



Safe sites: Driver's perceptions

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Safe sites: Driver's perceptions

Clive Winkler BSc(Hons), CEng, MICE

J. Neill Irwin BSc, MSc, CEng, MIEE

PSL

Irwin House

118 Southwark Street

London

SE1 0SN

The HSE has identified, as a source of serious concern, the frequency of accidents to delivery drivers whilst involved in activities on delivery or collection sites. There is a wide variation in safety procedures on sites and it is considered that there would be great value in obtaining the views of drivers into what constitutes a safe site.

A focused investigation was undertaken by interviewing selected drivers from companies in the logistics sector. Questionnaires targeting eight key areas with numbered tick boxes for a graded response were used at face-to-face meetings with each of the drivers, complemented by discussion to elicit wider views and opinions.

The report has been produced in two sections. The first section contains the findings of the study including the recommendations, which may be made available for general publication. The second section containing coded interview transcripts is strictly confidential and will only be used for internal information by the HSE.

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FOREWORD

As part of HSE's continuing drive to reduce the number of workplace transport-related accidents, HSE has been reviewing and analysing Workplace Transport accident records going back almost a decade. Earlier this year it became apparent that drivers of Large Goods and other delivery vehicles are an exceptionally vulnerable group of workers.

To try to understand this better, in April 2004 HSE commissioned PSL (Partnership Sourcing Ltd) to interview a cross-section of drivers to get their views about what the worst risks are, and where and why they arise.

PSL was asked to interview drivers across across a range of sectors and businesses. The main purposes of the study was to:

- Collect the views of drivers about what they saw as the dangers on customers' sites;
- Identify material that might lend itself to an awareness campaign, and
- Identify those areas of most concern that would benefit from action to improve drivers' health and safety.

HSE acknowledges the effort put in by PSL and the contribution made by its contacts. The findings will help HSE to improve the health and safety provisions for drivers carrying out delivery and collection operations.

PSL has made 18 recommendations for HSE to follow up, ranging from the need to "promote procedures to ensure that loading is complete and that it is safe to leave" to the need to "promote public awareness as to the limitations and differences in Heavy Goods Vehicles in such areas as manoeuvrability and fields of vision".

For HSE perhaps the most striking, and yet disappointing, point to emerge is the extent of the lack of communication between the drivers' companies and the owners of the sites being visited, even though it is a requirement of Regulation 11 (Co-operation and co-ordination) of The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. It seems that many of the problems encountered could be mitigated by the parties involved talking to one another - this is one of the messages we will be promoting in the months to come.

Carol Grainger
Hazards and Technical Policy Division
The Health and Safety Executive

August 2004

CONTENTS

FOREWORD	iii
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	vii
INTRODUCTION	1
Background	1
Aims	1
Methodology	1
Key Outputs	2
QUESTIONNAIRE	3
Format of the questionnaire	3
Further questions	3
INTERVIEWS	5
Selection of companies	5
Selection of interviewees	5
Conduct of the interviews	5
ISSUES EMERGING FROM THE INTERVIEWS	7
Artics	7
Rigid HGVs	20
Transits	34
General	44
Trends from the scores	45
RECOMMENDATIONS	49
APPENDIX 1 Questionnaire	52

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1 BACKGROUND

The HSE has identified, as a source of serious concern, the frequency of accidents to delivery drivers whilst involved in activities on delivery or collection sites. There is a wide variation in safety procedures on sites and it is considered that there would be great value in obtaining the views of drivers into what constitutes a safe site.

In April 2004 PSL was commissioned to interview a number of drivers to provide information leading to recommendations that may be used as the basis for developing guidance and to obtain material that might lend itself to an awareness campaign by the HSE drawing attention to potential dangers and good points to look for.

2 METHODOLOGY

A total of 22 drivers, based at three depots belonging to two different companies, were interviewed using a customised version of PSL's structured questionnaire. This was designed to capture their experience of loading and unloading at a variety of sites and to identify the factors that make them safe or unsafe.

The process comprised individual face-to-face interviews during which drivers completed a graded tick-box questionnaire indicating the degree of danger they felt was inherent in each of eight aspects of the procedure. This was followed by a structured discussion to draw out areas of concern or commendation.

The interviews took place at various depots in the South East and were of necessity restricted to between 20 and 30 minutes each, given the limited time available by nature of the drivers' work.

The report has been produced in two sections. The first section contains the findings of the study including the recommendations, which may be made available for general publication. The second section containing coded interview transcripts is strictly confidential and will only be used for internal information by the HSE.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The aim of this report was to elicit the views of drivers as to what they perceived posed dangers on customers' loading sites. The prime objective, reflected in the "issues emerging from the interviews" section, was to obtain material that might lend itself to an awareness campaign by the HSE. The second objective was to identify those areas of most concern that would benefit from action by the HSE in order to improve drivers health and safety. Its purpose was not to suggest ways that companies and organisations might improve their systems and processes.

The following recommendations for areas of action are made as a result of observations and interpretation of the views expressed to us during the course of the interviews. They are not listed in order of priority and it is recognised that many of these already have been or are being addressed in some way or other.

1 Driving off

Promote procedures to ensure that loading is complete and that it is safe to leave. There are appropriate systems to suit large and small sites, both sophisticated and simple.

2 Visibility

Promote the wearing of high visibility jackets, which drivers considered were highly effective in helping them to see and be seen.

3 Access to site

Highlight to customers some of the issues that make access difficult or dangerous and ways that they can mitigate the risks.

4 Customer awareness through exemplar companies

Demonstrate best practice in customer awareness and general procedures, through publicising case studies of say supermarkets or logistics companies to large organisations. Identify appropriately sized companies for similarly targeting those with small premises or occasional use.

5 Reversing

Raise awareness to customers and drivers of the dangers associated with reversing both from the public highway and within the site and measures to mitigate these. Investigate the provision of cameras on the rear of lorries to improve visibility when reversing, as are now fitted to some cars.

6 Lighting

Raise awareness that sufficient lighting should be provided for night-time deliveries and that it is not positioned in a way that it dazzles drivers, particularly through their mirrors while reversing.

7 Manual handling

Raise customer awareness of the difficulties associated with carrying large or heavy packages, particularly to upper storeys and further education to all regarding the legal restrictions.

8 Training

Encourage appropriate training or awareness for those involved in banking or guiding vehicles. Highlight provision of appropriate refresher training for drivers.

9 Knowledge management

With the apparent reality of drivers having to assess conditions themselves, emphasise the benefits of structured feedback and passing on knowledge. Promote the way that experienced drivers will park safely and reconnoitre a site with which they're not familiar, before entering.

10 Parking on the public highway

Promote of the dangers and difficulties experienced by delivery drivers when having to stop on the public highway to load or unload including other traffic, pedestrians and parking restrictions.

11 Segregation of pedestrians

Promote awareness of the dangers to pedestrians from vehicles in the process of delivering goods, together with ways of recognising and then mitigating or avoiding the risks.

12 Safe loads

Promote guidance for ensuring loads are safe and secure together with clarification of responsibility where loading is conducted under secure procedures by designated employees.

13 Signposting

Publicise good practice in signposting points of contact, delivery access points and hazards.

14 Building and temporary sites

Promote awareness of the particular dangers to which delivery drivers are exposed on such sites.

15 Mechanical operations

Reinforce the potential dangers of the operation of tail lifts, detaching trailers and the like.

16 Forklift trucks

Highlight the safe operation and control of forklift trucks.

17 Public awareness

Promote public awareness as to the limitations and differences in HGVs in such areas as manoeuvrability and fields of vision.

18 Schools

Promote awareness of the need to avoid deliveries, where possible, at times when children are arriving at or leaving school, together with the inherent dangers of parents parking nearby and of dark uniforms when visibility is poor.

INTRODUCTION

1 BACKGROUND

The HSE has identified, as a source of serious concern, the frequency of accidents to delivery drivers whilst involved in activities on delivery or collection sites. There is a wide variation in safety procedures on sites and it is considered that there would be great value in obtaining the views of drivers into what constitutes a safe site.

In April 2004 PSL was commissioned to interview a number of drivers to obtain material that might lend itself to an awareness campaign by the HSE drawing attention to potential dangers and good practice and also to provide recommendations for areas that would benefit from action.

2 AIMS

To:-

- Elicit the opinion of drivers who are most closely involved in the process and who will have objective views
- Draw out their suggestions as part of a structured process as to what makes sites safe or unsafe from their perspective
- Present anecdotal evidence leading to the identification of areas of greater or lesser concern
- Obtain material that might lend itself to an awareness campaign by the HSE drawing attention to potential dangers and good points to look for
- Make recommendations for action arising from the information received

3 METHODOLOGY

Using techniques from PSL's structured approach, the method employed was:-

- To interview a total of 22 drivers based at three depots belonging to two different companies
- To use a customised, structured questionnaire designed to draw out their experience of loading and unloading at a variety of sites and obtain their views on the aspects that make them safe or unsafe
- The process comprised:
 - Face to face interviews
 - Graded evaluation of safety concerns related to eight agreed aspects of the delivery/collection process
 - Responses to qualitative, structured questions
 - Discussion to draw out areas of concern or commendation
- The interviews were restricted to between 20 and 30 minutes each to fit in with the limited time available by the nature of the drivers' work
- Interviews took place at each driver's depot

The interviews were undertaken in two stages. In Stage 1, several drivers were interviewed as a pilot to allow the questionnaire to be reviewed and amended if necessary. As a result of this, some minor changes to the emphasis of points within the questionnaire were incorporated in the process before proceeding with Stage 2.

Meetings were held with HSE at regular intervals throughout the project to review progress and ensure the direction of the research continued to reflect the agreed or any revised objectives.

4 KEY OUTPUTS

The primary outputs from this proposal are structured to enable the HSE to identify areas of greatest concern to drivers by presenting their views in their own words.

The outputs comprise:-

- The specific questionnaire used in the interviews
- A summary of anecdotal evidence that can be used to identify areas of concern and the actions that are felt to be most needed
- Graphical summary of the graded response to the tick-box questionnaire
- Identification of those facilities provided at loading sites that are felt to be most beneficial
- Identification of those aspects of best practice that might be promoted more widely
- Recommendations in respect of the information received.

The report has been produced in two sections. The first section contains the findings of the study including the recommendations, which may be made available for general publication. The second section containing coded interview transcripts is strictly confidential and will only be used for internal information by the HSE.

QUESTIONNAIRE

1 FORMAT OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire was divided into three parts relating to drivers' experience on customers' sites and each of these was sub-divided as shown below.

On arrival

- Ease of access/reversing
- Clear procedures/instructions

On site

- Surface condition
- Supervision/assistance
- Traffic control/segregation
- Night deliveries/lighting

Driving off

- Notified when safe to go
- Sightlines on public highway

Tick boxes were provided for each of the eight sub-sections in which the drivers recorded on a scale from 1 (very little) up to 6 (really critical), how they felt each of these affected their safety.

2 FURTHER QUESTIONS

After the tick boxes had been completed, the drivers were asked for their views and experiences under each sub-heading, with a structured approach to cover the following aspects.

- Ease of access/reversing:- drive straight in off highway; stop on highway; find assistance; block traffic and reverse in
- Clear procedures/instructions:- told where to go; told hazards to avoid; told of changes since last time; if told to do something dangerous do you refuse and what is your manager's attitude
- Surface condition:- good concrete/tarmac; potholes; hardcore; muddy; sloping re trailers
- Supervision/assistance:- guided to position; no help with loading/unloading or done by others - who responsible; leaving/picking up trailer - expand safety procedures; safe refuge/rest room
- Traffic control/segregation:- one-way systems; loading areas separated; pedestrians segregated
- Night delivery/collection:- what differences; lighting; visibility (winter early a.m./late p.m.); reduced assistance
- Notified when safe to go:- loading equipment clear; loaded trailer ready
- Sightlines on public highway:- obstructions by parked vehicles; narrow exit

The questionnaire is reproduced in Appendix 1 and the consolidated table of the scores in Confidential Appendix 3.

INTERVIEWS

1 SELECTION OF COMPANIES

PSL has a Steering Group and an extensive National Network comprising leading edge companies from a wide variety of sectors that are willing to assist us in pursuance of improving performance through better business relationships in the supply chain.

Having consulted with a number of these, we selected two organisations in the logistics sector with a number of depots across the UK. Three depots were able to provide a representative range of customer, from large organised sites to small city premises and of delivery vehicles including artics, rigid HGVs and Transit size vans.

Given the potentially sensitive nature of the comments, it was essential that confidentiality be maintained by using reference numbers in all parts of the report, with the code being known only to PSL, and to satisfy all those taking part in the survey that any comments made could not be traced to them.

2 SELECTION OF INTERVIEWEES

The companies represented in this survey were willing both to co-operate and to assist in identifying drivers who were prepared to be interviewed and share their experience. Two of the depots provided seven drivers each with eight coming from the third.

The twenty two drivers selected had between them driven a wide variety of vehicle and represented a significant breadth of experience. There were eight drivers currently engaged on artics, eight on rigid HGVs and six on Transit type vehicles.

Some drivers were direct employees and others were sub-contractors.

3 CONDUCT OF THE INTERVIEWS

The drivers' routines meant that individual interviews were generally restricted to between 20 and 30 minutes. The completion of the simple "tick box" questionnaire was followed by discussion on experiences and any additional comments.

The scoring system was simply designed to act as a prompt for discussion by forcing drivers to recall their experiences and anecdotal evidence behind the marks they gave. The resulting scores may be used as a general indication of relative importance, but the limited sample was always considered to be too small for any significant statistical analysis.

The discussion elicited relevant comments based on actual experience. At the outset it was acknowledged and expected that there would inevitably be some variation in the views expressed, but within the number of responses received it was possible to detect general concerns.

Confidentiality was stressed to each of the participants in respect of the HSE, the other organisations that may have been referred to and colleagues in their own company. Each was allocated a code number, known only to PSL, which is the sole form of reference used throughout the detailed information contained in the confidential appendices. This created an environment in which they were able to express their views freely and openly, resulting in

occasionally forthright statements. We have not attempted to change any of the comments, nor have we been able to verify their validity as this was outside the scope of this study.

A breakdown of the drivers and their associated vehicles is contained in Confidential Appendix 2. Transcripts of the interviews are reproduced in Confidential Appendix 4 and quotations have been widely used in the text of this report in order to provide the material required by the HSE for use in connection with proposed publicity campaigns.

ISSUES EMERGING FROM THE INTERVIEWS

As the project developed, it became apparent that the issues emerging from the interviews would probably best be grouped broadly under each type of vehicle involved. They have therefore been set out separately for artics, rigid HGVs from 7½ to 20 tonnes and Transit type vehicles, under the three headings and eight sub-headings represented in the questionnaire.

