

Vehicle Accidents

Vehicle use in the workplace is an essential part of many businesses yet every year people are killed or seriously injured in accidents involving workplace transport. Accidents that do not involve personal injury can result in damage to property, plant and equipment and the vehicle itself.

Often, at the root of these accidents is poor management control, involving a failure to provide or maintain a Safe Workplace, a Safe Vehicle, a Safe Driver and/or safe systems of work. With appropriate and effective safety management practices workplace transport risks can be controlled.

Vehicles at work accidents are identified through four kinds of accident where involvement of a vehicle is recorded. The four kinds of accident are:

- Struck by a moving vehicle
- People falling from a vehicle
- Materials falling from a vehicle
- Collapse/overtake of a vehicle

Employers and self-employed people need to be aware of the main risks associated with vehicles that need to be managed to protect workers and members of the public. The activities most commonly associated with vehicle related deaths and injuries are:

- Driving for work
- Reversing and slow speed manoeuvres
- Coupling and uncoupling
- Vehicle maintenance and repairs
- Loading, unloading and load securing

The Regulatory team at DWF recommend that duty holders who use vehicles in the workplace should take proactive steps to (at best) minimise the risks and, in the worst case scenario where there has been an incident and a prosecution is brought, to minimise potential heavy fines and/or imprisonment.

Duty holders should consider the following 4 key areas, as highlighted by the HSE, in relation to use of vehicles at work:

1. People safety
2. Vehicle safety
3. Management of use
4. Site safety

We recommended that businesses using vehicles in the workplace look through each of the examples set out below (a non-exhaustive list);

- Assess drivers' physical and mental fitness before using vehicles
- Fully induct and train new vehicle operators
- Ensure drivers are fully certified and qualified
- Supervise and regularly assess drivers' fitness and performance
- Provide on-going training
- Maintain accurate records of assessments (driver, vehicles, etc)
- Ensure relevant licences are in place for the use of the vehicle
- Ensure the vehicle in use is suitable for the site and the type of work it is being used for
- Fully risk assess the vehicle and the site to identify and negate any potential risks
- Ensure regular inspections and maintenance to ensure safe vehicle use
- Ensure all workers are familiar with the site
- Implement a 'road system' for manoeuvring vehicles around the site safely including speed limits etc.
- Implement a 'safe route' for moving around the site on foot
- Ensure lighting and signage is sufficient
- Draw up method statements for vehicle use on site and communicate to all workers effectively
- Establish safe working practices for parking, unloading, etc. and communicate to all workers effectively
- Implement measures to ensure people and vehicles are kept separate (clear road marking, etc.)
- Ensure loads are secured properly
- Ensure the risk of falling from vehicles are assessed and minimised
- Ensure adequate personal protection equipment is given to all workers
- If using agency/contract workers, ensure they are qualified, have fitness to drive the vehicle, are fully aware of the vehicle and site risks, and methods of vehicle use on site

If you require assistance with any of the above contact us today.