



Safety in the road freight transport industry

WorkCover NSW gratefully acknowledges Workplace Health and Safety Queensland and WorkSafe Victoria for the information gleaned from their publications on developing a traffic management plan, safe handling when securing loads on trucks, unloading flatbed truck trailers, getting in and out of truck cabins, and preventing falls. Workplace Health and safety Queensland and S. Davis are also acknowledged for permission to use their photograph of a worker using a dog and cheater bar.

Disclaimer

This publication may contain work health and safety and workers compensation information. It may include some of your obligations under the various legislations that WorkCover NSW administers. To ensure you comply with your legal obligations you must refer to the appropriate legislation.

Information on the latest laws can be checked by visiting the NSW legislation website legislation.nsw.gov.au

This publication does not represent a comprehensive statement of the law as it applies to particular problems or to individuals or as a substitute for legal advice. You should seek independent legal advice if you need assistance on the application of the law to your situation.

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Introduction

This guide provides health and safety information for road freight transport operators.

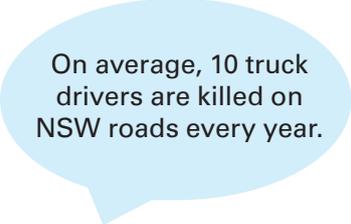
WorkCover's Focus on Industry Program has identified road freight transport as one of the state's high-risk industries, with a high number of injuries and illnesses.

Together with the industry and wider community, this program aims to reduce workers' exposure to workplace hazards, raise awareness of wellness issues, and improve return to work outcomes for injured workers.

The key issues the industry faces include:

- manual handling of freight
- falls
- securing loads
- onsite traffic management
- wellness
- returning to work after an injury.

Use the online checklist to measure how well you manage these issues, and implement the solutions outlined in this guide to eliminate or minimise any risks you identify.



On average, 10 truck drivers are killed on NSW roads every year.

As a transport operator, cooperation of others in the supply chain is essential for the safety of your workers during pick-up and delivery of freight. Use this guide to show other businesses they have a responsibility to work with you to ensure everyone is safe.

Manual tasks when handling freight

What is the problem?

Workers injured while manually handling freight.

What are the risks?

Heavy lifting, awkward postures, long periods doing the same movements, and inappropriate plant and equipment are the most common cause of injuries when manually handling freight.

Thirty per cent of injuries are caused by manual handling.

What is a solution to the problem?

Responsibilities

A number of businesses may be involved in loading/unloading freight, such as:

- the transport operator
- the business where freight is loaded/unloaded
- the business that controls mobile plant at the workplace where freight is loaded/unloaded
- the consignor or consignee of the freight.

Under the workplace health and safety laws, each business shares responsibility for the health and safety of those involved in the work, to the extent of their capacity to influence and control the work. Everyone must work together to ensure manual handling risks are eliminated, or if this not possible, minimised. A safe work procedure may assist with this.

Transport operator

The transport operator should:

- Eliminate or reduce the need to manually handle freight – particularly heavy, awkward or bulky items – by making available suitable, well-maintained equipment, such as forklifts, trolleys, pallet jacks or tailgate lifters.
- Work with the business where the freight is loaded/unloaded to ensure the size, weight and shape of the items are configured for safe handling. In some cases, it may be necessary to:
 - reduce the size and weight of the items

- where applicable, check the integrity of the pack or unit
- use pallets for bulk deliveries, unstable items (eg grain), and small consignments of dangerous goods.
- Work with the business where freight is loaded/unloaded to ensure the distance from the pick-up/drop-off point to the vehicle is as short as possible.
- Configure the load to ensure items are easily accessible when unloading.
- Ensure work is undertaken at a safe pace and avoid high workloads where possible.
- Talk to those involved in loading/unloading about the physical demands of the job, the time required to perform it safely and effectively, plant and equipment requirements, and any protective clothing requirements.
- Provide workers with stable non-slip footwear, high-visibility vests and, if required, suitable protective clothing such as overalls and gloves.
- Provide instruction and training on handling freight and using equipment safely.
- Select equipment that the user can push rather than pull – it involves less pressure on the lower back and fewer awkward postures, maximises use of body weight and allows better vision for the worker.

On average, transport-related manual handling injuries cost \$17,000.

Business where freight is loaded/unloaded

The business where freight is loaded/unloaded should talk to:

- the manufacturer/supplier of the freight, to ensure the shape and design of freight allows for safe loading/unloading
- the transport operator (before dispatch), to ensure they are aware of the weight and shape of the load, and any particular risks associated with handling the freight and the equipment needed to load and unload.