The objective of the exercise was to obtain, in their own words, the experiences and views of drivers in order to find representative quotations that would resonate with others. It is intended that they be used to highlight the good and the bad to those operating delivery and collection depots. The quotations have been grouped within the sub-headings generally according to common themes prompted by the aspects noted above in Questionnaire Section 2.

1 ARTICS

1.1 On arrival

Ease of access

Some sites present difficult permanent restrictions, such as narrow roads and bends, that may or may not be easy to rectify. In either case drivers felt it was desirable to recognise them and take reasonable measures, where possible, to mitigate the difficulty.

"It is mainly because of the way that some of the smaller industrial estates are designed; they are not designed for articulated vehicles."

"New areas that are opening up are getting smaller and smaller so whereas years ago you were driving, turning round and coming out I find myself reversing in now. The estates are smaller with more people taking cars in which makes it difficult to manoeuvre. However, lorries are getting larger. They have now hit 40 tonnes. I think the longest one is 56 ft in total. Every unit must have an allocation for cars to make it safe for vehicles to get in and out but they do not think about larger vehicles or emergency services."

"There is one site that I go to in Kent where you have to reverse in to the office, because you cannot get an artic down and turn round. There is also a big dip, which should be repaired by the Council. There is a dogleg into the place but if you are careful then that is okay, but what annoys me is that the guy who opens the barrier to let cars in and out is letting cars up the ramp while I am trying to reverse down. For the sake of 5 minutes, get the wagon in and then cars can go where they want, so that is a bit annoying. I have had a word but that does not seem to have changed anything – they still do it."

"Years ago I was sent down to a firm in East London and when I was given the collection sheet with the name of the firm and what they required us to pick up, they were all laughing at me because I had to do it in an artic. You had to stop in the road and you had to blindly reverse off the main road down into this yard. There was a bridge over a canal. There was a slope so you could not see anything coming behind you. No one came out and helped, it was a nightmare. If I was given that job again I would not do it."

"Often you arrive on site and there is a back road, you have to drive up in an artic and you have to do a three point turn in an artic in a little sideways. It is dangerous."

"Underground parking spaces are easier to get into than to get out of and they are difficult. Another underground space had lots of concrete pillars and my vehicle was far too large to get round the corners and the concrete pillars – I managed to get out of it in the end but they had to stop cars coming in and everybody was inconvenienced."

Where restrictions made access difficult for their vehicles, drivers often tried to arrange for the appropriate size vehicles to be assigned.

"If I find a site particularly difficult, I will pass it on to a rigid vehicle, which would be safer. There is no point in trying to squeeze in. We do have vehicles available to avoid that hazard."

"I will go to the customer and say I have got a pallet but I cannot get in, I will take it away and try and get it there tomorrow on a 7.5 tonner. Customers know me so they do not mind. If I explain to a new customer, they will come and have a look and I say I will take it back and get it on a small vehicle and it will be there that afternoon or the next morning. They understand once I have shown them I do not just take it away and not deliver it. I have made the effort and they have seen it. If they need the stuff urgently – where there is a will there is a way. If it is urgent they will go and get their company van or get a trolley. If they are not too rushed then they do not mind having it the next morning or afternoon."

Temporary obstructions such as parked cars or equipment left thoughtlessly cause difficulties that could often be avoided.

"On most sites they do not put any thought into the fact that somebody has got to get in and out of the site – stuff is everywhere – they will not move it if you ask – what should take 2 minutes can easily take one hour because somebody else doesn't care. That is my biggest thing – you should not have to worry what is going to be there when you get there – am I going to get in or am I not going to get in?"

"Some industrial sites that you go to, you cannot get particularly close to the customer due to parked cars and other delivery vehicles. You just park up and go and see one of the people that you are delivering to and just ask them what they are going to do – whether they are going to load you where you are, or whether they are going to move a few vehicles so that you get a bit closer."

"It is difficult to get round cars at some sites so I stay there until the car moves and then at 3 pm I am on my way, whether I am loaded or not. Unfortunately, sometimes you have to take that view because at the end of the day I am the driver, it is my licence and I am responsible if anything goes wrong. Once the lorry leaves the yard it is my responsibility and I will not lose my licence through anybody for any reason."

"Unfortunately it is just one of those things – you are not going to get anyone to move the vehicle. No one is going to come out and move it for you and personally I would rather find another way round than trying to get Joe Public to see me round because they are not bothered whether I hit a car or not."

Having to reverse into the site and blocking the public highway while doing so, is a particularly hazardous manoeuvre.

"In another job in Tottenham you have to drive past and then reverse off a main road to get to their building. Cars are cutting you up inside and around the outside of the vehicle – it is totally dangerous. Someone will get hurt one day."

"There are one or two sites that I go to where I have to reverse across a main road. No-one helps you with this. If you are driving an artic most people will stand behind you so you cannot see them and they do not have an idea that everything on an artic is the other way round. They do not really help you unless they are a fellow driver really and then they understand which way you intend to go."

"At another site near the Docklands you drive down past the gate and across the road, which could be clear when you go across, but when you reverse, traffic is coming round the back of you. If nobody is there to stop the traffic even it is highly dangerous and it is all down to you if you hit something regardless of whether you have been careful or not."

When help was needed for reversing, more often than not there appeared to be no assistance from customer's staff. Where assistance was given, it was felt that those involved ought to have received some instruction or training.

"When you don't have traffic control when reversing onto the main road it would be very, very helpful if somebody came out to stop the traffic, but they don't as they are normally too busy."

"If staff came out when you arrived on the site and told you where to park and maybe guide you in sometimes – instead of you trying to reverse in between cars and you cannot see and you get blind spots. Even, if they stopped pedestrians for you as the amount of times that you reverse in to somewhere people are walking across the back end and you cannot see them – very dangerous."

"I think it would assist if places could have people standing out to guide you when you have got tough spots to park in. They could watch you back and it would be a good idea to have that assistance – they are not going to employ someone to stand out and guide traffic safely for them. Other than that there is nothing much you can do about it apart from telling the customers to get a decent building with decent loading area because the majority of the customers have got bad loading areas. Things do need to change."

"The last time I did get assistance they watched me back and I ended up hitting a car! He did not shout for me to stop."

Many sites were said to be poorly signposted, causing unnecessary confusion, frustration and potentially dangerous situations.

"Another site was not very clearly signed where you had to drive in and the address actually was in the next street which is where I went in, thinking the back entrance was round there. I came across was a low bridge and there was a car coming along and he could not get passed. It took 25 minutes just to turn the lorry round. If the site had been clearly signed I would not have ended up where I was."

Knowledge of access conditions was clearly a significant factor and experienced drivers said they would reconnoitre the site if they had not been there before.

"As long as you know what it is that you are supposed to do, I think that is the most important thing. You don't always know what is expected until you actually arrive."

"There is quite a lot you need to take into consideration and I think ease of access is very important. Can I drive straight in, turn round and reverse in a straight line? Do I have to jackknife the lorry, turn it in very tight, being aware of cars either side at all times and cyclists, pedestrians, parked vehicles and other obstructions. With experience, what I end up doing if I

am going to a new place is I get in the entrance and then have a good look round, preparing for a reverse, making it as easy I can to reverse. Experience tells you to stop outside and go and have a look at the site first."

"With experience I find I get a good idea of the best time to go to some of these places. I know who has forklifts and who has got loading bays. I avoid the problem of turning up somewhere with a heavy pallet where I know there is no forklift, so it is all a matter of forward planning and checking your load in the morning."

Clear procedures/instructions

Drivers needed clear instructions on where to go when they arrived on a customer's site. Often this knowledge was gleaned with some difficulty or later from being familiar with the site. Clearly defined procedures that took account of health and safety appeared to be the exception rather than the rule. The major supermarket chains were often cited as exemplars of good practice.

"First time on site you need procedures and instructions as to where they want the vehicle, where it should go, if it is a one-way system, do you work on the traffic lights, are you on red and green, where to put the keys, do you want to drop the trailer. Those sorts of questions where instructions would be critical, but you only receive these instructions if you actually ask."

"If I have not been to a site before I normally park up and have a walk around and try and work out the safest way to do it. You do not normally have procedures at many sites."

"The majority of the places that we go to are just units on an industrial site and there is not really much instruction. It is up to you to sort it out yourself really."

"You tend to go to the same sites so often that you know the procedure. If you go to a new site then it is mostly word and mouth by the other drivers – they give you advice and we help each other out."

"Sometimes you reverse onto the site or ring the bell or the shutter will be open and I do not like going into the premises. I wait patiently for someone to come out but occasionally you get some people that take a while or are not interested or you get people working in the warehouse and they just stand and stare at you and ignore you. Sometimes that does concern me, how you are ignored or are expected to know exactly where the person you are meant to deal with is."

"Once you get to know the offices and yards that you go to then it is no problem. If I have not been to a place before then I find someone and ask them what the procedure is, once they tell me then that is fine."

"Problems occur with the customers as they do not come out and give you any guidance of what they want you to do, or advise you how their operation works, or their safety rules – they have not got any rules basically."

"The supermarkets make it very clear as to what the driver is expected to do. The supermarkets are very, very strong on their health and safety."

One aspect of the procedures that was considered to be extremely important in respect of health and safety was the wearing of a high visibility waistcoat or jacket.

"There are a lot of sites now where you have to wear the fluorescent jacket to walk around the site. They have got clear instructions of where you should go and what you should do. When you arrive on site there are large signs outside to show it is a health and safety site and it informs you that you have to wear the fluorescent jackets at all times."

"One firm insisted that all drivers wear a fluorescent jacket at all times and all drivers had a letter about that. They informed us that if we turned up on their site not wearing a fluorescent jacket then we would not get served. That is a good thing really as you know where you stand and also people can see when you are walking about.

We have been told to wear these high visibility jackets/vests. I think the customer collections that we go to should definitely be wearing them, especially if they are in the yard with trailers going in and out."

"People are supposed to wear their highly visibility jackets if they are out, but not everyone always does. I think there should be zero tolerance on that. It is usually just left with a verbal warning – it is usually the same two or three people who refuse to wear them for whatever reason. It makes a huge difference if everyone is wearing these jackets."

"Being seen by wearing the fluorescent jackets is good and walkways for people are good. Just knowing where you can and cannot walk makes it all a lot safer. The general message here is to be seen and then you will be safe."

"On some of the customer sites you get people flying around on forklifts with people not paying attention and no fluorescent jacket. If you come out of a dark warehouse into bright sunlight you can't see for a minute and it only takes somebody walking near the door for a potential accident."

Drivers were concerned at the lack of information regarding potential dangers to do with the vehicle and failure to rigidly enforce existing safe procedures.

"We have got tail lifts on all our vehicles or the vast majority of them. If they put the tail lift down and go under the dock and then when they pull off they drive round the yard with the tail lift down. Anybody who is not aware of that happening could get their legs chopped off. It is blatantly dangerous and they do it all the time."

"When it is wet and there are slippery conditions you have to be careful on the back of the trailer. Sometimes you can open up and the water can be pouring in and with a metal plate on the back of the trailer that can get quite slippery and you have to be aware of that. Also the sides of the vehicle with the shutter can get slippery."

"I have had two accidents on customer sites since I have been here – nothing serious. One customer brought more trailers in, which I had not used before and I was not familiar with their operation – you had to remove a bar in the centre – I moved it and it sprung out and smashed me in the face. Whether there were warning signs on it or not, there wasn't any briefing before, so a poster was put quickly put up. I was fortunate as I was at one of the few customers that actually had an on-site nurse. If I had not been treated on site I would have had to get an ambulance to the hospital. If you have new equipment coming in it is useful to be shown around it and then you know what to expect rather than to find out like I did! The other accident was with one of our cages, which had not been loaded properly and when I tried to move it, it fell down and smacked me on the head. This is something, which is known about but they still get loaded up incorrectly."

There appeared to be little prior notification of particular hazards on the customers' sites and this was generally contrasted with drivers' own depots.

"I am not generally informed of any hazards."

"Forklifts are a hazard to avoid on site because of their speed. There are a lot of forklifts flying around and if they cannot see you then accidents are going to happen."

"Normally at our premises any hazards are coned off – these are visible with hazard tape around."

1.2 On site

Surface condition

Deep potholes were considered to be a danger, but in the main drivers were able to see the conditions and drive accordingly.

"Some places have holes in the yard that can tip your vehicle over or you have to walk round them – I have known an instance when the cages tipped off the vehicle and it is very dangerous."

"Really bad potholes affect the vehicle but normally the surfaces are okay."

"One of the sites is a difficult delivery because it is all rubble and potholes. On one side there is a telegraph pole and panel fencing and on the other side there are parked cars. I will have literally between 6 inches to a foot either side. You have to go very carefully and have to watch for the vehicle to tip sideways when I hit the potholes."

"Some sites have slopes so you have to work a bit harder with the lorry but most surfaces are pretty good."

"Building sites may cause a problem but I stay on hard ground and will not risk going over rubble or into mud or soft conditions because the vehicle is not suitable for that sort of ground."

"There is one site where I have to reverse out and drive through a garden centre and down to a pipe place at the end. There is a little bit of concrete down at the end but basically it is just dirt and if the weather is warm it gets very dusty and when it rains it is mud so that can become a problem. The dust blows up when it is windy and visibility is not as good as it could be so I drive very, very slowly."

Supervision/assistance

Drivers felt they would benefit from trained assistance in manoeuvring into position, particularly when reversing. Reversing was clearly deemed to be one of the most hazardous manoeuvres the driver had to undertake and once again the major supermarket chains appeared to stand out in taking this seriously.

"I receive no assistance with regards to guiding the lorry into position. We usually just turn up and park. They do not watch you back up and there is no assistance whatsoever."

"It would be helpful to receive more assistance on site when manoeuvring the lorry. It would be helpful if someone was trained who understood what the driver has to do with the vehicle."

"There have been a couple of incidents when the forklift has actually got wedged in between the loading bank and the trailer. These were when it had not been put on the loading bank properly and the trailer brake had not been put on. As the forklift goes on the trailer drops down, he picks up the pallet and as he comes back the trailer goes down again and there is too big a gap. You then have to lift the unit up. I think everyone is learning what is right and what is wrong with regards to health and safety."

"The supermarkets don't even allow you to reverse in the yard without assistance from the staff even if it is an empty yard. They are quite prepared to tell the driver not to reverse until the driver is supervised. It is not always the case everywhere – as long as I know what I am expected to do then I will back myself and will be able to do it. People generally give the impression that it is not something that they should have to do in their job description."

Drivers generally considered they did not get much help from customers with loading or unloading, when compared with the major supermarket chains and with their own company procedures.

"I do not get a lot of assistance on various sites; if you go and insist then you will receive someone to help you but most of the time you just deal with one person who is the forklift truck driver and they are not really interested."

