These must be confirmed as operational during plant pre-start checks.
- traffic speeds are clearly identified and controlled
- loads are adequately secured
- there are safe loading and unloading bays/areas to ensure vehicles and equipment can be manoeuvred easily and safely
- only those licenced, trained and competent operate mobile plant
- workers and others are adequately trained, instructed and supervised within the specific worksite.

Heavy Vehicles

All heavy vehicle operations must comply with regional legislative requirements regarding fatigue management and chain of responsibility.

Chain of Responsibility (CoR)

Under Heavy Vehicle Legislation, everyone in the supply chain, not just the driver, has a responsibility to ensure transport activities are carried out safely.

All parties listed below, have what is referred to as primary responsibility to ensure the safety (eliminate or minimise risk) of transport activities (for the areas in which they have control or influence);

- An employer of a driver
- A prime contractor for a vehicle if the vehicles driver is self-employed
- An operator of the vehicle
- A scheduler for the vehicle
- A loading manager for any goods in the vehicle
- A loader and/or un loader of a vehicle
- A consigner of any goods for transport by the vehicle
- A consignee of any goods in the vehicle
- A loader and/or unloader of any goods in the vehicle

If you direct, control, or influence the transport task, you can be held legally liable if your actions or inactions have contributed to a road safety breach (i.e. breach of legislated work and rest times, speeding, over weight or unsecured loads etc.). The heavy vehicle legislation requires that systems are in place and certain steps are taken, to comply with legislation and prevent any breach of the law.

These steps include;

- Preventing a driver from driving whilst fatigued, or breaching work/rest hours;
- Ensuring work demands, schedules and practices will not cause, contribute or encourage a breach;
- Not entering into contracts or agreements that will cause, encourage or give an incentive for a breach;
- Ensuring loading arrangements do not cause breaches (i.e. mass or dimension limits).
- Not passing on false or misleading information that could cause a breach.

To comply with the law, you must ensure that you can demonstrate all reasonable steps have been taken to prevent a breach from occurring in the transport task.

Drivers of heavy vehicles must;

- Plan your journey to allow enough time
- Know your heavy vehicle journey and work and rest requirements
- Do a daily heavy vehicle check
- Check your load is properly restrained
- Not drive distracted
- Drive to the conditions and don't speed
- Keep your work diary up to date

For other parties in the supply chain it is important that you;

- Understand the CoR requirements
- Know your role/s in transport activities and how the requirements affect you
- Make sure you are aware of and understand the process and measures in place to manage the safety of transport activities and which ones specifically apply to the tasks you will be carrying out
- Don't put pressure on a driver or any other party in the supply chain to carry out actions that could lead to a breach in the law

Loading Vehicles

Vehicles must be loaded in a safe area, exclusion zones established as required and loads must be checked to ensure they are within a vehicles capacity and that the load is distributed evenly and secured correctly. The load must remain in a safe condition during loading, transit and unloading. If you are a driver however didn't load the vehicle, you must check that the load is in a safe condition before commencing travel. For more information refer to the Load Restraint Guide - National Transport Commission.