The business should also consider:

- Workplace layout
 - Ensure that pedestrians are separated from the loading/unloading area.
 - Provide enough space to operate mobile plant, such as forklifts and trolleys.
 - Design loading docks to accept vehicles of varying dimensions, and provide easy access and egress.
 - Ensure the loading dock has fall prevention devices (eg guard rails).
 - Ensure vehicles can be loaded and unloaded as close as possible to where the freight is located.
 - Ensure that goods can be moved along clear, wide routes.
 - Ensure the loading/unloading area is free of clutter, and designed so that workers are not placed in awkward positions – eg reaching above shoulder height, bending over.

Four in 10 injured workers with manual handling injuries are off work for a week or more.

- Physical environment
 - Install non-slip surfaces, signs and road markings for mobile plant and pedestrians.
 - Ensure loading/unloading area is well lit.
 - Install stairs, ramps or walkways for pedestrians and drivers, away from the loading/unloading area.
- Skills and knowledge
 - Ensure forklift operators are appropriately licensed and supervised.



Falls from heights

What is the problem?

Drivers are frequently required to work from heights. The design of the vehicle, the type of load transported, the collection and delivery points can all lead to the driver having to access the cabin, tray or trailer frequently.

What are the risks?

The risk of falling from a height increases when:

- entering and exiting the cabin
- loading or unloading goods or livestock
- arranging and restraining loads
- checking a load at a loading bay or en route to the destination
- checking livestock
- tarping or un-tarping
- undertaking maintenance
- working at night, in wet or windy conditions, or on uneven surfaces.

One in 10 injuries are caused by falling from the cabin or the back of the truck.

What is a solution to the problem?

Responsibilities

A number of businesses may be involved in loading and unloading freight, such as:

- the transport operator
- the business operating the workplace where freight is being loaded/unloaded
- the business(es) controlling mobile plant at the workplace.

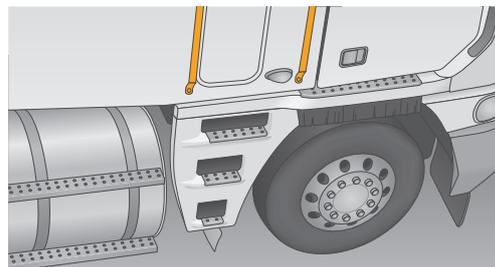
Under the workplace health and safety laws, each business shares responsibility for the health and safety of those involved in the work, to the extent of their capacity to influence and control the work. Everyone must work together to ensure the risks associated with falls from a height are eliminated, or if this not possible, minimised.

Cabin access

Reduce the risk of injury when accessing or exiting the cabin by:

- training drivers to properly access and exit
- maintaining three points of contact and facing the cabin at all times
- maintaining a balanced posture when accessing and exiting
- keeping soles clean and replacing footwear when tread is worn (consider lace-up boots, as they provide better ankle support)
- parking in well-lit areas, with an even landing surface
- placing hand rails/handles on both sides of the cabin opening
- installing, maintaining and when necessary replacing non-slip surfaces on steps
- ensuring steps and hand rails are within easy reach
- installing, maintaining and when necessary replacing non-slip surfaces on steps
- ensuring steps have consistent dimensions – eg same distance apart, same treads
- installing lights in steps to aid visibility.

The key thing to remember is, when purchasing a new or used vehicle, ensure that its design provides for all of the risk controls above.



Truck steps with dual handrails



Steps with lighting

Load area access

Working at ground level

Review all tasks that are performed at height and consider ways to perform it at ground level, or from a solid platform.

Where possible, configure loads so there is no need to access the tray or trailer. Use a crane and slings, for example, to take the load from the trailer to the unloading site.

Many vehicles have been designed or modified so that drivers do not work at heights. For example, some fuel and bulk-liquid tankers now have valves, fittings and hoses located so that filling and dispensing can be carried out from ground level. Many tip trucks and trailers are now fitted with ground-level tarping systems. Tarping of general cargo can also be undertaken from ground level by using tarping gantries or tarp spreaders mounted on a forklift.

Fall protection

If the task cannot be done on the ground or from a solid platform, consider a fall protection device such as a temporary work platform or guard rail. Guard rails are often fitted to vehicles, and designed to fold flat until needed.



Guard rail

Many workplaces insist that drivers and others use fall protection devices when loading and unloading. Work-positioning systems with harnesses are common. Some worksites have installed overhead frameworks

that provide anchor points or cables, to which the fall protection device is attached before accessing the tops of vehicles. These structures are very effective but only if drivers are trained in using them. Anchor points or cables in the container or on the trailer are also popular. They allow drivers to clip a harness on and undertake inspections of their load with reduced risk of falling to the ground. Some are work-positioning systems, others are only fall-arrest systems.



Travel restraint system



Fall-arrest system

Work-positioning systems, such as travel-restraint systems, are preferred as they substantially reduce the risk of a fall by not allowing the person to move beyond a designated point. A fall-arrest system restricts the distance a person can fall, but does not prevent the fall. Only use a fall-arrest system if a work-positioning system, guard rail or elevated work platform is not practicable – and only if a person can be rescued immediately. A fall-arrest system may be useful if there are rungs to grab hold of in the event of a fall.