"When you go to customers they sometimes double stack the cages and expect you to pull them, which is totally unacceptable. They're too heavy and they could topple over. The Managers do not expect the driver to do it, but when you go to customers you feel that if you don't take this work the customer is going to get "funny" and it just causes upsets so the driver ends up doing it."

"We are told not to move the cages unless someone is helping you; you ask someone to help you and they send the youngest kid there who can hardly push and these cages are very heavy – so you refuse to do it and there is an argument."

"People at one of the supermarkets will help me unload. They will be helpful and co-operative. I can go in there and there will be a lorry unloading. Sometimes I have to wait or sometimes they will bring a trolley and there will be light boxes, maybe as many as 30 - I put them on the trolley and then I will be gone. That supermarket is very well organised."

"With our company the unloading is usually done for you."

"We have loading bay operatives that load the lorries through the night, so when I arrive in the morning I know my lorry is ready to take. I walk on the back of the trailer with the loader and ask what have I got and how much have I got for a particular delivery. I ask how he has loaded it and then I look at it to make sure that it is safe and there is not too much weight on one side. It is my responsibility to ensure that the lorry is loaded properly."

There was a range of views regarding dropping off and picking up trailers. Although the pros and cons of safety did feature, much of the concern appeared to centre on the security of the trailer and its load.

"You must apply the trailer break on slopes as the trailers could roll if the ground is not level."

"At one place we have to reverse off a main road into the yard, round the back and then you have to get out and drop the trailer. There are lots of vehicles going in and out and it should

not really be a problem but if the yard is old with not much room and forklifts driving about – you have to be careful when leaving/picking up the trailer."

"On one of our regular collections, they lock the trailer onto the loading bay and have got a ramp inside. You have to wheel the items up to an area where the loading takes place, but then the ramp up onto the trailer is so high that really it is almost a dangerous height to get up onto the trailer. It is alright on a small vehicle, because they are level, but with the trailers they are too high so it is quite a steep ramp to get up. They have just spent a fortune having this trailer lock put in place, but rather than channelling down and digging it out so the trailers are level, they have decided they have got to lock the trailers for safety and then still leave this big slope for the guys to take freight out."

"One instance happened in a container depot where the driver was told to stay sitting in his cab. When his lorry was being loaded whilst he was sitting in his cab the load should have been dropped gently down and they let it go and I was sitting behind him – there was a bang – his cab was damaged and the driver's face was smashed – awful. That happened because the driver was instructed to stay in his cab, but after that incident the rules were changed."

"I never leave the trailer and pick it up again. I never leave the vehicle. I was stuck in a bomb scare once in London and I sat in the vehicle."

"When swapping trailers it is not normally a problem, common sense really. We drop the trailer on a bay and the chap on the site will say that is your one to go back next to it."

"I do not have any deliveries where I go in, leave somebody else to unload and then come back. I never let the load out of my sight. They could take off the wrong pallet by mistake and then I go to the next customer and they have the wrong pallet. I am the only one that gets onto the back of the vehicle."

"On some of the collections, with our premises where we swap trailers, there is one trailer swap in Tottenham – that is a poky, horrible little yard. I would not like to have just passed my HGV test to drive down there and tackle that on the first day, you have a level crossing, there is a bus depot with buses parked all round, you have to come in and time it to perfection, the level crossing goes down to stop the traffic coming and you have to reverse in. Normally, we try and keep hold of our trailer because otherwise they go missing, especially at a centre recently opened."

"I do not drop the trailer off anywhere during the day generally. Sometimes I come back here to drop a trailer and to pick up a new one. When I come back at night I will drop the trailer and put the trailer handbrake on. I park the unit over the other side of the yard and then the night driver hooks it up for me in the morning."

With regard to provision of a refuge or rest room opinion was fairly diverse with some drivers appreciating the benefit of a break away from the lorry, whilst others preferred to remain with the vehicle.

"While goods are being offloaded I would normally go to the canteen. When feeling tired it is important to walk away and forget about the lorry for 10-15 minutes and to take your mind of it."

"There are not that many customers that we go to where they have rest room facilities to be honest. The supermarkets are much better."

"Sometimes you go somewhere and they are not ready to load you so you go and have a cup of tea in their canteen. It does make a difference. There used to be a lot of small cafes on the smaller roads. Now there are motorway services and these smaller cafes cannot survive. Now I take my own sandwiches and pull up in a lay-by and eat and drink there. It is better though to get away from your cab sometimes and then you feel more refreshed."

"It would not make a difference to me to go the rest room – do not have time to sit down and have a cup of tea, just load and go. If you do get 5 minutes you can always sit in the cab."

"If there is no rest room to go to I am quite happy to sit in the cab reading the paper or listening to the radio. That is not a problem."

"I do not go into the rest room. I pull the curtains back and they load the lorry from the side and you have to be there to strap the load up."

"I do not make use of a rest room as I constantly supervise my vehicle."

"There is one delivery that offers me a cup of tea when I go there but I do not take them up on it very often. It is not that important to me to sit down while they are loading the lorry."

Traffic control/segregation

Drivers were asked about one-way systems and not surprisingly they are only found on the larger sites. It was felt that where such systems were feasible they made for safer conditions, but controls had to be in place to ensure compliance.

"Most of our places I go to have all got one-way systems so that is pretty good. Customers do not have this."

"At our other centres there is normally a one-way system and it is traffic light controlled which is good but at the customer collection there is nothing like that at all."

"On another site it used to be two-way and then they changed it to one-way. It has been one-way now for about two years and you still get people coming out of the wrong gate because they are only a hundred yards from it - then they have to back up. It causes frustration and I cannot back up with the lorry – people drive up on the path to get round the lorry."

"One site in Tottenham is quite dangerous. If you have got an artic the idea is to go in one gate and to come out the other, but during the day people leave their cars there and you just cannot get out. The only way you can get out is to go out the way you came in and it is very dangerous."

Drivers stated that where loading bays were separated from other parts of the facility, as with the big supermarket chains, the operation was safer. This was not always feasible and could lead to frustration and additional risk..

"Particularly on industrial estates, you are trying to load up and you are blocking in someone's car. They want to move and you can ask them to wait half an hour, at which you probably end up having an argument, or you could get in the vehicle and move it. It is more of a nuisance rather than a real danger. It just makes the deliveries slower and then you are inclined to rush a bit."

"Bigger supermarkets have their delivery sites separated from the general public so there is not a problem there. The big chains are all very well organised."

One of the areas of greatest concern was in relation to pedestrians. This applied while accessing the site as well as on the premises. Well-defined segregated pedestrian paths were considered to be extremely important, but again control was needed to ensure that they were well positioned and properly used.

"Cars and people are all around whilst you are reversing – you just get used to it and get on with it. This is a particular concern."

"If people are walking around at the back of the vehicle the driver is just not going to see them unfortunately."

"Anywhere where you are in a yard with cars and pedestrians it is a hazard all of the time because everybody wants to get in front of you."

*"At one site down in ***** there was total disregard for pedestrian safety with people walking when you were reversing the trailer, people walking in front of forklift drivers and it is your fault, of course."*

"It would definitely be helpful if pedestrians were segregated. Here there is a line going right across the middle of the yard which I don't think is a good idea; I think it would be better to be around the back of the lorries. A driver was backing in as a man was walking around and the driver just caught him."

"With our premises there are no problems. In yards there is often a yellow footpath with zig-zag line where pedestrians walk."

"Our company has separate pedestrian walkways, which are good. Not all sites have these though. It does not worry me too much as if you are parked up you are normally out of the way – the forklift driver has to be more careful really – if you get to know where these places are you park so that you are safely away from pedestrians."

"A lot of the places have now got yellow walkways where pedestrians should go. It keeps the pedestrians out of the way of machinery. Some sites are very busy in the mornings with the day shift coming in to work and the night shift going home - there are lots of people walking past. If they are not walking where they should be then accidents can happen."

"I come across various sites where there are pedestrians walking around and you have to be aware of that anyway. There are separate walkways but no-one seems to use them."

Night delivery/collection

The main difference between delivering at night or during the day related to the effectiveness of the lighting. Although there might be many powerful floodlights, the positioning was deemed critical if they were not to dazzle drivers, by reflecting through their mirrors, when reversing.

"I used to work for one of the supermarkets and their premises were well lit for the people that work there. If you had to reverse in you would get such a glare in your mirror. Once I was reversing in and my bumper caught a sack of flour on a pallet and knocked flour all over the place but that could have been a person – I was dazzled. Obviously, you would walk around the site first. You might see the shutter door that you are going in as that might have a light on it,

but you do not see all the hazards that are around the yard as they are not all lit. You can be as careful as is possible but there is always going to be something that you don't see. Here for example, the big spotlights are no help at all – they are worse than if it was just dark. It is obviously lit here for security reasons and not safety reasons."

"Reversing a trailer in the rain during the day is totally different than at night because the position of the lighting is different. At night-time when it is pouring down with rain and you have got the lights in your eyes and in your mirrors it is very difficult. Reversing trailers in front of the buildings, sometimes when it is raining you cannot see and the light is reflecting onto the mirrors so I normally ask someone to watch me reverse. Not all depots have this assistance available."

"The lighting is generally getting better but there are still a few sites that do not have lighting and it becomes a danger when they put the freight on the back of the trailer and you cannot see what you are doing. I always carry a torch with me just in case."

"I am a bit fed up with the trailer park – at night it is not lit at all and that is dangerous. There is vehicle movement and pedestrian movement 24 hours per day and in the winter when it has been snowing, raining or foggy it is really bad as there are no lights at all."

Lighting was also raised as a source of concern unrelated to night-time.

"Some places you are asked to deliver to can be underground – eg underground car parks. If the lighting is not spot on in those places, then that is very, very difficult."

During winter, visibility during poor weather and early morning or late afternoon deliveries was also raised as an issue.

"You do not see the yellow markings for pedestrians very well at night – if you are reversing across them and people are walking around then you have to be alert when it is getting dark."

"On one of the sites I visit where there is rubble and potholes and access is tight, if I deliver in the winter or it is an afternoon or evening it can be a very difficult manoeuvre. I would not deliver there if it was snowing."

1.3 Driving off

Notified when safe to go

This was considered to be a critical area with great potential for accidents to occur, even where fairly sophisticated systems were in place. Even in these circumstances, drivers generally double-checked for themselves that loading had been completed and they were safe to drive off. A number of systems were mentioned such as trailer locks and traffic lights in operation at the larger sites, but even smaller premises were able to operate simple procedures, such as retaining the keys or placing a signboard in front of the lorry, until everything was clear. Many customer sites, however, did not appear to have any structured system in place.

"Recently they have got a trailer lock where you actually back over one bit and it goes with the wheel, so once the trailer is on the lock they press a button and it locks it so you cannot pull off without their say so. I then collect the paperwork, they give the lorry a quick check and okay it and then I lower the ramp off, pull the shutter down, make sure everything is where it should be, lock the trailer, shut their shutter, press the unlock button and off I go. It is a foolproof system. If I was to back on and forget to put the handbrake on the lorry then the lorry would not go

anywhere as it is automatically locked on - it is a new system that they have in France. It can be a bit of a pain as you have to back into it on the blind side but I have got used to doing it now."

"Here what they do is for you to back onto the bay, you walk around and hand your keys to the guy who puts them on the hook. Once the barrier goes up you cannot get your keys but when you have got trailers that have been dropped people could still hook onto them and pull out. Again, if you are reversing up to a trailer and you have got a red light you know you do not go under it – you just back up towards it and wait. As soon as you have got a green light you can hook up to your trailer. Personally, once they have told me it is ready to go I just pull the lorry off the bay and am looking at the back to make sure it is strapped okay and I collect my paperwork and off I go. It works in reverse for the loaders inside. When the guys here have got a red light on the inside they cannot go onto the back, because that vehicle could be in the process of being moved. Whenever the lights pack up they just don't use the bay. It is slightly different at operations where you have got to unload it yourself. That is very, very critical. We have had quite a few instances where people have hooked up to the wrong trailer and pulled the trailer when they are still loading on the back. It shouldn't happen if they just watched the red or green light."

"Here, we have a lighting system of green and red on the bays to tell us when it is safe to go. With most of our own sites you don't go onto a bay or off a bay unless there is a green light. If there is a red light then you do not move the vehicle. That is the system. When you get your keys back off the person who has loaded your lorry he then closes the door and the lift is up then that activates the green light so before you drive off you check that the green light is on."

"There were a couple of incidents where agency drivers who were not used to a certain place came in, saw the shutters were down and were told Bay 3, they got the keys and pulled off. We have had a chap fall out of the bay door here as the driver was pulling off and he went down very heavily. Now our premises have a traffic light system in place."

"I marked this down as critical because we have had a couple of potentially very, very serious accidents. We have got a green and red light system – the driver is sitting in his vehicle being loaded and if he gets the red light that means that he cannot go. He should not have his keys anyway and it shouldn't happen, but it does happen where the vehicle has pulled off while it is still being loaded."

"A while ago a colleague did not bother looking at the traffic light, assumed it was green and he unloaded, got under the trailer and pulled off – there was someone in the back. Fortunately he was just checking the work off so he was fine – there was then a disciplinary procedure that we use. The traffic light system is extremely important."

"Here, we used to have a system where the driver used to shut the back doors, which I thought was good, because then I am in control. I would know that that back door of the lorry was shut and that the ramps had all been taken down because you cannot shut the doors until the ramps are down. I thought that was quite good. They have changed it now, so you have one man on there who does it, which is also good, but it is now somebody else who does that for you."

"You have to hand your vehicle keys in at some places from a safety point of view Someone at the depot tells the driver it is okay, everything is safe to go, you can now go and get your keys and you cannot go really until you are told."

"A lot of the customers have the same system. They give you your paperwork and you know you are clear to go, because you are shutting your doors up, lifting your tail lift etc and you know it

is clear. Some companies put a large board in front of where you have stopped and then when they have loaded you and you can go, they take the board away. That is a good idea."

"With customers, I normally make sure that I go into the dock and make sure that I am closed down and I always ask someone if it is safe to go and I wait until they say yes. I do not assume that it is safe to pull off – I always make sure. For the sake of 5 minutes it could save an accident. If no-one is there then I go and find someone."

"With customers, nobody tells you to go – once the paperwork is done it is down to you and you drive away."

"Customers do not notify me when it is safe to go. You just go. Communication between customers and drivers is non-existent."

"You go to some places and the only way that you check whether you have been loaded or not is to physically walk round the back and see if they have finished it which is crazy."

"You go to other places and they have nothing at all. You go in there and pull up to the door yourself and do everything."

"When the last item is loaded the customer says, 'that's the last one' but apart from that you have no idea until the last item is on the lorry."

Sightlines on public highway

This aspect was related to the ease with which drivers were able to rejoin the public highway and the assistance they received. It was affected by permanent features such as narrow exits....

