

Procedures and working practices

Workplace transport site safety information sheet WPT19

This information will be useful to anyone who uses workplace transport or who works where it is used. It will help employers, managers and supervisors to assess their workplace and make improvements. The checklists will help you to prepare your risk assessment.

A clear and safe set of procedures and working practices are vital to maintaining safety on site. It is important that everyone using a site is familiar with the procedures and working practices relevant to their job.

This information sheet provides a general overview of health and safety issues relating to procedures and working practices. More detailed information relating to specific types of procedures and working practices is contained within the other information sheets in this series.

Common problems

Most workplace transport health and safety issues are caused in part by procedural and operational issues, so it is important to have a clear set of procedures and safe working practices.

Procedures are not in place or not comprehensive enough: Your site should have clear, comprehensive rules and procedures that are easily understood and cover all the activities that occur on your site. When procedures are unclear and inconsistent, site users are encouraged to behave in a dangerous way that places themselves and others at risk of injury.

Unsafe procedures and working practices: Unsafe procedures and working practices can lead to accidents that cause injuries to people or damage to buildings, equipment and vehicles. For example, the use of jogging to free loads can cause a vehicle to fall over, or not making sure that site users wear the necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) may lead to them being injured by a vehicle or falling object.

Procedures and working practices that don't comply with relevant legislation: Your site's procedures and the



working practices should comply with relevant legislation, including:

- Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992;
- Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999;
- Disability Discrimination Act 2006; and
- Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.

If procedures and working practices don't comply with relevant legislation then you are at risk of prosecution, particularly if someone is injured in an accident caused by unsafe working.

Out-of-date procedures and working practices: Agreed procedures and working practices can become unsafe if they are not regularly updated to take into account changes in site layout and operation.

Site users don't adopt procedures and safe working practices: A site may have clear, safe rules, procedures and working practices but if they are not enforced, site users may ignore them.

Specialised procedures and practices are not provided for particularly hazardous activities: Activities that are particularly hazardous, such as the controlled containment

and disposal of chemical waste or the use of a banksman in areas where vehicles are turning or reversing, will need specialised procedures and practices.

Relevant risk assessments are not produced and regularly amended: Risk assessments may not have been updated to take account of changes to site operation or layout.

Site users not clearly informed of relevant procedures and working practices: If site users don't know and understand the procedures and working practices relating to their job, they may put themselves or others at risk.

Checklist – what to look out for

- Procedures are not in place.
- Unsafe procedures and working practices.
- Procedures and working practices don't comply with relevant legislation.
- Out-of-date procedures and working practices.
- Site users don't adopt procedures and safe working practices.
- Specialised procedures and practices are not provided for particularly hazardous activities.
- Relevant risk assessments are not produced and regularly amended.
- Site users are not clearly informed of the relevant procedures and working practices.

How can you deal with common problems?

Most of the common procedural problems can be addressed by having a clear and safe set of agreed procedures and working practices. These should be consistent with your sites rules and encourage efficient and safe working.

Enforce procedures and working practices by monitoring their use and disciplinary measures: Regularly monitor and enforce the use of safe working practices and procedures. Make sure that people working on site follow the correct procedures and working practices and know that disciplinary measures will be used if they are found to be breaching site rules and procedures.

Regularly review and amend procedures and practices, making sure that legal requirements are met: Procedures and working practices need to be regularly updated so that they stay current and continue to meet legal requirements.

Risk assessments need to be produced for individual activities undertaken on site. They should include how the agreed procedures and working practices mitigate the risks relating to particular activities. When site operations or layout change, risk assessments should be updated.

Make sure site rules and information are easily accessible to regular site users and visitors: Everyone using your site, including regular site users and visitors, should be able to easily access information about your site, its rules and procedures. Think about what the most appropriate way of providing this information is and whether it should be provided before or during working on site.

Inform site users of relevant procedures and working practices: Site users need to know and understand the procedures and working practices relating to their job. This includes why procedures and safe working practices are needed and the hazards that pose a risk to their health and safety. Staff should feel they have ownership of procedures and working practices. You should look to develop a 'safety culture' through clear, regular briefings/toolbox talks. Actively encourage staff to comply with agreed safe working procedures and practices.