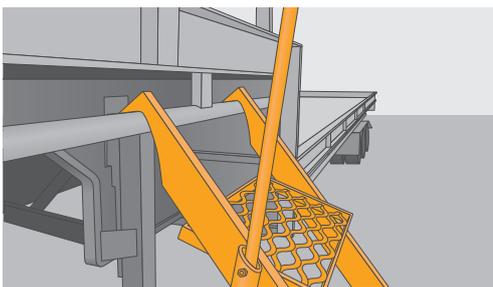
Emergency procedures

Emergency and rescue procedures must be in place when a fall-arrest system is used. This is fairly straightforward at a fixed location such as a depot or loading facility, but is more difficult if the driver has to stop on the side of the road. In this instance, procedures should be in place so that, where possible, the driver stops at a location with other people in attendance, to assist in the event of a fall. All drivers should have access to a mobile phone, a pager, or some other device or procedure for alerting emergency services (or someone) when assistance is needed.

When injured in a fall, a worker is likely to be off work for a week or more

Getting to and from a tray

To reduce the height at which drivers need to access a load and to allow access to anchor points, some trucks are fitted with retractable or foldaway steps. They reduce the risk of sprains and strains, and falls at lower levels. Portable step platforms are also popular.



Retractable steps to access tray

Duration and frequency of a task

Long tasks and frequent tasks need more substantial control measures than shorter and infrequent tasks. For example, a mobile scaffold will provide more protection than a ladder for tasks that take a long time, and for tasks that are done frequently.



Use of mobile work platform to undertake maintenance

The expected environmental conditions, such as the weather, ground surface, traffic and pedestrian proximity will also affect the type of safety measure chosen.

Securing loads

What is the problem?

Injuries to workers when securing loads.

What are the risks?

Injuries are mainly caused when:

- handling side-gates on trucks
- opening and closing side-curtains on trucks
- placing lashings and corner protectors over loads
- using tensioning devices with chains and webbing.

What is a solution to the problem?

Handling side-gates on trucks

To eliminate the risks associated with handling gates, consider whether or not you need them. There may be a more effective method, such as:

- vehicles with folding sides or sliding panels
- vehicles custom designed for loads – eg some pallet loads may suit a vehicle with an internal side and middle expanding wall, an inward sloping floor, and load-rated curtain
- load-rated curtains – follow the manufacturer's instructions with regard to weight, placement and type of load
- chains or webbing.

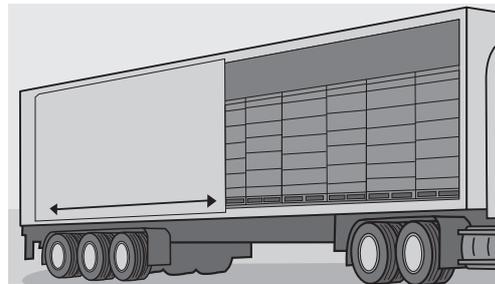


Folding sides

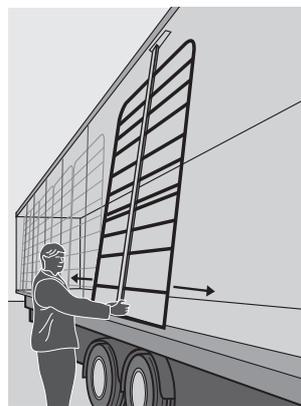
If it's not reasonably practicable to eliminate the use of gates, consider gates that don't need to be removed during loading/unloading (and can be retrofitted to the vehicle), such as:

- swinging gates
- sliding gates
- hanging gates – use a hanging system that prevents the gates from falling completely if any part fails.

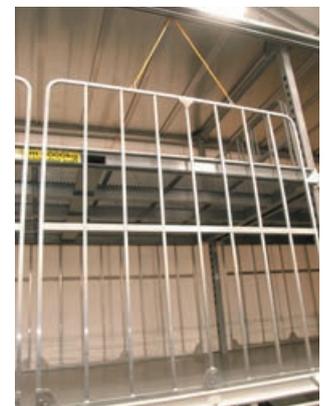
Clean the tracks and rollers regularly.



Sliding panel



Sliding gate



Hanging gates

A less effective option is to use gates that can be removed from the vehicle, which will involve a greater degree of manual handling. These gates should be removed and installed from a solid platform that is a similar height to the truck tray, to ensure the gates are handled between shoulder and knee height. If the gates are tall and heavy, a minimum two people should remove and install them. A minimum of two people should also be used if the gates are removed or installed from ground level, unless the gates are short and light. Advise the delivery site in advance should the driver require help removing the gates.