*"At a site in ***** the site is so narrow – it almost touches the sides of your mirrors – it is so tight. If you open the door you have to literally squeeze out of the lorry to get out. Not safe."*

"If it is tight I always back in. I would not attempt to back out onto the main road anyway."

"A lot of places will not assist you in reversing out onto a public highway because they say they are not insured, so unless you can turn the vehicle round then it is down to you to back out onto a public highway."

..... and temporary obstructions such as parked vehicles.

"There can be lots of cars and vans parked around you, whilst you are watching them you cannot watch behind at the same time so if somebody comes up behind you, you might not see them. Obviously, there should be no parking allowed on the road near an entrance. Even yellow lines are marked on the road people still park there. A lorry might be waiting to come in and is sitting parked on the side – you cannot see properly. With an artic it takes you an awful lot longer to get out of somewhere, so in those few seconds it is clear and then you look at the back and by the time you are out somebody is on top of you. So it is all a case of stopping and starting again and edging out slowly. Not sure what you can do about it other than to say no parking within 50 yards or something. No-one assists you in coming out – that would be helpful if there was somebody just to do that. A marshall would not do it as it is probably a danger to them as they would have to stand in the road and vehicles would be coming at them from all directions."

"Sometimes we have to queue at the front so people coming out of here cannot see what is coming down the road as there are another couple of transport companies sited down there and lorries are flying down there. If you are coming out of here you cannot see until you are half way out."

2 RIGID HGVs

The comments in this category relate to lorries ranging from 7½ to 20 tonnes, although most were at the smaller end. The effect of this difference, therefore, tends to some extent to be reflected in the responses.

2.1 On arrival

Ease of access

As noted by artic drivers, some sites presented difficult permanent restrictions, such as narrow roads and bends that may or may not be easily rectified. Drivers felt it was desirable to recognise them and take reasonable measures to mitigate the difficulties.

"Access is one of the most important priorities – you have got to make sure you have got a clear access and there are lots of places that you drive to that are a bit dodgy. At one delivery site I have to drive in forwards and I reverse out. I am getting used to doing this as I have been doing it for a long time now."

"There is a new shopping centre there (15 years old) and I have no issues in there. The health and safety there is really good, it is all on camera, there are barriers, I cannot go in there unless there is an empty bay for me and I am not allowed to enter the premises until the vehicle that is leaving has left. The drivers are all in the same place every day, we get to know each other and we know the system. I will not drive my lorry until I know it is safe anyway. A lot of emphasis is on the driver - you have to look at safety before you approach an access point, so if it means parking your lorry down the road and then walking up and sussing it out then that is what you have got to do."

"For the big firms it was always a drive straight in, but with some of the smaller firms it was easier for you to reverse in. That way it makes it easier for you to come out straight onto a highway. If you have a driver's mate you can reverse much more easily. You can back right up to walls and do all the little things you do not normally do when you are by yourself because you have to rely just on your mirrors."

"I have noticed access into new industrial estates is terrible, as they are trying to get too many units into a small space. The car parking is then an issue if you are trying to get a 17 tonne lorry into a small space, which is impossible. There are just not enough car parking spaces and so consequently they are parking on corners and bends."

"Residential deliveries with a 17 tonne lorry are difficult, as you have to find an address in a small country lane, which is not fun at all. Some places I cannot get into with an 17 tonne vehicle and I refuse to do it – I just say, 'no access obtained'."

"The small industrial units, shops are generally a nightmare. Shops are definitely the worst, especially if there is no rear entrance to the shop and they expect the delivery drivers to manhandle goods through the front entrance of the shop when customers are trying to come in and out. We deem that if access to the property is dangerous for us to take goods any further then we will not do it."

Once again, temporary obstructions such as parked cars, or equipment left thoughtlessly about, caused difficulties that could often be avoided and sometimes drivers would try to get deliveries re-assigned to smaller vehicles.

"Cars parking on the corners of sites make access very difficult. It makes it difficult to get round onto the site. We try and squeeze round, but if we cannot get in we have to bring the freight back and send it out on a smaller vehicle the next day. Or we may try and go back later and hope the cars are not there, although sometimes you can find people on the site who will move the vehicles."

"There are very large industrial estates that I have visited where there is adequate parking for the people in those units and they are not even using them – you are trying to manoeuvre large vehicles with parked cars and rubbish bins all over the place and pedestrians walking around – a recipe for accidents to happen, not only to people but to the goods. The number of cars that I have seen hit by delivery vehicles when they are trying to do manoeuvres is unbelievable. Nobody listens!"

"The people that work on some of the sites park their own cars in the loading bay so you have to squeeze past and try not to hit their car and cause damage. Why do they park their cars where they know lorries are trying to park? No organisation really."

*"My main problem when delivering is in ***** High Street. It is a pedestrianised area after 11.00 am until 4.30 pm daily so everyone is trying to get into the High Street really early in the morning and then again later in the day."*

"Private addresses are a pain as you are in a large vehicle, there are tight roads with cars parked either side of the roads outside their houses and there is nowhere for the lorry to park. You then end up walking five or six houses away."

Access to building sites was cited as being particularly difficult and these sites were also singled out in other respects.

"Access to buildings sites is terrible – there are lorries sitting around. There are large forklifts in the way – you do not know whether to reverse and nobody helps you. You have to park the vehicle where you feel it is right and hope it is okay."

The requirement to stop on the public highway to load or offload goods was highlighted as involving dangers to the driver and to members of the public. Drivers also had to deal with the added problems of parking restrictions.

"A place in Deptford is a very busy road and you are unable to open the curtains to be unloaded so you have to load up through the back. Getting parked is the main problem as they leave enough space just for an artic but what they don't realise is that to get the lorry in there you have got to have a lot of space to manoeuvre it in. They have moved it down now to a 17 tonne lorry because bigger vehicles find it impossible to get in. Once you are out of the vehicle it is very dangerous trying to move around because it is a very fast road and again cars are parked everywhere around – you can be knocked down whilst you are operating the tail lift because you have to park the lorry in such a way that you have to manoeuvre the tail lift from the road."

"I can have problems, when I am parked on a highway, in getting items across to shops but my vehicle has a tail lift and I have the facility to move stuff. As long as it is secure on pallets it is

just a question of wheeling it across. If you are delivering things on a pallet then you have to look for a low kerb or make sure you can park so that you are able to take it off the tail lift."

"They build all these shops and then there is a little entrance around the back where you can get a car or a van round, but you have got no chance with a lorry. You have to park outside on double yellow lines; maybe you are near a junction and you are causing a hazard there. You then have to carry your goods so you get out of your cab onto a busy road and you have a heavy pallet, which you cannot pull up the kerb. Sometimes you have to pull the pallet into the main road with cars coming towards you just to deliver to some shops that are just not built for deliveries."

*"On some roads you have to park in places that you are not supposed to park, in order to deliver. You have to park and get a parking ticket to deliver because in some of the shops around ***** the "goods in" bays are just not meant for larger vehicles – you have to reverse and park in the main road with cars flying towards you that as it is the only way of doing it. You have got no-one to help you to reverse."*

*"In ***** High Street there are a lot of handicapped drivers parking near the main delivery areas, because they have got the badge. They park on the yellow lines and that is a big problem for me. The Traffic Wardens will move us on, but they will leave a handicapped car there because I do not think they are too sure on what the real laws are; that is a big problem."*

Not surprisingly, the ability to get assistance on site appeared to vary with the attitude of the people involved - both driver and customer.

"If you cannot get into a site someone will come out and will get traffic moved. The staff are always helpful. I don't seem to have any trouble with the people on the sites with issues like seeing me in, clearing the way if it is blocked. If you go in with a good attitude they are fine and helpful." (lady driver)

"There are two sites that I drive to with bad access points. You have to cross paths to get into the loading bays and one site is on a main road as well. On one of the sites there is a market on a Friday that runs right in front of the site so my vision is not very good, but I am guided in and out of both of those sites."

"No-one comes out to assist. It is very rare that you get help."

As with artic drivers, having to reverse into the site and blocking the public highway while doing so, was considered to be a particularly hazardous manoeuvre.

"Access is not easy. You have to look for parked cars and people walking behind and just generally have to be aware. A lot of the sites we have to reverse in because you cannot turn round. It can be dangerous but it should all be a matter of public awareness. Other lorry drivers and bus drivers are aware of what you are trying to do. At one site I have to turn right and reverse down. I have to indicate right, put my hazards on, lean out of the window so I can see people behind me. I then manoeuvre round and pull up and reverse round."

"When carrying out a three point turn in the road to come onto a site you do have to stop the traffic most of the time. My experiences of this have been quite good actually. At one company I have to reverse in off a very busy main road, which leads up to the M25 with lots of traffic on there. As I come up to the site I put the hazards on and most drivers realise that you are stopping and that you will be doing a manoeuvre. You do get the odd driver who will put his indicator on and try to come round you before he realises what you are doing."

"On one industrial estate that I go to there is a main road and you have to reverse in off the main road. People do not care that you are reversing. The other week I was reversing into one company and as I was reversing back a van went straight round the back of me, up onto the pavement and then drove off. If I had hit him it would have been my fault."

"People do not realise what it is like to be a professional driver – they do not realise that when you have got your hazards on and you are half way across the road you are reversing into somewhere and people get impatient which puts the driver under pressure. That happens every single day really. There is always someone that you upset or they upset you!"

"When stopping on the public highway I pull into the centre of the road and try and make it obvious to every other road user that I am reversing into the gateway of some premises - even so you get an idiot who is still trying to squeeze behind you while you are beginning to reverse and manoeuvre. You end up in situations where other road users are very impatient or becoming aggressive. I have seen little Minis trying to intimidate 18 tonne lorries!"

"I have delivered to companies where we are expected to reverse in off a dual carriageway and to actually get the swing onto their premises you have to be in the outside lane. It's an absolute death trap - an accident waiting to happen. You voice concerns but companies do not want to know. You are just a delivery driver."

Clear procedures/instructions

The supermarkets and large factories generally gave good instructions, but on many customers' sites this knowledge had to be gleaned with some difficulty.

"With the supermarkets you get to the security gate and they ask you where you are going. They look at their camera and they tell you if you can get onto the bay and exactly which bay to go on. It is well lit up and you back onto the bay and there is no problem."

"If you go to a large factory there is normally strict control on the entrances, exits and well-displayed site information, speed limits, and directions going round their particular sites. That is excellent."

"I go to most companies every day so I already know the procedure there. Sometimes you do get a different delivery that you have not been to before and you are not sure where you have got to go. In that instance I would park up outside, pop into reception and ask them if they have the goods in, is it accessible etc – there are not normally many problems. I do not receive that information before I go to the site, I usually have to ask and find out for myself when I arrive on site."

"There is normally someone to tell you where to go or if not, there are sometimes big signs saying, for instance, good inwards door 3. Sometimes they say park here or report here."

"Sometimes a customer will come out and make sure that you are okay, but nine times out of ten you do not receive assistance. I do not enjoy it when you arrive on a site and you have to hunt around for someone to advise you of where you have to go to – it can take quite a while to actually find someone."

Building sites were singled out as being particularly difficult to get instructions.

"When you first visit building sites they are bad. They are temporary sites and you get no help at all. They pass the buck so you just have to try and find someone responsible. No-one will move to help you reverse in or out or anything. The main building sites are there for a couple of years and they make a permanent area where you should deliver but then you get so many people going there at one time it is a bit manic and awkward."

"I get no guidance at all on building sites generally. Once you get out you ask, "who do I see about this" and they just send you from person to person because they don't want to know. You might find a Site Manager upstairs in his office but it is pretty rare."

"Some building sites have a security guard or gate man and they will sort you out straight away but on other sites you have got to try and find the site office and then find the contractors."

"I never enter straight onto a building site without any authorisation, as you never know what is going on (cranes etc). Building sites are quite dangerous especially if you have not got the protective gear. The drivers do not have hard hats."

Notification by customers of hazards on their sites was not unknown, but more often than not the drivers had to find out for themselves. When having to park on the highway during delivery, pedestrians and other traffic were seen as significant hazards.

*"Another big problem is people of all ages running around the back of my lorry when I am reversing and that is a massive problem in the town centre. Jay walking is another problem – you cannot move on a green light in ***** and you must look carefully, because the children are a terrible danger. Everyone wants to move fast and it is really dangerous – pedestrians running out in front of me are my worst problem."*

"Even if I am being guided in by a site operative, there are often still people running around the back of my lorry. Complacency has come in with the reverse beeper – it is just like a siren – pedestrians just do not take any notice any more. I do have sensors on my lorries and they are that good that I can pick up pedestrians running across (it beeps and goes red); the sensors are very good (the lorry is only one year old though) and sometimes they will pick up a lamp post."

"I always wear a high visibility jacket in the lorry. It is necessary because of forklifts moving."

"Forklifts are always a hazard as they are racing around all of the time."

With no notification of hazards, experienced drivers tended to park somewhere safe and look at the situation for themselves when delivering to new sites.

"I am lucky as I drive in a relatively small area, which I know well as I live near there. I know the safety issues in that area and it is down to driver perception. If you are not sure then you must go and have a look first - that is my philosophy."

Drivers needed to be aware of the hazardous nature of goods they were required to carry.

"If I am instructed to do something dangerous I would not do it – I would not carry anything that I consider is a hazard. Once I went out to pick up an engine up and I refused to do it because the engine had oil in it. You do not want oil on the other goods. It is company policy anyway but the last thing you need is thousands of pounds worth of computers being covered in engine oil. The customers do not like it but what else can you do?"

"Also, I would never have any bare metal on show and I will not take anything like that as I could get back here and the loader could catch his leg on it or even the driver when he is on the back – it is a hazard and I think most of the drivers feel like that. They would not carry bare metal. It is company procedure."

There was an awareness of danger arising through something having changed since the last time a driver delivered, but although one driver was notified it did not appear to be the norm.

"I do get notified through the customer if things have changed since the last time I delivered. The company is not normally informed, so I am told when I arrive on site by the customer."

"I normally go to the same sites. Sometimes you are too familiar with certain sites that you go to all the time and then the hazards change and you might hit something."

2.2 On site

Surface condition

Concerns regarding the lorry were mainly to do with the possibility of getting stuck in mud and often involved building sites, although some industrial premises posed similar traction problems.

"The surfaces on building sites can be bad. Two weeks ago I thought I was going to get stuck on a large building site. I was following a van in mud and my wheels were sinking. I got right to the top, got stuck and did not know how to turn round. They then told me I would have to back out. There was no organisation whatsoever."

"In the winter the surfaces are very muddy and if there is a chance of me getting stuck on site then I will not go in. I tell the people on site that I am not coming in. Every site has a different surface, but the main problem is whether my tyres will get stuck and if they will start spinning round."

