

Occupational Health & Safety

Road Freight



Transport Industry

A Transport Worker's Guide to Keeping Safe at Work

SAFER
Industries

Foreword

This booklet has been developed to assist the employee with occupational health and safety issues in the workplace.

This guide is for you.

Please read it carefully as it explains work safety practices by identifying the risks you may encounter within the depot or while driving. By developing safe work practices it reduces the likelihood of injury to yourself and to others.

The OHS Road Freight Transport Industry Occupational Health and Safety Committee has also produced an employer guide to assist employers with OHS implementation and monitoring of OHS in the workplace.

We are grateful to the WorkCover Corporation for their funding assistance. Also to members of the Working Party and the Transport Workers Union delegates and officials that contributed in developing the guide.

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What's this all about?

This booklet is aimed at helping you and your workmates to keep safe from injury at work or while you are on the road.

What your boss must do

The law says that your boss has a legal responsibility called a 'duty of care' to protect the health and safety of the people in your workplace. The 'workplace' has significant meaning. It may include trucks, depots, warehousing facilities and any place where you go while at work, such as out on the road or to a customer's workplace that may be in another State.

It doesn't matter if you work casually, part-time, permanently or even as a volunteer, the law says that your boss is responsible for the safety of everyone, including members of the public while they are in your boss's workplace.

What you must do

Don't think that you aren't responsible for anything. You are! There's a whole list of things that you should do. Find them on page 5.

1. When you start work

When you start a new job or are transferred to another place of work, your boss should ensure that you undergo an induction program. This is to familiarise yourself with your new place of work. If it's done properly, you'll work safer, better and be aware of any safety hazards. Your boss should choose another worker to be your 'buddy' in the first few weeks so that you can get answers to any questions.

The law says that your boss must supervise you and make sure that you and your workmates are given suitable information, instruction and continuing training in safe working methods.

Your boss must also work out a way to consult with everyone at work about health and safety. In a small company that may mean organising a regular meeting. In bigger companies it may mean a more formal committee.

What your boss should do at work

- Provide a safe working environment.
- Provide safe systems of work.
- Provide safe equipment and chemicals.
- Provide training, supervision and information.
- Provide appropriate welfare facilities such as access to lunchrooms and toilets.
- Regularly check your working conditions.

Even though your boss is responsible to make sure that your workplace is safe, you are also responsible to behave the right way.

What you should do at work

- Set an example to other workers, particularly new workers, by following all work health and safety policies, procedures, practices and directions.
- Correct where possible any unsafe situation including any 'near-miss incidents' and immediately report them.
- Let your boss know if you see a problem.
- Ensure that you don't perform an unfamiliar task for which you haven't received appropriate instruction or training.
- Report all work-related injuries.
- Protect your health and safety.
- Don't put others at risk.
- Help your boss complete any paperwork.

2. Risks of injury that every transport worker faces

Injuries you can get without leaving your truck

In minimising vibration in your truck, your boss needs to make sure the rig has appropriate seating, cabin suspension, axle suspension, pedal positioning and suitable tyres.

Hazards and what can happen

- Lack of lumbar support in the backrest of the seat – this leads to increased spinal stress.
- Vinyl upholstery reducing comfort: promotes sweating leading to poor sitting posture and fatigue.
- Poorly adjustable seating and inadequate seat suspension – this leads to increased spinal stress due to vehicle vibration and poor sitting posture and fatigue.
- Controls too high and too far in front of you – this may cause shoulder and back strain from over-reaching, particularly if you do it for many years.
- Poor visibility due to lack of full length windscreens, positioning of external mirrors – this promotes bending of your spine with awkward neck positions and may cause long term neck and back strain.

For more information on seating refer to:

“Safe Handling of Freight” kit, see red section:

“Guidelines to Help you Choose a Seat”. To obtain a copy, please call the Transport Training Centre on (08) 8268 6066.