Opening and closing side-curtains

- Check if the load is resting against the curtains before opening them; look up and check for deformity or pressure marks in the curtain, particularly at the top; stand clear at the rear when releasing the curtain tensioner.
- Use automatic curtains that are self-opening and closing.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for load characteristics and placement in transit if side curtains are load-rated
- Use curtains with a securing system that does not involve buckles – it reduces the risk of pinched fingers and repetitive strain to the hands and arms.
- Use load tensioners that operate outside the curtains so they don't need to be opened as often to check restraint tensions – eg winches attached to the coaming rail or under-floor track can be re-tensioned without opening the curtains.
- Use safe procedures when manually handling curtains:
 - check for trip hazards before opening/closing curtains
 - grab two buckle straps, one in each hand, keep hands close to the body and below shoulder height, and walk back slowly so the curtain moves smoothly
 - be aware of the buckle locations to reduce the risk of buckles becoming tangled.

- Ensure the curtain track and rollers are regularly maintained and follow manufacturer instructions for lubrication; keep the track clean by using air, water or vacuum to remove dust; be aware of increased curtain resistance, as it probably means the track or rollers need maintenance.



Curtain track roller on plate with double bearings

If the curtains or tracks need repairing, but the truck needs to be used in the short-term:

- clean the track and use dry lube to help rollers move along the roof track
- pull the curtains in sections – when opening, pull back a section of the curtain near the rear of the truck, move forward, pull another section, then repeat until the curtains are fully open.

In windy conditions:

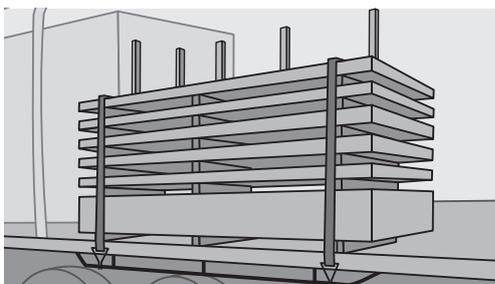
- open the curtain by undoing most, but not all, curtain buckles before releasing the curtain ratchet (it will reduce the chance of the curtains billowing as the ratchet is released); keep two or three buckles attached along the length of the curtain and only unbuckle these as the curtain is pulled back slowly
- when the open curtain is bunched at the rear of the trailer, secure it to the trailer to prevent the wind from catching it – eg clip a section of the curtain with a buckle to the rear of the trailer, or pass a rope through the buckle.

Placing lashings and corner protectors over loads

- Don't throw lashing over loads anywhere near overhead powerlines.
- Keep pedestrians away from vehicles when restraining loads – eg use barriers.
- Use a system to apply and remove lashing and corner protectors while standing on the ground, such as:
 - a purpose-built lightweight extension pole, especially one that grips the lashing or corner protector
 - a system designed for a curtain-sider that retracts the webbing straps to the roof of the trailer when not in use – this will eliminate the need for workers to climb onto the truck to position and pull straps over the load.
- Work from a platform ladder or elevating work platform.
- When using chains, use a lead rope to throw and drag the chain over the load – this will reduce the risk of shoulder strain from throwing the chain, and will cause less damage than a chain if it hits someone.



Retractable webbing-strap system



Removable posts that help restrict the movement of the load

Using tensioning devices with chains and webbing

The following recommendations depend on the type of load. Manufacturers' instructions should be followed and the requirements outlined in the *Load restraint guide* must be met.

Minimise the use of chains and webbing by using:

- an alternative system, such as a containment system, pins, pegs, posts, headboards, or a goose-neck on a drop-deck trailer to help block the load
- a custom-built truck with expanding walls, sloping floor and load-rated curtains.

Consider webbing straps as an alternative to chains – webbing, if suitable for restraining the load, is lighter than chain. If you use a hand ratchet with webbing, use a pull-down webbing ratchet as it will not need to be repeatedly pushed up, thereby reducing the risk of shoulder injury. If you use a winch, ensure it doesn't require the removable handle to be reinserted with every turn – eg use a geared winch.



A geared winch



A geared winch

If you need to use chains – ie eliminating the use of chains and webbing, or using webbing only, is not reasonably practicable – consider an alternative to an over-centre, lever-style load binder (a dog). Use chains with non-rebounding tensioners, such as a turnbuckle tensioner.

If using a dog, never use a cheater bar (extension bar or pipe) of any kind to increase chain tension, as they can rebound quickly and cause serious injury. You should:

- use gloves to reduce the risk of pinched hands
- position tensioner below shoulder height, or use a stable standing-aid when applying or releasing the tensioner
- regularly inspect and maintain the tensioner to ensure effectiveness and safety.



A pull-down handle ratchet



Ratchet turnbuckle chain tensioners



Chain tensioner



Chain tensioner



Chain tensioner



A type of chain tensioner that eliminates the risk of kickback



Worker using dog and cheater bar.

Traffic management – loading/unloading freight

What is the problem?