"We very rarely go onto a building site with one of our vehicles. We had a driver do this 18 months ago – the access road to the site was about one mile long so obviously he had to go down the access road. The access road was totally inadequate and full of potholes. He ended up going down a pothole and smashing the radiator on the lorry. Our vehicles are not designed to go onto site and because we do not carry the appropriate hard hats etc we do not go onto the site. We are wary of some engineering industrial units, especially if there seems to be spillage of oil or grease – you can normally notice that. Obviously we do not want to be sliding around on that. 99% of the surfaces are not a problem – it is people that are a problem."

Many deliveries involved manual handling and it was clear that the condition of the surface could make a significant difference to the driver's ability to perform this task safely.

"The premises can be anywhere, ie on an industrial site, at a garage or an old farm, so they can be very uneven. A proper delivery yard does make the job much easier if the surface is good. If the tail lift's on the ground and you have got to push a cage on pebble stones it is very awkward. If there is a bad slope it means you have got to push the load up an incline on the vehicle - it is not always possible to get the vehicle round the right way for that. A lot of places are not really designed for our sort of vehicle."

"It is difficult trying to push trolleys or sack barrows through gravel surfaces. A lot of private houses have gravel drives. I try and back the lorry up as far as I can but when you go to people's driveways you do not know if they like having lorries there."

"I have problems with sloping surfaces. Going up steps to the houses as well. That is another thing that is difficult because you cannot pull a barrow up steps. We are supposed to deliver to the door."

The potential of damage being caused to goods was referred to as another concern to drivers.

"Most of our deliveries are on pallets so if you have an uneven surface you cannot make the delivery. Until the site gets the uneven surface sorted out then I bring the load back. We do not always know what goods we are carrying so it could be an expensive TV and that could get damaged."

Supervision/assistance

Drivers had differing experience of being guided into position, but generally agreed that it was important, especially when reversing.

"With the building sites sometimes you have to reverse in with machines going, the crane can be up above and it is a bit scary. No supervision is given to you on the building sites."

"We get the problems with small industrial units simply because they are not concerned, you are just another delivery driver and they expect you to unload your goods at their door, get your paperwork signed and then be out of their way. They are not concerned whether you can safely get to the door – that is your problem! There is quite a difference in attitude."

"Sometimes I ask for assistance in reversing but most times I manage on my own. It is sometimes difficult to get the back of the lorry lined up with the delivery bay so it is best to have someone to guide you."

"I do ask for guidance especially when reversing on sites and someone normally comes out to assist."

"If you are off the road it is not too bad. When you are on the road and you have got to reverse in onto a loading bay you have the pedestrian problem, but you do receive assistance with that."

"Most yards that you go into are pretty safe. The only thing that does concern me in the city is where you have somewhere tight to reverse into and obviously some companies have not got that extra person just to see you backing in."

"I am normally guided to my position of loading or unloading. The person guiding me will point out where the bay is, help with reversing and make sure I am keeping the right distance so they will tell me when to stop when the back is flush with the delivery bay."

Assistance with loading or unloading varied with the lorry size and in particular whether mechanical assistance was required. Where forklifts were necessary and not provided the driver would get his company to take action.

"You always get help with the loading and unloading; there has never been a problem with that. I think that is probably one of the first things that any driver would flag up when he gets back to the depot that he is not getting assistance. We are supposed to take it from the tail lift back on

to the vehicle, we are not really supposed to put anything on the tail and forklifts are expected to put the work on the lorry."

"If the stuff is light enough I can take it off by hand, but it does not happen very often. If I have heavy stuff then I have to be happy that I can move the stuff myself. Our policy is that, if you cannot manage on your own then we have to ask the customer for help. If we need assistance and they cannot help, we have to take it away and bring it back on a tail lift or whatever - we explain why. We are not forced to deliver stuff that will put us at risk. I control the process myself and have the authority of the company."

"I do receive assistance with the forklifts lifting the pallets. If the forklift is being used somewhere else and there are just a few boxes on a pallet then I will break it down and just hand roll it off. Usually, once you have found the person who is taking delivery then they will take the goods off for you – not a problem. The biggest problem is finding the right person to take delivery."

"If we cannot pull the goods onto our tail lift safely we then ask for assistance and they do not give us assistance then we do not pick the goods up. 90% of it is common sense from the driver's point of view, but all drivers are under instruction that, if they think it is unsafe then do not do it. If you require further guidance on whether it is safe or not then you telephone in for guidance. Do not put yourself or other people at risk of personal injury."

Getting assistance when loading or unloading by hand was often felt to depend on the relationship between driver and customer. Delivering goods to upper floors in smaller premises and to building sites was a common cause of complaint.

"I find that I do receive assistance on most sites with loading and unloading so it is not a problem. Most of my customers are pretty good at helping me – I think it helps to create a good relationship with your customers and then there is not a problem."

"A lot of it is down to the driver's attitude, if you are professional enough in your job you will recognise a problem before it happens and you will stop it. I will not drive onto a building site – I think it is too dangerous to put your vehicle in that situation. I would go straight to the site office and tell them that I have delivery for them, I would tell them that I have parked in a safe place and nine times out of ten if you have approached them properly they will assist you."

"I will carry the majority of the goods into the shop as it means that I get on quicker. Obviously it takes longer because you have to close the shutter down every time for security, but if I have a large load I will walk into the shop and ask for some assistance. They generally will help me because most of the other times I have done it without asking for their help. It is a bit of give and take on both sides."

"I usually have a good understanding with the customers and they assist and do not cause any problems. I find building sites are a real pain – they are dangerous. The men are walking around with their hard hats on and I am trying to find someone to sign for the goods. Nobody wants to sign for anything so you are hunting around looking for someone to sign. Again, some building sites are extremely dangerous and I think we should not have to go on to them. Others have a site office and they are much better as they have a forklift and they will come out and take the goods off the lorry with no problem."

"I had an incident last summer when we were carrying water in the large water machines. They are very heavy - 40 kilos each. We were getting all the bad access deliveries and I was carrying these machines to the front doors of premises. A lot of the women working in the retail outlets

were instructing me to take the machine here, there and everywhere and I said that that was not my job because if I had an accident on their premises then that is my fault - so I would not do it. If the retail outlet has any issue with it then they just ring the company, who explain the situation. Nine times out of ten I would be back there the next day and the shop workers then know what the situation is and do not try to instruct you again. They were asking me to carry heavy objects upstairs when it is not my job. You use your experience in these situations and you have to trust the company that you are driving for to back you up in the right situation at the time."

"I do not get much help from the people I deliver to. I went to one today with about 60 boxes, but there was no-one to help me and their attitude was not good. It was off the kerb, up three flights of stairs to their stationery store."

"One office block that we go to there is no adequate loading bay for a lorry to go into. The reception area will not allow the driver to use a sack trolley or a pallet trolley and the driver might have 30 or 40 boxes to go to the eighth floor. There is no assistance and it is just unreasonable. The people on site think that the goods are going to get to their destination as if by magic!"

"Sometimes they want me to carry parcels upstairs. I do not carry parcels upstairs even though the customer expects me to so they ring up the company and I am backed up. I get on with anyone but if they start getting awkward I say no, I am not doing that and if you do not want it then I shall just go. The main hazard is carrying heavy parcels upstairs when there are no lifts."

"I do receive assistance on the industrial parks from the forklift truck drivers. The building sites let you do it yourself. The shops will tell you to park at the front and you do not receive any help with the loading/unloading."

"If it is safe to do so, we will go onto a building site to find the relevant customer but if it is a situation where we need a hard hat then we try and get the site workers to find him."

"It is dangerous on building sites as you are supposed to wear a hard hat and you are walking under a lot of scaffolding, which can be hazardous."

Interpretation of what constitutes a load too heavy for one man to handle on his own was often the source of disagreements and peer pressure or macho attitude could take over.

"If the goods are too heavy for one man to lift (which we would normally class as anything over 25 kilos) and there is only one of us, then we will refuse delivery if nobody will assist us. It normally causes problems. You get abuse from the customer and we get comeback from our employers."

On larger sites the loading and unloading was an integral part of the organisation's overall procedures, but drivers would commonly want to check the loading themselves.

"A lot of companies now have forklifts so the driver does not have to keep loading and unloading. The forklifts take the goods off the wagon, all we do is just put the goods to the end of the wagon and then the forklifts take the goods off – the drivers are the only people insured to be on the back of the lorry. When loading, the forklift will put the load onto the lorry, we use the pump ups and we just take the goods to the back of the lorry. The driver secures the load all the time. Some sites have their own loading staff – you know you will be there for about 2 hours – an hour and a half later you return to your vehicle and you can tell when they have finished loading because the green traffic light comes on. If a yard has the traffic light system in place

then I rely on the staff loading my vehicle to make sure that my load is secure as it is their job to do that."

"There are different systems of loading/unloading –with bigger companies the trailers are loaded and are locked with a company padlock. The driver has no access to the back of that trailer and we pull the trailer in good faith that it has been loaded correctly. You can go into a company one day and be correctly loaded. You can go into the same company another day and it can be an absolute shambles. I have pulled out of a company and got to the first roundabout and heard all the goods smashing in the back – there was nothing I could do about it as I had not loaded it – it was loaded for me. I turned up at the destination and was told this was not down to bad loading but bad driving! It is a no win situation."

"I prefer to load the vehicle myself, so at least I know what is on the vehicle and how the weight is distributed across the vehicle. When the vehicle is loaded for you, you do not know what is on the vehicle."

Appreciation of the provision of a rest room or canteen facilities appeared to depend largely on whether the driver was delivering long distance or short hops to many local customers.

"It is important to me. If you are doing local delivery work then most drivers will prefer to work to get the deliveries done and a lot of drivers would have their own favourite lay-by or café where they will stop and have their break. If you are doing distance driving there are normally proper rest rooms for the drivers, a canteen and all facilities. It is normally at those points where they are going to get all their inbound or outbound traffic and they know they need to provide those facilities for the driver. The site itself would be very controlled."

"A lot of yards have a rest room with coffee, sandwiches etc. It is important as I drive on the motorway and do not always know what goods I am carrying, therefore I do not want to stop on the motorway and just want to get to the yard. As long as I have got enough time to get to my next stop, I will unload and then go and have a break, cup of coffee, sandwich, have a rest for a little while and have a walk about. It is important to me."

"I think it is important as if you are tired or thirsty, at least you have got somewhere where you can sit down and take a break."

"It is not that important to me. Sometimes customers will offer me a cup of tea but usually I am just in and out straight away; you get loaded, sign the paperwork and off you go. If you have got a spare five minutes then the customers might make you a cup of tea."

"I do not normally have time to use a rest room but at some sites there is a place where you can sit down for a little while but I have never been into a rest room. I have just been in and out. If I have a break then I just sit in the lorry. It is not important to me to have a rest room."

Traffic control/segregation

One-way systems were considered to be important on the larger sites, although some problems were referred to on industrial estates.

"On big sites, one-way systems are very important. On big factory sites or big distribution sites you would normally have security at the entrance and the exit – there will normally be a barrier entrance. It will be a well signposted site and road markings, clearly defined speed limits and where particular vehicles need to go is marked. The problems are with small industrial units and retail shops. A small industrial estate could contain 15-20 units, each of which could

probably employ a maximum of 10-15 people. Sadly to say, health and safety with regard to people working outside of their own normal environment is not a high priority. They may be concerned with health and safety within their own little warehouse unit, but that would normally be it."

"On the industrial estates you have got barriers, speed ramps and one-way systems. The one-way system can be a nuisance, because you are going one way you have got to reverse into a loading bay with cars coming up behind you. Usually other lorry drivers and professional drivers understand - they see your hazards on and they know that you are going to be doing some sort of manoeuvre."

Drivers' concerns about the separation of loading areas were mainly in connection with smaller customers without their own controlled yards where parking was often a problem.

"At the big factories and distribution sites there could be a car park full of staff cars and it is a very controlled environment. 80% of all the problems we come across are at the small industrial units and retail premises. It can be dangerous – guys on forklifts come out of little warehouses with a forklift that has got no restriction on it – you have Joe Public walking out across the front! There is nobody there to stop the forklift hitting a pedestrian."

"A lot of my deliveries are to high streets so you park almost at the front of shops rather than going to loading areas. It is probably 50% front door and 50% back door deliveries. Sometimes though it is difficult turning round. One of the supermarkets, for instance, keeps all their cages in their yard."

"From experience you get to know the problems such as people parking in loading bays – you have no help to back on. You have to do it all yourself and hope for the best."

"It is difficult because these days, even if you get a loading bay for a site people will park in it. You either have to double-park or forget it."

"There are a lot of vehicles which park in the way. If they are in their cars then I hoot at them and ask them to move for me so that I can back up. I make them aware of what I am trying to do."

The segregation of pedestrians in loading yards was considered to be extremely important, but even where the procedures were in place, there was often not adequate compliance.

"When unloading from the rear of vehicles we unload and pallets are taken away (up to a tonne on the smaller lorries, they can be a tonne and half on the bigger lorries). You get people wanting to walk up close to the tail lift while you are loading stuff onto it. The pallet could collapse. The stack of goods on the pallet could collapse. The driver always stands well clear, he asks the public to stand clear, he asks the people at the premises he is delivering to, to stand clear."

"I feel it is very important to segregate the pedestrians. You have to have your eyes everywhere because pedestrians are walking about at the back of the lorry and it is so easy for the forklift driver to hit them. The pedestrians tend not to look - you have to be very safety conscious but you cannot prevent someone just walking out at the wrong time – the staff should also be kept informed to keep out of the area and should also be more vigilant."

"There are walkways in most yards to segregate pedestrians. Most drivers will still obey what the signs say even off road, so if someone is on a zebra crossing in the yard then we would still

stop. If the pedestrians do not use the zebra crossing in the yard then they are in trouble. It is drummed into them that they must use the crossings."

"A lot of the small industrial estates tend to be the worst places, as the units are scattered all over the place and vehicles are parked haphazardly everywhere. Even workers on these estates will not move out of your way – even when they can see you are reversing. The larger the vehicle the more limited line of sight you have to the rear of the vehicle so the more dangerous it is. The biggest fear is running somebody over when reversing. It does not matter if you have warning beepers on the back of the vehicle - Joe Public tends not to notice!"

Interaction with pedestrians was a great concern when delivering in public areas, but segregation was not really within the customer's control.

"Pedestrians are walking about all the time and they are not looking what they are doing – they can hear the lorry reversing and they will walk behind you until the last minute and just assume that you will stop and you cannot always see them."

"There are a lot of people who do not seem to be aware of what you are trying to do and will try and get in behind you."

"Early in the mornings you can be backing in off a main road onto one of the industrial estates and people are on site rushing around because they are late for work etc. These problems occur every single day and you have to be alert for pedestrians at all times – you have to think ahead and you have to think that they will do something stupid like walk round the back of your vehicle as people do do that sort of thing. People cannot wait two minutes for you to back in."

"Pedestrians are their own worst enemies because they can see the lorries backing in and they still want to walk behind you. You have to have your eyes everywhere."

