

Health and Safety Executive Senior Management Team Paper		SMT/10/55	
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HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE

Senior Management Team

Load Safety of vehicles: partnership working with the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) and other external agencies.

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Issue

1. To advise HSE's Senior Management Team of HSE's continuing and planned work with other agencies to address the issue of load safety on vehicles.

Timing

2. Routine

Background

3. Many injuries to workers unloading vehicles at a worksite are due to the unintended shift of the load during transit. Loads affected in this way can fall on the road during transportation, causing road traffic accidents, or fall at the delivery site during unloading causing injury to people carrying out the unloading or trying to re-secure the load for onward transport. In 2008/2009 over 1200 accidents were recorded under RIDDOR. Injuries have occurred both on the road and in the workplace because loads have not been secured properly.
4. HSL has carried out research on the safety of loads on road vehicles coming on to worksites. This research has identified significant issues with the loading and securing of a wide variety of goods on Light and Heavy Goods Vehicles.
5. The research identified a general lack of compliance with the existing Department for Transport code of practice for securing loads 'The Safety of Loads on Vehicles'. The research also found that consignors of goods often assumed that responsibility for load safety rested solely with the driver of the vehicle, regardless of who had loaded the vehicle and secured the load.
6. Accidents in the workplace fall under the jurisdiction of either HSE or Local Authorities; accidents on the road fall under the jurisdiction of VOSA and/or the Police. Since load security is an issue that affects road and workplace safety, a partnership approach to address the issues was suggested as a way forward on this.

7. HSE has been working constructively with VOSA and the Metropolitan Police on issues of Work Related Road Safety (WRRS) for several years. The HSE Board has recently agreed to extended limited delegated powers to the Metropolitan Police (MPS), (paper HSE/09/108 refers).
8. Since 2008 HSE, VOSA and the Highways Agency have been working in partnership on joint inspection initiatives dealing with load safety on the strategic road network. Following the success of a programme of joint inspections, VOSA would like to make load inspection a “business as usual” activity.
9. To support VOSA in this HSE is planning to help build competence and confidence for VOSA’s 1600+ inspection staff in load safety, adopting a “train the trainer” approach to limit the investment required by HSE and remove VOSA’s reliance on HSE resources in the future.
10. VOSA has robust data recording processes and systems and will provide intelligence to HSE on repeat offenders which will enable local HSE offices to target companies more effectively.
11. FOD has indicated that they are prepared to respond to the VOSA data and time has been allocated in 2010/2011 for this activity. The project has FOD management support.
12. HSE has completed phase 1 of the Load Safety campaign raising the issues within the transport industry and we are currently planning phase 2 which will be launched in autumn 2010. Phase 2 will highlight the risks associated with unloading unsafe loads and dovetails with the workplace transport team’s current planned work to review L117 – the Rider Operated Lift Truck ACOP and to organise an intervention initiative on fork lift trucks being planned for 2011.

Resource Implications

13. Training VOSA inspectors will cost £15K of HSL resource; this work is included in the work plan for 2010/2011 and the costs will be covered within current allocations.

Consultation

14. Interested parts of HSE were consulted prior to the joint work being undertaken and again more recently with regard to the proposed extension of powers to the MPS in Board Paper HSE/09/106.
15. HSE Legal Advisors were consulted before agreeing the approach and the Local Authorities, via the partnership managers have been offered the opportunity to share in the data that VOSA will provide. We shall continue to consult in connection with any further issues that arise as the project develops further.

Recommendation

16. SMT to note HSEs work on load safety and the proposals for continuing and further effective partnership work with VOSA and the Metropolitan Police.