Inadequate onsite traffic management at workplaces where freight is loaded/unloaded from trucks.

What are the risks?

Workers are at risk of being hit by trucks, forklifts and other mobile plant during loading/unloading – and by falling loads if they're in the exclusion zone.

What is a solution to the problem?

Responsibilities

A number of businesses may be involved in loading/unloading freight, such as:

- the transport operator
- the business where freight is loaded/unloaded
- businesses that control mobile plant at the workplace.

Under the workplace health and safety laws, each business shares responsibility for the health and safety of those involved in the work, to the extent of their capacity to influence and control the work. They must work together to ensure risks are eliminated, or if this not possible, minimised.

The influence and control held by each business varies, depending on the circumstances. For example, when a transport operator visits a particular business regularly, where a forklift and operator are available to load/unload the freight, that business would generally have a high capacity to influence and control the work and risks at that workplace. The transport operator would therefore follow the business's traffic management procedures. However, when a transport operator visits a business that rarely receives freight, the transport operator would generally influence and control the work and risks. They should work with the business to devise safe work methods. This could be included with the booking system information.

Communication

Before delivery/pick-up, the following information should be considered:

- the restrictions on the types of vehicles that can be accepted
- delivery times
- site information, including loading/unloading area, parking facilities, reception, rest rooms and the like
- reporting procedures on arrival and departure
- safety procedures on site, such as wearing high-visibility clothing, using mobile phones and the like
- availability and use of equipment
- person in charge of loading/unloading
- emergency contact details.

The driver should be provided with this information.

The transport operator should also provide the business with any information, such as specifics of the truck.

About 15 per cent of injuries in the road freight transport industry are the result of being hit by trucks or forklifts or other 'moving objects'.

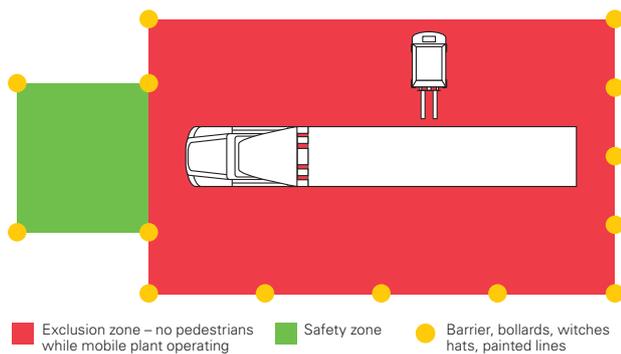
Roadside delivery/pick-up

When loading/unloading involves backing into busy streets, crossing footpaths, parking on public streets and the like, particular attention should be given to other people and other vehicles. Barriers, signs, cones, lights or a traffic control person should be used to control hazards. Also consider the ability of other road users to see the stationary vehicle and the loading/unloading operation.

Loading/unloading procedures

When loading/unloading with mobile plant, consider the following traffic management measures:

- Exclusion zone and safety zone
 - Specify a pedestrian exclusion zone around the truck.
 - Specify a safety zone for the driver – eg at the front of the truck, in the amenities area or in the cabin, if it is safe to do so.
 - Erect sturdy barriers, such as fences or gates, around the safety zone – or, if these are unavailable, use chains or tape.
 - No-one should enter the exclusion zone without the mobile plant operator's approval.
 - The mobile plant operator should not begin loading/unloading until everyone is clear of the exclusion zone.
 - Maintaining an exclusion zone around the truck while loading/unloading will also eliminate the risk of anyone being hit by falling loads.



Example of exclusion and safety zones

- Communication
 - Use an effective communication system between the mobile plant operator and the driver – eg hand signals may be suitable in some workplaces, two-way radios in others.
 - Use signs, lights, alarms and the like to indicate loading/unloading is in progress.

- Mobile plant
 - Ensure operators are appropriately licensed, where necessary, and trained to load safely in accordance with road safety legislation.
 - Fit speed limiting devices, where appropriate.
 - Fit reversing sensors, cameras or audible warning devices.
 - Ensure tyres, windscreens, mirrors, reversing sensors and the like are well maintained.
 - Ensure mobile plant is appropriate for the loads and workplace.
- Work environment
 - Ensure adequate lighting.
 - Provide a safe loading/unloading surface area.
- Personal protective equipment – eg high-visibility work gear.

It is also essential to put measures in place to ensure the truck cannot move during loading/unloading. Consider using dock locks, air-brake isolation-interlock devices, barriers or 'stop' signals. Also, prevent unauthorised access to ignition keys and cabin, and ensure systems are in place that alert the driver when it is safe to leave.

Wellness

What is the problem?

Wellness describes a person's general health and fitness. Common wellness problems in the road freight transport industry are obesity, sleep apnoea, diabetes, cardiovascular disorders and poor mental health.

What are the risks?

Sedentary work (driving) and long working hours can result in a low level of wellness because it may lead to workers having a poor diet, low levels of exercise, increased alcohol and drug use, or fatigue.