"It would be helpful if pedestrians were segregated. On big sites there are no problems with this. Again, the industrial estates and the High Street are the biggest problem as the pedestrians can actually see you and still try and squeeze past you. I have bought pallets from the back of a lorry across the pavement to go into a shop and I have seen pedestrians trying to squeeze past me pulling a pallet weighing approximately 1 tonne on a sloping pavement. Even if you ask people to wait they will not do so."

"I always put my full flashers on as I am backing up anyway so it gives someone extra warning. I wish I had a bleeper on my lorry but it hasn't unfortunately."

Some drivers singled out pedestrian problems associated with schools and drew attention to the more hazardous times of day.

"Schools are a problem as there is no control. You can drive in and out of a school and no-one will even stop you in a lorry. That sort of security is terrible. You do have HGV lorries driving into school grounds. I try to get there when I know the children are not around, ie not at 9.00 am or 4.00 pm. The gates should be closed and there should be security to alert people that there is a lorry coming in. Schools do not do that – I think it is terrible and it is an issue that needs to be addressed. When delivering to a school it is my responsibility to get to the delivery point, so I have got to get there as safely as possible. At one particular school it means driving about 300 feet into their premises. I actually have to go past the playing field, the main access point from the offices to the kitchens and I have had to drive between children at playtime, as slowly as possible, and then reverse onto a bay unaided. You have to ask the children to keep

out of the way whilst you are reversing back – that is a serious issue. I have mentioned this because it stands out as being so bad, but this happens also at other schools too."

"There are a lot of schools where I go and sometimes I get there around 3.00 to 3.30 and there are a lot of children about so you have to be aware that they are there and have to take it steady."

Night delivery/collection

There were pros and cons mentioned when considering delivering at night as against during the day.

"Night work is not as dangerous as people would imagine it to be, simply because you have got fewer pedestrians about. With the night deliveries that we make, people know that the deliveries are coming. They tend to be larger sites and the majority of them have proper access and control at their sites so they are not a problem."

"I sometimes have trouble finding company names and roads when it is dark and you are trying to locate a place. It is difficult trying to find a house name because you cannot see the name from the road and you are trying to concentrate at the same time – house numbers are easier as you can find the first number and then guess where you are, but house names are a bit different. You might be looking for a company and you cannot see their sign and you end up going past it."

"Also, when it is dark and you do not know the site, you may have driven in and then not realised it is a dead end and there is no place to turn round and so you have to back out. That is always more difficult in the winter and in the dark."

The importance of lighting was stressed on sites where there were night deliveries, but this was rarely provided on smaller premises.

"Night deliveries tend to be to larger sites, which usually operate 24 hours and they will therefore have adequate lighting. There is always going to be the black spot on any site but the main access points are usually very well lit. Again, to go back to small industrial units, retail shops, little places on the High Street – they do not have lights outside, as they do not see the need for it. It would be a drain on their operating expenses."

"A lot of sites are unlit. There was an incident where there was a nasty kerb but I just could not see the kerb in the dark, but I am used to it now so I do not have a problem."

"Goods In signs are always well lit with spotlights – most companies have these spotlights above their doors. It is not difficult to see for loading and unloading as the spotlights are there. There is also a light in the back of the lorry so you can see what is going on."

One driver drew attention to simple measures that could be taken to improve visibility on sites at night.

"At this main airport I have to reverse up to a door – they have got fluorescent strips going down the side of the doors so I know where I have got to put the vehicle and they are well lit. Most places have got these fluorescent strips. It is rubber and you are not actually backing straight up against a brick wall. The rubber takes it and then the lorry comes back off and the rubber sits there and you are bang in the middle of the fluorescent stripping - very simple and effective."

A number of drivers referred to problems of poor visibility in winter, particularly when delivering near schools.

"Winter afternoons are a problem. 4 o'clock on a winter's afternoon when it is wet, cold and dark and children are on their way back from school – they are very difficult to see – especially when you are trying to reverse a vehicle. The view in the reversing mirrors is restricted, because the mirrors are wet and again people do not seem to take any notice of vehicles reversing. People think that they can walk behind the vehicle, that the driver can see them and that he can stop. That person could be wearing a black coat and you have absolutely no chance. I do not like driving in winter."

"The worst nightmare is at 3.30 pm on a winter's afternoon making delivery to the industrial estate which is near to a large comprehensive school and there are lots of children around – invariably the school uniform happens to be black which makes it very difficult to see them."

2.3 Driving off

Notified when safe to go

With this type of vehicle, the larger ones delivering to bigger sites normally found a system in place whereas drivers of the smaller ones generally checked for themselves.

"I shut my lorry up when it is loaded, I check the forklift truck driver has gone, I go back inside and do all my paperwork and then after that I know I am clear to go. Someone may come and check that I am alright and then off I go. There is an informal system of checking before leaving the site – they are very good."

"If you are picking up from a unit and you have loaded the vehicle yourself and you have signed for the goods then you know you are ready to go. If you are on a large site and you pull onto a loading bay where they are loading the vehicle there will be some form of traffic light system and you follow that system."

"Some places I go to have a traffic light system. One in particular locks the trailer onto the bay and you cannot pull off until they release it. These are few and far between, so normally we decide when it is safe to go."

"You have to use your own discretion when it is safe to go."

"I do not get notified. It is just down to me. I make sure the shutters are closed, get in my cab, check my mirrors and if it is safe to do so then I move off. There is no-one around to tell me I can go."

"I am the judge of when it is safe to go."

Sightlines on public highway

Parked vehicles caused obstructions at exits and difficulties near schools were highlighted.

"Parked cars can be a nuisance. You might have reversed in one way, but you have to drive out another way and there can be parked cars in the way and you cannot get round. Sometimes you have that problem. Mothers picking up their children from schools park their cars around the school and that can be a problem. Once I waited at a T-junction for 45 minutes waiting for a

couple of mothers to finish chatting after they had dropped their children off at a school – I had to wait for her to move her car so I could get round. It was a very tight road."

"The larger sites are having a constant flow of large vehicles going in and out. They are aware of the dangers and the problems that they have. Smaller sites and industrial units do not care. You get the vehicle on to their site and how you get it off is your problem."

Guidance out onto the public highway appeared to be a rarity.

*"There are only two places that I have ever been guided out of in ***** and I can do around 60 drops a day at different places. They are both large companies and have more money to spend on health and safety. It is promoted throughout the company and it is noticeable. I have not been guided out of any other companies unless I have actually asked. You have to have patience when driving out of any site as no-one will let you out."*

3 TRANSITS

3.1 On arrival

Ease of access

Transits, by virtue of their size, did not have so many problems in physical access to sites although there were other issues.

"Sometimes you get security barriers and the buzzer or intercom is in a very awkward place at times. Consequently you might have to park half way across a road driving in, blocking up the whole gate. Sometimes it is a bit tight and they either put the intercom very low for car drivers, or very high for lorry drivers, but nothing in between. You are either reaching up out of your cab or sometimes you have to get out to use the intercom. At one particular place, you pull up at the barrier and the intercom is across a pavement. You go to the intercom and tell them who you are, you then go back to your van. They then lift the barrier and by the time you get there it is starting to come down again so you have to be quick."

"Some access is quite good but sometimes you can get to a site and they give their own vehicles priority over the delivery driver. In up to 70% of cases you have to reverse in."

"If you go to a building site there is very little access and normally security stops us going on site. Some of them let us on and some of them do not. With the ones that do not, you have to find somewhere safe to park outside and then get onto the site itself. Normally I would go to the works offices. Factories are easier for us to deliver to."

Many of the smaller vehicles deliver to city premises requiring them to park on the public highway, which brought its own difficulties.

"If I am delivering to offices I sometimes have to stop on highways, which can be a bit of a problem, especially in the city. You can have problems with parking tickets. There is not much dispensation for delivery drivers. If you are parked on yellow lines they will slap a ticket on your vehicle. You can get it when you are sitting in your van. If you pull over to answer your mobile phone and just put your hand brake on for a minute, if you are in the wrong place you get a ticket. You either pull over to answer your mobile phone and get a £50 fine or you break the law and answer your phone while you are driving and get a £30 fine. What would you do?"
"I normally pick up documents from offices so I look for a single yellow line."

The requirement for assistance on arrival generally appeared to relate to parking in the city.

"Generally no-one helps you on site. There are a couple of firms in London where you can ask for an assistant to go with you. Basically that is to stand by the van to stop it being clamped as there are Traffic Wardens about – the office is located up some stairs quite a distance away and if you are on your own or if there is a lot to collect then you can spend a long time away from your vehicle."

Most of the transit drivers also preferred to reverse into delivery sites to enable them to drive out forwards, but although not having the same degree of difficulty as larger vehicles still required assistance at times.

"Most of the time I am okay driving in or out on my own, but if it is in the middle of the day and it is a busy road I will go out and make a bit of a fuss and get someone out to help me. Normally when you go and ask someone they do not mind. They are quick to run out and give you a hand. If you have a driver's mate it makes a world of difference, because he can jump out and quickly hold up traffic."

"More often than not I can drive in rather than reverse, as they normally have a good delivery point that is tucked away from everywhere else."

"Most of the time I reverse it because it is much easier to exit the premises."

Clear procedures/instructions

Drivers delivering to large sites were normally directed where to go by security guards.

*"***** is purpose built and you have got security everywhere so you are directed every three minutes. You know exactly where you are going and exactly which loading bay to go onto, whereas some of the places "out in the sticks" are a little bit more hit and miss."*

"At most big companies I deliver to, security will always point you in the right direction and it is normally well sign posted for goods in and reception - this is critical for us. Most places are geared up for deliveries."

"Since I started driving I have noticed that companies do put more signs up which is helpful."

"I am normally told where to go. A lot of the time if it is somewhere where you have been before so you generally know the procedure; whether you have to sign a book or whatever so you tend to just follow the set procedure. With the big firms there is always a security guard there telling you whether you should go on a one-way system or wait here. There is always someone giving you instructions on what is going to happen, what to do, where to go etc."

"If you are not sure where to go and you are visiting a site for the first time, most places have security and they tell you to go to a bay number but you are not really taken there. The security guard will not normally get out of his hut. He will tell you where to go through the glass and you go."

"Normally there are basic procedures on site. Some places they might have ten loading or unloading bays and they normally have a system. Once they have a system in place it is up to someone to come and let you know what the system is and for you to follow it. Some places you might speak to the security guard and tell him you have a delivery and he will just say, "back it up onto any of the loading bays 1-5 and let one of the forklift drivers know"."

Most places I go to I know where their post room is and so I go there. They tell you where to go. If it is the first time I visit I ask someone to point me to the post room."

Building sites were again singled out for the difficulty of getting instructions on where to go, although they were not alone.

"Building sites are the worst places to access. They is very little communication regarding where the goods are supposed to be going. There are so many different contractors on site so you normally go from pillar to post before you find someone who is willing to take the goods from you."

"Generally there are very few information notices up. You just drive in and you have to find your way round. The majority of places have not got procedures in that respect or, if they have, the delivery drivers do not know about them. Some places have security or reception and they ask you to go upstairs and that is it, but generally there are no signs in respect of where you should go or what you should do. It is pretty much hit and miss. The instructions should be better."

Other than by permanent warning signs, the majority of drivers did not appear to be specifically told of particular hazards.

"I am not usually told if there are any particular hazards to avoid. I am usually observant and experience tells me if there are any hazards on site."

"Nobody tells me about hazards on the site. I look around and sort that out for myself."

"You can normally tell by the outside, on the sign of whatever factory it is, whether there are hazards. Most of them have hazard signs outside. If it is a chemical company for instance, then that is clearly marked. Agricultural sites and places like that, normally say there is heavy machinery in operation so the sites themselves are pretty good. However, building sites, which are temporary sites, are not too clever."

"If there is a hazard on a site I would expect someone to come and notify me as I enter. I have not really come across this - I have not been to a yard where there is a hazard like a big pothole."

"I have never been told of any hazards on site."

Transit drivers identified some of the aspects that they considered hazardous on sites, many of which related to lifting heavy packages.

"If I was told to do something dangerous and I was not happy about then I would not do it. I normally deliver documents in and around the City of London so I am not so regularly involved with loading bays and warehouses etc. If there was a hazard on site then I would telephone my Manager here and inform him of the situation and then await further instructions. For example, if I was trying to lift a massive box and I could not lift it on my own and there was no-one else there to help me then I would be told to leave it."

"If I consider something is too dangerous to lift or move, firstly I inform the guys here. I then advise them that if we get to the other end and they are unwilling to help us with the boxes that are too heavy then we will not unload them. Sometimes they will help you, but most of the time there are only women there and they are unwilling to help. Once you say no and take the

package away again, the next time there's normally someone there to help you. A lot of people open up the boxes in front of you and carry the things up a bit at a time."

"If I was asked to do something dangerous I would not do it, but it has not happened as far as I can remember."

*"Packages sent out can be hazardous. We do a lot of ***** for ***** companies and their packaging is horrendous. It is too heavy, there are generally no lifts and it is bulky stuff, which is difficult to carry up. They are unwilling to help you carry it up and they can be quite rude as well."*

"Customers will sometimes ask you to go to the third or fourth floor with boxes if a lift has broken down but I refuse to carry them up the stairs. I leave them at the bottom of the stairs and if they refuse to accept it then I just bring it back to the depot. It would be dangerous to try and carry them up the stairs."

"You do not normally get a customer asking you to do anything hazardous. Your job is to drive the delivery. If the boxes are too heavy for you to lift, then they have to get someone to help you if they want their goods. If it is a forklift job then you just have to wait for it to come along and offload. If it is too heavy, the customer knows that the only way it is going to come off the van is if you are given a hand."

"If I were asked to do something unsafe I would not do it. For instance, if I was asked to lift something that was too heavy or that I could not get my arms around because it was too big, which might cause an injury."

Some other aspects relating to hazardous situations were mentioned.

"Obviously Class I toxic goods and things like that we are not allowed to pick up. Drivers make the odd mistake here and there. For instance, at Christmas people are sending gifts all over the world. I remember once I picked up a box one day that said gifts on it and when I opened it up it had crackers in it. I was told they were dangerous goods because they have got gunpowder in and they ignite and they are not to be sent on a plane. I did not realise that at the time but it is dangerous. Customers need to be educated in that respect as well."

"Another hazard on site is other vehicles. If they are bigger trucks they do not slow down and do not seem to care. They do not heed speed limits. They also block entrances and exits and park in the wrong places. Forklift trucks can be quite hazardous. They drive too fast and do not consider other drivers in the area."

"Another hazard is a post that is not painted. If you are going on site for the first time, particularly if it is dark, you would not see it. I think 3' high posts are not a good idea on sites. You need something a bit higher so that larger vehicles can see them. They should be at least 4' to 4.5' high."