Provide site users with appropriate induction and supervision: Visitors and people unfamiliar with the site should be given an induction by an experienced site user. This should include explaining the site rules, procedures and safe working practices that staff are expected to comply with. Individuals' responsibilities need to be clearly defined so that they are understood.

Checklist

- Enforce procedures and working practices by monitoring their use and using disciplinary procedures.
- Regularly review and amend procedures and practices, making sure legal requirements are met.
- Make sure site rules and information are easily accessible to regular site users and visitors.
- Provide site users with appropriate induction and supervision.

Checking your site

Consider employing an external health and safety professional to review your procedures and working practices. They will be able to highlight any issues and make suggestions as to how you deal with them. They will also be able to tell you whether your procedures and working practices comply with current legislation.

Observe the procedures and working practices used on your site. Look at whether safe working practices and agreed procedures are being used. This will help you identify if you have any problems with enforcement and whether any practices and procedures need to be modified.

Ask for feedback from site users about procedures and working practices. This provides a good opportunity to check that site users are aware of, and complying with, procedures and working practices. It may also reveal unsafe working practices and how safe people feel when on site.

Ask site users how they think procedures and working practices can be improved.

Separate risk assessments should be produced for the different activities that occur on your site. This will enable you to identify the hazards and their associated risks for each type of activity. Carefully examine what, in your work, could cause harm to people so that you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm. The important things you need to decide are whether a hazard is significant, and whether you have it covered by satisfactory precautions so that the risk is small. You need to check this when you assess the risks. Completing a site inspection may provide a good opportunity to complete a risk assessment.

More information on how to complete a risk assessment is in *Five steps to risk assessment*.

Checklist

- Employ an external health and safety professional to review your procedures and working practices.
- Observe working practices used on your site and find out whether they are safe.
- Ask for feedback from site users about the procedures and working practices they use.

Where to get help

If there are any problems with procedures and working practices on your site, you may be able to resolve them yourself. If you are unsure, speak to your health and safety workplace representative or contact HSE for advice. It may be more cost effective to have a professional assess your site. If you need any alterations to your site, such as creating designated delivery areas, you may need to bring in professional help such as a highway or lining contractor.

You can also get advice by speaking to other similar local businesses – look for examples of good practice. Contact your local trade association or Chamber of Commerce for recommended local suppliers or look in the *Yellow Pages*.

Checklist

- Can you solve the problem yourself or do you need professional help?
- Speak to your health and safety representative and talk to your staff.
- Speak to similar businesses and look for examples of best practice.
- If further information is required speak to HSE.
- Employ the relevant professional to carry out the required work for you.

What might it cost?

The use of efficient, safe procedures and working practices is unlikely to incur any significant costs. In many cases, they are likely to considerably reduce operational costs. The benefits and operational savings they bring are likely to far outweigh any costs that could be incurred.

Find out more

Workplace transport safety: An employers' guide HSG136 (Second edition) HSE Books 2005 ISBN 978 0 7176 6154 1 (Includes examples of safe working practices relating to: reversing vehicles; parking vehicles; access onto vehicles; loading and unloading; tipping loads; and sheeting and unsheeting loads)

Workplace transport safety: An overview Leaflet INDG199(rev1) HSE Books 2005 (single copy free or priced packs of 5 ISBN 978 0 7176 2821 6) www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg199.pdf

Five steps to risk assessment Leaflet INDG163(rev2) HSE Books 2006 (single copy free or priced packs of 10 ISBN 978 0 7176 6189 3) www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.pdf

Designing for deliveries Freight Transport Association 1998 ISBN 978 0 902991 66 8

Further information

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For information about health and safety ring HSE's Infoline Tel: 0845 345 0055 Fax: 0845 408 9566 Textphone: 0845 408 9577 e-mail: hse.infoline@natbrit.com or write to HSE Information Services, Caerphilly Business Park, Caerphilly CF83 3GG.

This document contains notes on good practice which are not compulsory but which you may find helpful in considering what you need to do.

This document is available web-only at: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/wpt19.pdf.

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