More than one in 10 injured workers are hit by a forklift or truck, or some other 'moving object'

What is a solution to the problem?

There are several initiatives that you can bring to the workplace to enhance the mental and physical wellbeing of your workers, such as:

- demonstrating a top-down commitment to wellness programs
- introducing flexible work hours that allow for meal breaks and exercise on the road
- nominating one driver to promote the wellness message among other drivers
- implementing a health and wellbeing policy that includes fatigue management
- having pre-employment health checks
- conducting wellness workshops or having a fitness trainer teach aerobic and stretching exercises during safety meetings.

More than 70 per cent of workers in the transport and storage industry are overweight

The following government and non-government not-for-profit organisations provide assistance and information for the workplace and the individual.

- Diet and exercise

The Healthy Worker Initiative provides a free and confidential workplace health check for diabetes. It also provides workplace support with a focus on smoking, alcohol, nutrition and physical activity. Visit health.nsw.gov.au/healthyworkers

The Get Healthy Information and Coaching Service is a free, confidential telephone service that helps people achieve a healthy weight, eat better and exercise more. Call 1300 806 258 or visit gethealthynsw.com.au

The Trans-Help Foundation is a national charity that supports the health and welfare of transport workers and their families. It offers a 24/7 national support line, and mobile health and support units. The foundation also supports the widows and families of deceased transport workers, and provides assistance to drivers who have suffered road trauma. Call 1300 787 996 or visit tranhelffoundation.com.au

- Alcohol and other drugs

1300 DRIVER is a 24/7 confidential telephone service, designed specifically for long-distance truck drivers. It offers information, resources, support and referrals for alcohol, tobacco, drugs, and health and lifestyle issues. Call **1300 374 837** or visit stvincents.com.au (see 'services').

The Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS) is a 24/7 confidential telephone service, providing information, support, referrals and crisis counselling for alcohol and drug issues, including heroin, ice and cannabis. The service is available to those who are dependent on alcohol or drugs, their families and friends, and other professionals. Call **(02) 9361 8000** (Sydney metro) or **1800 422 599** (NSW regional), or visit yourroom.com.au

Smoking

Quitline provides advice and support for those who want to stop smoking. Call **13 7848** (13 Quit) or visit quitnow.gov.au

More than 30 per cent of workers in the transport and storage industry consume unhealthy amounts of alcohol.

- **Mental health**

The Business in Mind DVD and resource kit is designed to help owners and managers of small to medium businesses manage workplace mental health and wellbeing issues. Call **(03) 6226 2713** businessinmind.edu.au or call **(03) 6226 2713**.

The Black Dog Institute, beyondblue and the NSW Mental Health Association offer a range of services for mental health. Visit blackdoginstitute.org.au, beyondblue.org.au or mentalhealth.asn.au

The Mental Health Line provides 24/7 support. Call **1800 011 511**.

- **Sleep apnoea**

The National Transport Commission says that sleep disorders, such as sleep apnoea, is common among truck drivers. Sleep apnoea symptoms include heavy snoring broken by sudden periods of silence, restless sleep, and constantly being tired during the day. Drivers who suffer from sleep disorders are a risk to themselves and to other road users. It is important they see a doctor for advice and treatment.

Nearly 30 per cent of workers in the transport and storage industry are smokers.

- **Fatigue management**

Roads and Maritime Services has information on heavy vehicle driver fatigue at rms.nsw.gov.au/heavyvehicles/downloads/nhvdf_industryupdates_dl1.html, and more information is available in the *Road Transport (Vehicle and Driver Management) Act 2005* and regulation.

Also, see transport.nsw.gov.au for information on general driver fatigue management.

After a workplace injury – what happens next?

All small employers receive a 10 per cent employer safety incentive (ESI) premium discount up-front, at each policy renewal. This discount is conditional on you keeping your workplace safe or, if a worker is injured at work, supporting them to return to work within four weeks. If your worker does not return to suitable work within four weeks, you will have to pay back the premium discount amount after the policy period expires.

Support your worker return safely to work

As well as protecting your premium discount, supporting your worker return to work sooner has a number of other immediate benefits. It:

- lessens lost work time and maintains productivity
- keeps the worker's skills and experience in the workplace
- promotes a positive workplace safety culture
- improves a worker's recovery.

Supporting return to work is also part of your legal obligation as an employer.

About 30 per cent of claims in the road freight transport industry are the result of soft tissue injuries.

What can you do?

Most workers are able to return to work in some capacity following a work-related injury, providing they get the support they need.

Here are three steps you can take to support your worker's recovery and return to work:

1. Stay in contact with your worker from the start. Offer early support, and help them stay connected to the workplace by keeping them informed and involved in making decisions that may affect them – and contact them to see how they are progressing. This will help them feel valued and confident they will be supported to return to work.