"Having electronic equipment on site, i.e. cameras, is an improvement in recent years. They can record if a driver is going too fast on site and then get back to the company so he can be warned. Stop/go lights have come in recently and these, as well as barriers, are a good idea. These things are designed to slow you down and if you are slower you are going to be safer. Multidrop drivers do not want to slow down because they do not have the time, but these things are essential to bring the accident rate down."

High visibility jackets were sometimes, but not always, required on potentially hazardous sites.

"I have delivered to a chemical place and they gave you protective glasses but we all have high visibility jackets, which we use here in the depot, but we are not instructed to use them outside. We can do if we want but we do not have to."

"When I deliver to sites out of London, or factories, they like you to use a high vis jacket when you go in there and there is a sign stating high vis jackets must be worn. It is normally just factories and then you cannot go past a certain point anyway so you wait until someone comes out to you. It is not too bad in that respect. The offices have nothing like that."

It appeared that drivers found out for themselves any changes in procedures or circumstances since the last time they delivered.

"On one particular site, there is a security gate and a few weeks ago they put a severe hump behind it, but it was in black tarmac. I did not notice it the first time I went there and I hit it at about 10-15 miles an hour and I thought I had crashed into something. That was bad on their part. They should have made the drivers more aware."

"I would not be informed of any changes though, it would be up to me to decipher whether there have been any changes."

"I look around myself to see what has changed."

"I have never been told of any changes that have been made in procedures. I find out for myself."

3.2 On site

Surface condition

Poor surface conditions appeared to adversely affect the driver's ability to deliver rather than difficulties with the vehicle.

"At some sites a lot of the time there are just pallets lying all over the place. Sometimes there is oil lying on the surface, potholes, sometimes some smashed glass and you have to step around it. It is dangerous if you are walking along with a box and you are trip over on something."

"The worst surface I have been on was a very old tarmac yard where you had a few potholes, but it was not so bad you could not drive on it. It does not become too much of a problem because you are normally in first gear anyway and just "rolling around" in the yard. It is important that a yard is on the level for the manoeuvring of trolleys, but if you have good wheels on your trolley then they can go over anything."

"There are no problems with sloping sites for the Transit vans."

"Sometimes you go to building sites to deliver and they are the worst. Although they have got all the health and safety signs up, during the winter they are just muddy and puddly and we are not dressed for a building site. You just get covered in mud and really you need someone to unload you. Sometimes you cannot go onto a site because they have got various things there so you are on the pavement or on the roadside and you have to walk through the site to their stores. It can be a bit dangerous but generally most places are okay."

Supervision/assistance

Transit type drivers tended to receive little assistance with guidance into position. Although there was some indication that it would be helpful, there was a view that people giving such assistance would need some sort training.

"People, if they are showing you back can be more of a hazard than if you manoeuvre yourself. They are not trained but most places do not have people showing you back anyway. It is generally the experienced drivers who know what they are doing. They reverse up to the loading bays with no problem. I have not heard of an incident of anyone being injured or doing anything like this in a van."

"We get very little supervision or assistance but we do sometimes have signs stating that a driver must report to reception. Most places I will speak to someone who may say, you need to be two shutters along and someone will be out in a minute. I then back up and wait for someone to come out."

"I back up and do not get any assistance. Lorries have got buffers at the back and they can go right up against the loading bay, but with vans you have to give leeway because you have to open the doors and load and unload. You are generally okay if you are careful. The only hazard is if you have got people walking behind you, but generally you do not have people behind you in loading bays."

"It would be nice to receive more help and better instructions."

Assistance with loading or unloading was given mainly in the form of a forklift when required, but mostly the goods were moved by hand. Practical requirements to do the job often meant that, if the driver was physically able to do so, heavier loads than allowed were handled.

"If you are delivering something heavy, there are some people in warehouses who are okay but you do get ones that will not do a thing. They will sign for it and if you damage it as you unload it, they will sign for it damaged. The only help is when you need a forklift. When it is being unloaded from a forklift I am to the side of the vehicle. I open the doors wide and then sometimes I will see the forklift in as, if there is a big pallet the forklift driver cannot see the side of it properly. Some of them tend to be a bit reckless and whack the back of your vehicle or the bumper and cost us money so I tend to stand at the side and they go in slowly. If they damage the bumper then I will report it."

"I normally unload myself. The only time I do not unload myself is if forklifts are available. It depends how busy they are, but most of them are quite helpful if you have got a few boxes to take. Sometimes they give you a pallet to put stuff on."

"It is very rare for anyone to help with loading or offloading. You would get help if you were delivering pallets where they have to forklift off but generally we only deliver small parcels and packages so you do not really need help. You just literally drop it off the back of your van."

"Loading and unloading is normally carried out by myself alone – usually boxes or documents. I do not normally carry pallets so you do not normally have to call out forklift drivers. Most of the loading and unloading is done by hand."

"I do not normally get assistance. Sometimes I help other drivers and they will do the same for me but I normally do it myself. It is mainly hand stuff."

"A lot of places they are not interested. They just want to get the parcels and sign for them and how you get them in is up to you. In 95-99% of cases stuff is manhandled on and off."

"With heavy goods I will pick up most things, but sometimes you need assistance and if the customer is not willing to give assistance then you cannot pick it up. I will lift anything up to about 40 kilos, which is above what they recommend, but some people are just not strong enough to pick up 40 or 50 kilos. People have different levels of strength but I would not ask anyone to pick up anything they felt was going to injure them. There is a company handbook and they recommend either 25 or 30 kilos. Anything above that should be assisted so they do not take responsibility for anything you lift above that."

"The speed of delivery for us is critical as we are on the go 24/7. Our biggest problem is being held up somewhere. Sometimes you cannot get off the site if they have decided they are going to move another lorry. You have to wait for it to unload and things like that, but I cannot think of anything too horrendous over the years."

The provision of a refuge or rest room on customers' sites was not really an issue, as these drivers were mainly making a large number of local deliveries to smaller premises. However, the opportunity to have short break and a quick cup of tea was often acknowledged and appreciated.

"We do not have time for a rest really, but I have been offered tea. There are too many deliveries to do and literally, the type of deliveries we do on the transit van, we have to get in and out and make the delivery and you have not got time to stop and drink tea. If there is a queue of vehicles making deliveries and you may have to wait half an hour to unload, you just do not have time. You have to carry on with your deliveries. Lorries have time to queue up as they may only have ten deliveries to make a day but on the transit we have 50-100 deliveries to do. Most of the drivers do not even have lunch. It is the nature of the job."

"A lot of the bigger firms provide a rest room where you can sit down and have a cup of tea. With the larger firms there may be four or five guys ahead of you so there is normally a rest room where you can sit down and there is sometimes a coffee machine. It is not necessarily important, but it is useful and is nice to have. Sometimes you see another couple of drivers sitting in there and have a chat with them."

"I am normally in and out on the sites and do not stop for a rest or a cup of tea."

"You get to know the guys quite well over the months, for instance the guys in the post room. If you have got five minutes most of them will make you a cup of coffee and have a chat, which gives you a five minute break."

"It is important that you do not drive all day. We are normally in a situation where you get a good half an hour to an hour break. I would say 90% of the drivers here do get some kind of break during the day. Sometimes you can find that on a customer site. A lot of big companies with new sites do not allow you into their reception. You are not allowed to use their main lifts - you get service lifts or service exits. Some factories have tea-rooms. One in particular allows all the couriers coming in and out free coffee and tea from a machine and cold drinks, but that is the exception."

Traffic control/segregation

Some of the larger sites visited had one-way systems, but most customers serviced had small premises and the situation did not arise.

"You might get a couple of vans in front of you but you just wait and they drive off and you drive in. There is not normally any traffic control or one-way systems on the sites I visit."

"There are a few places that have traffic control where you cannot drive into their goods in until you get a green light. It is one way in and the same way out and there is only room enough for one vehicle. If you have got two or three waiting to come out they get priority before they allow you in so it is quite well designed as long as you follow the procedures."

"Some places have a security barrier in the road that lifts up. It stops you with a red light and until the barrier is fully flat in the road the green light will not come on and again that will take you onto a one-way system."

The benefit of separate loading areas for Transit type vehicles was noted, not only in respect of obstruction by cars, but also for protection from heavy lorries. In the main deliveries were to small premises.

"Some premises have car parks where you use the same road and you have to drive through a car park to get to a loading bay so you have to look out for cars as well as other vehicles. There are normally speed limits up – 15 miles an hour on site or something similar. Some places have cameras up and one place in particular, if you go at 16 miles an hour a sign will come up "too fast" which is quite good. The bigger companies have these things. Health and safety is uppermost on their agenda these days. Sometimes you get cars parked in a loading bay and you have to try and reverse them round them and they do park awkwardly at times."

"Really the main thing is to keep an eye out for forklifts moving around on site. Also, you have to keep a watch on artics alongside the loading bay that you are trying to unload your boxes onto. I do go onto sites where there are artics – the loading bays are not separate – there may be artic lorries on a couple of loading bays so it can be quite dodgy reversing down the side of an artic and not being able to see too clearly. If there are artics on both sides and you are reversing down the middle you are worried that someone might come out of nowhere."

"We have to abide by the rules of sites but their drivers do not seem to have to. Their trucks can go where they like but we have to get out of their way. This particularly applies to forklift trucks."

"Most factories have their own set way of doing things once inside the building. Small packets go into reception because they go up to the offices but large boxes normally go into a separate goods inward area."

When delivering to larger sites pedestrians were often segregated, which was seen as beneficial. In other areas, perhaps due to the size of vehicle, this was not seen as a major problem.

"Normally, pedestrians are segregated on site. This is a big help."

"The good thing with our warehouses is that there are segregated walled bays with barriers that you stand behind so you are not likely to hit anybody, but transits are not fitted with reversing beepers or anything like that."

"We do not normally have too many problems with pedestrians. A lot of sites are marked out with pedestrian crossings inside so the traffic and pedestrians are normally well segregated."

"At most sites pedestrians have pavements and crossing points. They do not tend to walk in the road and so as long as you do not have to drive up onto the pavement or the grass then there is not a problem. By the time we start delivering most of the people are in their offices so there are not many people in or around a site to cause a problem."

Night delivery/collection

Some of the differences, both pros and cons, between delivering at night or during the day were mentioned.

"Delivering at night in some ways is easier, because there are less people around and they are expecting the stuff. That is quite good but we do not do that many deliveries at night."

"I have not had problems with forklifts moving around but most of my deliveries were at night and the majority of people had gone home. I would just drop off the delivery and they would probably be moved by forklift the next morning."

"Cars coming out of the site at night are not always aware and do not expect other vehicles to be around. They think that everybody has gone so you have to be on the look out for late workers leaving the premises or for people parking awkwardly. Also, if someone is in the delivery bay before you, they do not always check before backing up."

"During the day I often find that it is difficult reversing into our warehouses because it is so dark inside. When it is dark outside you can see inside the warehouse, but if you try using your mirrors to reverse into a warehouse when it is sunny it is very difficult. In several warehouses you have to reverse in to pick up stuff. When it is dark outside the lights from the inside do shine better. It lights up the warehouse so you can see to reverse in."

Lighting was an issue at those premises not set up to cater for night deliveries. The larger sites were normally well provided for.

"When I did nights I found some places did not have lights so it was difficult to see where you were going."

"Most places are expecting my delivery if it takes place early in the morning or late in the evening and most are pretty well lit."

"Most of the places I go to are large sites, which are open 24 hours a day and are very well lit up. I am happy with that."

Poor visibility during the winter, with early morning or late afternoon deliveries, required extra care and provision of high visibility jackets was felt to be beneficial in all circumstances.

"In winter I try to be a little bit more careful. Most of the deliveries go out in the morning and I would just do pick-ups later in the evening when it is getting dusk."

"During the winter it is useful when you are on site if people are wearing high vis jackets, because they can be seen. Also when you are delivering in the West End, where there is a lot of traffic, you can be seen when it is getting dark."

"As a driver I always wear a high visibility jacket so that I can be seen. I have noticed during the last couple of years that a lot more people on sites are wearing them. It makes a difference"

to me when driving as to whether I can see them or not; if someone is wearing a black sweatshirt you would not notice that as easily as if they were wearing a high visibility jacket."

3.3 Driving off

Notified when safe to go

With these smaller vehicles the driver satisfied himself when it was safe to go.

"I am not notified when it is safe to drive off. I make the delivery, shut the doors, the doors automatically lock, you get your paperwork signed then you get into your vehicle and drive off. The only time I receive any notification is if the company runs a traffic signal system but nobody actually tells you verbally whether it is safe to go."

"Nobody notifies me when it is safe to go. I am responsible for this. I just secure my vehicle, shut the doors and drive away, but you get no supervision whatsoever. The only time you are stopped is the lifting of the barrier for security. A few places do a security check."

"No-one notifies me when to go. It is just observation. Look carefully and just move out. There is no procedure from the company. It is just down to my judgement."

"I load myself and am responsible for driving off."

"I am not notified when it is safe to go. I just drive off."

"I sort myself out as to when I am safe to go."

Sightlines on public highway

Once again this size of vehicle did not suffer unduly from obstructions by parked vehicles.

"It is not normally a problem for me getting back onto the public highway. Parked cars are not normally a problem."

"I do not really have a problem. It is all part of the job but because we are not much bigger than a car there are no problems really. We do not have to worry about the back end swinging round, so it is generally easy to drive out."

Narrow exits were not a problem, but the importance of not having to reverse onto the highway was noted.

"A lot of the big firms make sure it is sorted out. They have bigger lorries coming in than a 7.5 tonner so they cater for bigger trucks and trailers. As I drive a smaller vehicle I have plenty of space and vision is good."

"I have no problems with sightlines or going back out onto roads."

"A lot of places you can reverse onto a loading bay but a lot of places do not give you the opportunity to. I like to reverse onto a door so that you can get your parcel out, get back in your van and drive off and you have not got to reverse out of a place. Obviously it is quite dangerous to reverse onto a highway. Some places are just not designed for anything bigger than a car so there is not much scope for reversing."

4 GENERAL

Some general points were raised regarding safety in the industry, highlighting some issues that were felt to be commonplace.

"When reversing, it would help if the reversing sensors worked on all of the lorries – that would help enormously when reversing out of tight spaces and it would stop pedestrians walking behind you. The reversing sensors have been built into the vehicles but do not work any more. You know exactly how far you have got, distance wise, to parked cars and people can hear you coming back – I think all vehicles should have these fitted anyway, but most of the time you have to judge it by yourself."