2. Identify suitable employment options to allow your worker to return to work in some capacity, if they are not able to do their usual work at first. Be flexible about what duties or hours your worker could undertake while they recover and discuss these options with your worker and their doctor as soon as possible.

Suitable employment options may include:

- parts of the worker's job they were doing before the injury
 - the same job, but on reduced hours
 - different duties altogether
 - duties at a different site
 - a combination of some, or all, of the above.
3. Develop a return to work plan. It should outline agreed arrangements to support the worker to recover at work and progress towards their usual work. A standard return to work template and further information on developing a return to work plan is available at workcover.nsw.gov.au

Assistance and support

Your first point of contact for assistance and support is your workers compensation insurer. You must notify your insurer within 48 hours of becoming aware that a worker has had a workplace injury. Your insurer can provide information about what you need to do to help your worker get back to work, or recover at work.

Also, WorkCover has a number of strategies to support you and your worker in the return to work process.

Return to Work Assist Program for micro employers

This [program](#) provides eligible micro employers with five or fewer workers with suitable work options for their injured worker. It:

- allows the injured worker to participate in a graded return to work plan, while continuing to receive their weekly payments
- allows the employer to maintain the alternative work arrangement put in place to cover the duties of the injured worker – eg employing a casual, or having staff do overtime
- runs for up to six weeks, within the first 13 weeks of the claim.

Equipment and workplace modifications

Funding for equipment and workplace modifications is available where it is necessary to support the worker to return to work, remain at work, or accept an offer of suitable work. The equipment or workplace modification may be specific to the worker's functional requirements, or necessary for commencement of a new work role.

Work trials

Work trials can be used to place a worker with a host employer for a short time, if the worker's employer is unable to provide suitable work. The work trial provides the worker with an opportunity to develop new skills, and enhance their physical and psychological capacity for work. The host employer does not pay the worker's wages, as payments continue through the workers compensation system.

More information

For more detailed information about road freight traffic health and safety, call **13 10 50** or visit workcover.nsw.gov.au or see the following publications.

Manual tasks

Code of practice for hazardous manual tasks (catalogue no. WC03559) – shows you how to manage the risk of musculoskeletal disorders arising from hazardous manual tasks.

Preventing injury from packing and unpacking shipping containers and enclosed trailers (catalogue no. WC01381) – provides case studies, checklists and safety tips about packing/unpacking shipping containers and pantechinons.

Falls

Code of practice for managing the risk of falls at workplaces (catalogue no. WC03566) – provides information about managing the risk of falls, working on the ground and from a solid construction, fall prevention devices, work positioning systems, fall-arrest systems, ladders, administrative controls, emergency procedures, and the design of plant and structures.

Securing loads

Load Restraint Guide – provides guidelines and performance standards for the safe carriage of loads on trucks (National Transport Commission, 2004).

Traffic management

Code of practice for traffic management in workplaces – provides information about the risk management process and specific control measures, and includes a checklist on traffic control measures (Safe Work Australia, 2013).

LUEZ guidelines: loading, unloading exclusion zones – provides 'best practice' information about managing risks when equipment and people interact in exclusion zones (Safety Assist, 2010).

Traffic management in warehousing (catalogue no. WC05856) provides a detailed checklist on topics such as forklifts, barricades, warning signs, training and more.

Risk management

Code of practice on how to manage health and safety risks (catalogue no. WC03565) – provides information on identifying hazards, assessing and controlling risks, reviewing controls and keeping records.

Working alone

Code of practice for the work environment and facilities (catalogue no. WCO3567) provides advice on working in isolation.

Checklist: How safe are you working?

Transport operators who work safely always have controls in place to protect their workers and reduce their cost of workplace injury and illness.

Issue	Yes	No	N/A
Manual tasks when handling freight			
Manual handling of freight is eliminated, or minimised, by using suitable equipment – eg forklift, pallet jacks, trolleys, tailgate lifters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Equipment and tools are regularly maintained	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Loads are configured to make items easily accessible when unloading	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Workers are trained to use equipment correctly and handle freight safely (including lifting, carrying, pushing or pulling)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
You monitor your workers' use of correct manual handling techniques	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
You work with the business where freight is loaded to ensure the freight is packaged (size, weight, shape, labelling) so that safe handling and easy pick-up/delivery is assured	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
You work with the business where freight is loaded/unloaded to ensure the pick-up/delivery locations are safe for your workers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Falls from heights			
Working at heights is avoided by operating suitable lifting equipment at ground level, or from a solid platform with fall prevention systems in place. Where fall prevention systems are unavailable, work positioning or fall-arrest systems are in place with effective and tested emergency rescue procedures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A safe way to access the tray or trailer is provided – eg fixed, retractable, foldaway or portable steps	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
All workers are trained in and use three points of contact when climbing in and out of the cabin, and when accessing the tray or trailer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When purchasing trucks, safe cabin access/egress is considered	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Truck cabins are fitted with non-slip access steps and handrails	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Securing loads			
Manual handling of trailer gates is eliminated by using alternative options, such as folding sides, sliding panels, load-rated curtains, chains and webbing, and the like	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If curtains are used, they self-open and close	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If gates are essential, swinging, sliding or hanging gates are used to reduce manual handling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If manual curtains are used, they have double-bearing roller plates	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trailer sides, panels, gates and curtains, webbing, chains and other load restraining equipment is regularly maintained	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Workers are trained and competent to secure loads safely	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When placing lashings and corner protectors on loads, work is done from the ground or a safe means of accessing the loads is provided	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Over-centre dog-load binders are avoided by using safer alternatives – eg turnbuckle tensioner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cheater bars are never used for tensioning over-centre dog-load binders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Issue	Yes	No	N/A
Traffic management – loading/unloading freight			
You work with the business where freight is loaded/unloaded, to ensure measures are in place to manage the risk of being struck by trucks, forklifts, other mobile plant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Workers are advised of onsite traffic management arrangements before pick-up/delivery	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When loading/unloading by mobile plant, exclusion zones and safety zones are used and clearly marked	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When loading/unloading by mobile plant, an effective communication system between the mobile plant operator and the truck driver is used	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Workers are provided with high-visibility work gear	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mobile plant operators have been assessed as competent and hold the appropriate licence where required	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wellness			
You demonstrate commitment to your workers', health and wellbeing through access to strategies, programs and/or education about health and wellbeing issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
You provide flexible work practices to accommodate healthy eating and exercise	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Return to work and injury management			
You have a current workers compensation insurance policy that accurately reflects the activities of your business	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
You have an effective reporting system for workplace incidents and all injuries are reported to your insurer within 48 hours	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
You understand the benefits of recovering from injury at work and offer suitable work to injured workers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
You demonstrate a commitment to your injured workers by maintaining regular contact during their recovery	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
You develop a return to work strategy in consultation with your injured workers, to ensure a safe and durable return to work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
You have a return to work coordinator (if your basic tariff premium exceeds \$50,000 per year)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your return to work coordinator has received the required training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
You have a written Return to Work Program that outlines how you will support your injured workers to recover at work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A summary of your Return to Work Program and the <i>If you get injured at work: poster</i> (catalogue no. WC00022.1) (with your insurer contact details) are displayed in your workplace	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Safe pick-up and delivery form

This form is a useful tool to help you plan a safe pick-up/delivery of freight.

Driver		<input type="text"/>	
Date (DD/MM/YYYY)	Time		
<input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> :		
Customer		Customer contact	
<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>	

LOAD

Description				<input type="text"/>			
Weight		Shape(s)		Irregular (draw)			
<input type="text"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/> 		<input type="text"/>			
Dimensions							
<input type="text"/> H	<input type="text"/> W	<input type="text"/> L					
Number of items		Packaging type					
<input type="text"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> Loose <input type="checkbox"/> Rigid <input type="checkbox"/> Fragile <input type="checkbox"/> Other					

COLLECTION SITE

Business		<input type="text"/>	
Address		<input type="text"/>	
Telephone number	Mobile number		
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>		
Contact person		<input type="text"/>	

Question	Response		Details
Is there an authorised representative onsite?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
Is there safe access to/exit from the site – eg site slope suitable, suitable surface conditions, no powerlines can be contacted.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
Are there onsite traffic management measures?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
Are there obstructions in pick-up/delivery area? – eg trenches, pits, mobile plant, poles.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
Is there loading/unloading equipment available? – eg cranes, trolleys, forklifts, dock leveller.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
Is reversing required?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
Are there onsite systems to control falls? – eg guard rails, ladders, harnesses	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
Is there parking for pick-up/delivery vehicles close to the site?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
What are the onsite rules? – eg speed limits, loading/unloading procedures.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
Are there any other hazards? – eg blind corners, intersections.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	

DELIVERY SITE

Business

Address

Telephone number

Mobile number

Contact person

Question	Response		Details
Is there an authorised representative onsite?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
Is there safe access to/exit from the site – eg site slope suitable, suitable surface conditions, no powerlines can be contacted.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
Are there onsite traffic management measures?.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
Are there obstructions in pick-up/delivery area? – eg trenches, pits, mobile plant, poles.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
Is there loading/unloading equipment available? – eg cranes, trolleys, forklifts, dock leveller.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
Is reversing required?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
Are there onsite systems to control falls? – eg guard rails, ladders, harnesses.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
Is there parking for pick-up/delivery vehicles close to the site?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
What are the onsite rules? – eg speed limits, loading/unloading procedures.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
Are there any other hazards? – eg blind corners, intersections.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	

SITE DRAWINGS – PICK-UP/DELIVERY