"I have been driving lorries for 15/16 years. I have driven everything, from small vans through to 18 tonne vehicles, which I am mainly on at present. The haulage industry today is so competitive, with everybody under pressure to get the goods delivered as cheaply and quickly as possible. Many companies within the industry have lots of health and safety rules, but when it comes to actual operation it all goes out of the window. The pressure is on to get the goods out of warehouses and into customers' premises – and that pressure is passed right the way down the line to the loading bay operatives, the warehouse staff and then onto the driver, which is where it stops. In the whole of the transport industry they make promises which they find extremely difficult to keep – that is a very cynical view, but unfortunately very realistic. I have worked for many, many distribution companies and they are all guilty of it. Once the goods are out of their warehouse they are then the driver's problem."

"Apart from all the issues we have actually making the deliveries, the industry puts immense pressure on the drivers when it comes to how the vehicle is loaded. In an ideal world there would be no other traffic on the road, no pedestrians anywhere near the delivery point, we would have proper access – realistically, how do you stop idiotic pedestrians trying to walk between a parked car and a lorry that is reversing? Impossible."

"The larger retail chains could do with looking at their system of receiving goods. Big shopping centres do not tend to be a problem. They have service areas where it is safe to load and unload the vehicle. The old-fashioned High Street stores, where there is no rear entrance to the shop, do pose major problems for the delivery driver, with safety to the public and to their own goods within the store. Major sites, factories and distribution sites tend to be very hot on health and safety. They will not let you on site without a high visibility vest or proper protective footwear – there have been vast improvements. The majority of the issues in my experience with health and safety tend to be smaller industrial units and offices. Offices tend to have an attitude where you are just a delivery driver, we pay you to deliver the goods – it is your problem. Industrial units have a similar attitude, but it is bigger and heavier stuff! I would like to see ways around those problems."

"Ongoing training for drivers would be a good thing, as we all lapse into bad habits. Ongoing assessment and training for drivers so you get picked up on the bad habits. Have your licence checked on a more regular basis. Members of the public could come out with us for an hour or two. A 38 tonne wagon does not stop like a car does – it does not manoeuvre as a car does and other people do not realise this."

"With experience I find I get a good idea of the best time to go to some of these places. I know who has forklifts and who has got loading bays. I avoid the problem of turning up somewhere with a heavy pallet where I know there is no forklift, so it is all a matter of forward planning and checking your load in the morning."

"New areas that are opening up are getting smaller and smaller so whereas years ago you were driving, turning round and coming out I find myself reversing in now. The estates are smaller with more people taking cars in which makes it difficult to manoeuvre. However, lorries are getting larger. They have now hit 40 tonnes. I think the longest one is 56 ft in total. Every unit must have an allocation for cars to make it safe for vehicles to get in and out but they do not think about larger vehicles or emergency services."

5 TRENDS FROM THE SCORES

The figures reproduced below have been compiled from the scores recorded in the questionnaires.

This scoring system is part of the structured process developed by PSL, but its function is primarily designed to make the interviewees think about their experiences in the particular aspects being investigated. They do indicate some of the trends reflected in the comments contained in the sections above, but caution should be exercised interpreting the results in view of the very small number of individuals concerned. There were eight drivers each of artics and rigid HGVs and six drivers of Transit type vehicles.

Figure 1 compares the average scores for importance in relation to their safety given by drivers for each vehicle type in each of the eight aspects considered. The first group of two is "on arrival"; the second group of four is "on site"; and the last group of two is "driving off".

In general, the highest scores are for artics reflecting the impact on drivers of this largest sized vehicle considered when poor practice is encountered. The highest score overall, given by artic drivers, was in the area of assuring that it was "safe to go", which confirmed the views expressed that this was a critically hazardous part of their procedure.

Drivers of transit type vehicles recorded the second highest score "on arrival", indicating the problems of delivering to smaller city premises where parking is a problem and the apparent difficulty of finding the right people.

In the aspect of "assistance on site", Transit drivers recorded the highest level of concern out of the three groups, probably reflecting the requirement to move heavy packages on their own. However, when it came to "driving off" their vehicle size meant that they had significantly less concerns than the other groups.

Figures 2, 3 and 4 show the average scores for importance in relation to their safety given by drivers for artics, rigid HGVs and Transit sized vehicles respectively, arranged by importance against each of the eight aspects. Ease of access rated top in two of the groups and close second in the other.

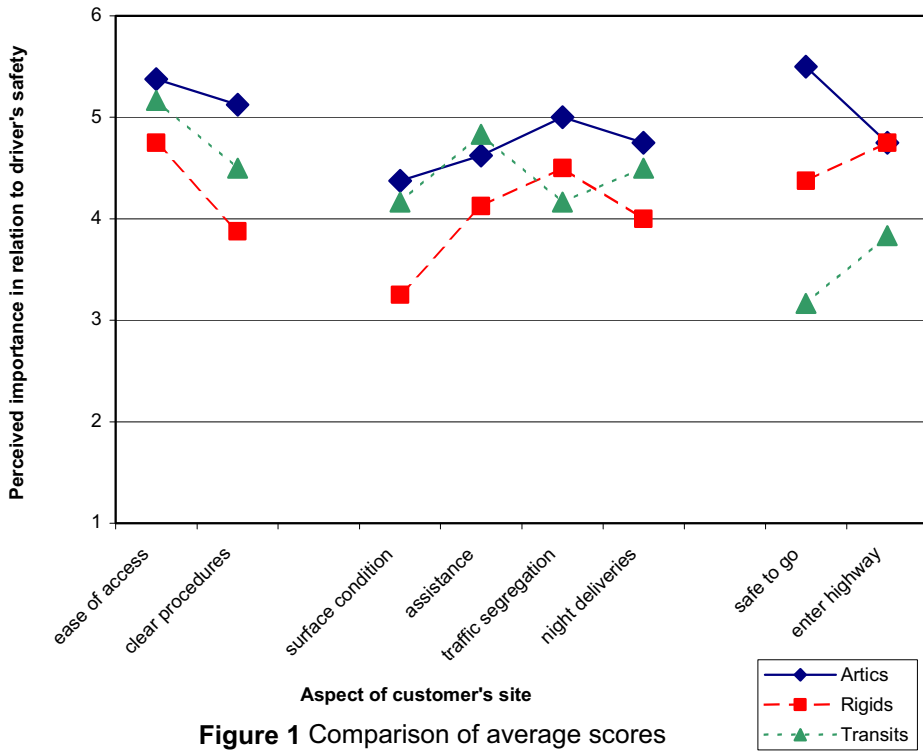


Figure 1 Comparison of average scores

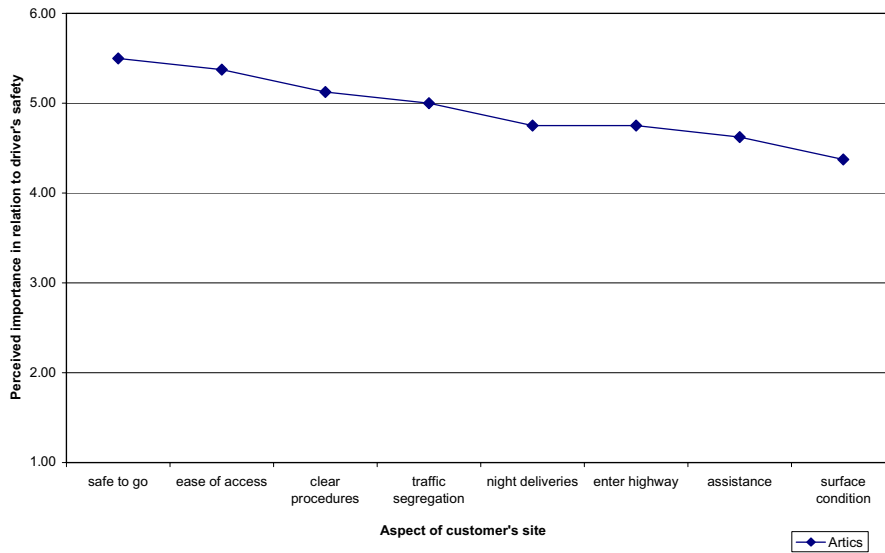


Figure 2 Relative importance - Artics

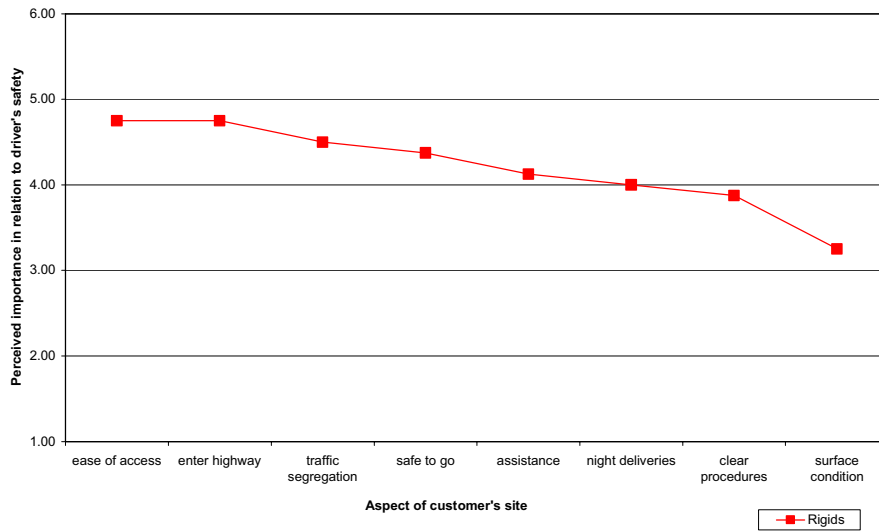


Figure 3 Relative importance - Rigid HGVs

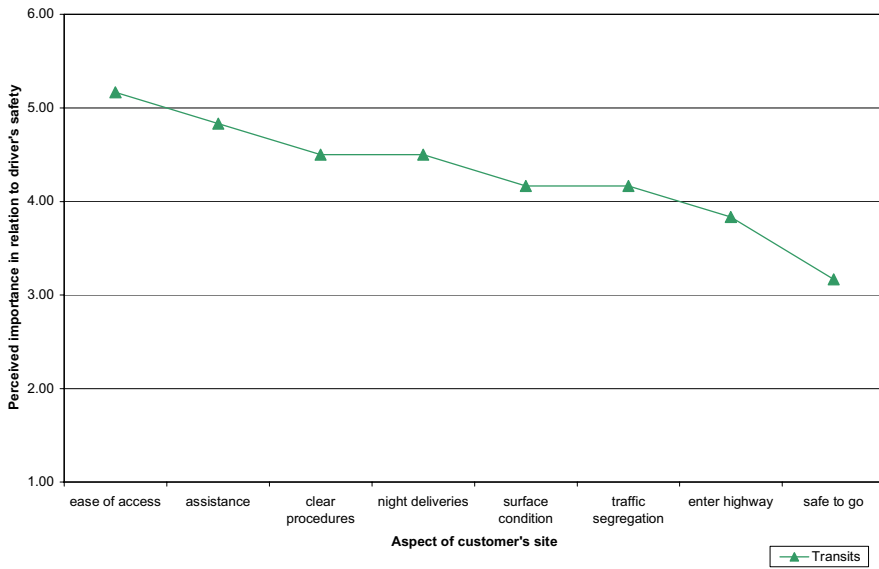


Figure 4 Relative importance - Transits

RECOMMENDATIONS

The aim of this report was to elicit the views of drivers as to what they perceived posed dangers on customers' loading sites. The prime objective, reflected in the "issues emerging from the interviews" section, was to obtain material that might lend itself to an awareness campaign by the HSE. The second objective was to identify those areas of most concern that would benefit from action by the HSE in order to improve drivers health and safety. Its purpose was not to suggest ways that companies and organisations might improve their systems and processes.

The following recommendations for areas of action are made as a result of observations and interpretation of the views expressed to us during the course of the interviews. They are not listed in order of priority and it is recognised that many of these already have been or are being addressed in some way or other.

1 Driving off

Promote procedures to ensure that loading is complete and that it is safe to leave. There are appropriate systems to suit large and small sites, both sophisticated and simple.

2 Visibility

Promote the wearing of high visibility jackets, which drivers considered were highly effective in helping them to see and be seen.

3 Access to site

Highlight to customers some of the issues that make access difficult or dangerous and ways that they can mitigate the risks.

4 Customer awareness through exemplar companies

Demonstrate best practice in customer awareness and general procedures, through publicising case studies of say supermarkets or logistics companies to large organisations. Identify appropriately sized companies for similarly targeting those with small premises or occasional use.

5 Reversing

Raise awareness to customers and drivers of the dangers associated with reversing both from the public highway and within the site and measures to mitigate these. Investigate the provision of cameras on the rear of lorries to improve visibility when reversing, as are now fitted to some cars.

6 Lighting

Raise awareness that sufficient lighting should be provided for night-time deliveries and that it is not positioned in a way that it dazzles drivers, particularly through their mirrors while reversing.

7 Manual handling

Raise customer awareness of the difficulties associated with carrying large or heavy packages, particularly to upper storeys and further education to all regarding the legal restrictions.

8 Training

Encourage appropriate training or awareness for those involved in banking or guiding vehicles. Highlight provision of appropriate refresher training for drivers.

9 Knowledge management

With the apparent reality of drivers having to assess conditions themselves, emphasise the benefits of structured feedback and passing on knowledge. Promote the way that experienced drivers will park safely and reconnoitre a site with which they're not familiar, before entering.

10 Parking on the public highway

Promote of the dangers and difficulties experienced by delivery drivers when having to stop on the public highway to load or unload including other traffic, pedestrians and parking restrictions.

11 Segregation of pedestrians

Promote awareness of the dangers to pedestrians from vehicles in the process of delivering goods, together with ways of recognising and then mitigating or avoiding the risks.

12 Safe loads

Promote guidance for ensuring loads are safe and secure together with clarification of responsibility where loading is conducted under secure procedures by designated employees.

13 Signposting

Publicise good practice in signposting points of contact, delivery access points and hazards.

14 Building and temporary sites

Promote awareness of the particular dangers to which delivery drivers are exposed on such sites.

15 Mechanical operations

Reinforce the potential dangers of the operation of tail lifts, detaching trailers and the like.

16 Forklift trucks

Highlight the safe operation and control of forklift trucks.

17 Public awareness

Promote public awareness as to the limitations and differences in HGVs in such areas as manoeuvrability and fields of vision.

18 Schools

Promote awareness of the need to avoid deliveries, where possible, at times when children are arriving at or leaving school, together with the inherent dangers of parents parking nearby and of dark uniforms when visibility is poor.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1 QUESTIONNAIRE

PSL - HSE Safe Sites: drivers' perceptions	
Driver ref. no.	Date
Delivery/collection sites: how do the following affect your safety?	
	1 2 3 4 5 6
<p>On arrival ease of access/reversing clear procedures/instructions</p> <p>On site surface condition supervision/assistance traffic control/segregation night deliveries/lighting</p> <p>Driving off notified when safe to go sightlines on public highway</p>	
<p>Scoring: Tick one box in each category from 1 (very little) up to 6 (really critical)</p>	



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