Useful tips

1. Driving seats should be easily adjustable. Seat suspension should be adjustable to your weight and height.
2. Seat pan (up and down) – adjust the incline to 10 degrees or more.
3. Back of the seat – set back tilt to 15 degrees or more.
4. The backrest should support your lower back.
5. The seat pan should fit your thighs.
6. Adjust your seat far enough forward so your knees are bent and slightly higher than your hips when fully compressing pedals. This avoids putting more strain on your back when stretching for pedals and the steering wheel.
7. Use a firm cushion if the seat is too low. The front edge of your seat should also be rounded to prevent sharp edges from compressing the back of your thighs.

Cabin setup

It is important to adjust the seat, steering wheel and mirrors before you start driving.

Checklist

Is the lower back supported?

yes no

Is the steering column adjusted so that your hands are in a '10 to 2' position?

yes no

Are your arms $1/2 - 3/4$ bent?

yes no

Low frequency use of pedals

Is the knee bent at 90° ?

yes no

High frequency use of pedals

Is the knee bent more than 90° ?

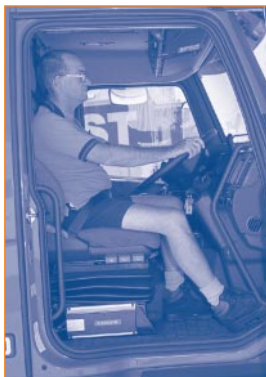
yes no

Are the thighs parallel to the floor?

yes no

Are the mirrors adjusted to ensure good visibility?

yes no



Investing in a sound ergonomic seat will help alleviate body fatigue

Correct seating position



Injuries... getting in or out of your truck

You can easily trip and slip in wet weather or if you're hurrying.

Six hazards that every transport worker knows about

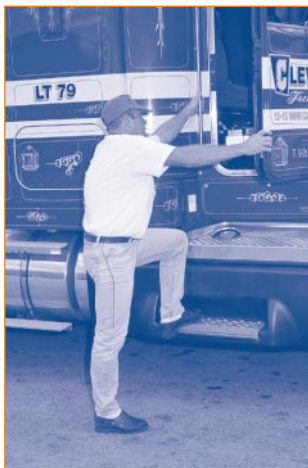
1. Footholds and handholds may be slippery when wet or muddy due to smoothness of surface.
2. Different step designs might exist from one step to the next, from one vehicle to another.
3. Too high a first step – more than 400 mm.
4. Swinging first step – unstable.
5. Lack of or poorly located handholds, for example, too high off the ground or often of limited length. Too small a diameter bar is often used (less than 30 mm). Handholds sometimes are not co-ordinated with footholds.
6. Subsequent steps may be too high above the first step – more than 300 mm.

Many of the risks involved in getting in and out of a truck cabin and other equipment may be prevented or reduced through improved design. You should raise health and safety issues with your boss. Writing down and reporting problems might lead to them being brought to the attention of truck designers.

For more information refer to:
“Safe Handling of Freight” kit, see red section.
Ergonomic Guidelines for designing Cabin entry/exit
Systems. To obtain a copy, please call the Transport
Training Centre on (08) 8268 6066.

Always maintain three points of contact

Don't jump from the cabin. If you do, you will exert 12 times your body weight on your ankles, knees, hips and lower back. For an average driver, that is equal to a tonne of shock.



A five-minute checklist

Nine ways to avoid getting injured at work

1. **Entering and leaving the driving cab:** Always use the steps, footholds and grab handles provided. Avoid twisting your back unnecessarily. Climb down from the cab (or trailer deck) backwards. Never jump down. Minor knee and back injuries all add up, and it's no joke as you get older.
2. **Jumping:** Don't jump down from your truck. Climb down carefully and use steps if provided. Did you know that a 100 kilogram transport worker, jumping one metre from the truck steps to the ground, is putting the equivalent of one tonne of shock on his joints? Think about it.
3. **When your truck is parked on the roadside:** Always look in your mirror before opening the cab door. Beware of passing traffic. If you must check the off side of the truck, always face the oncoming traffic so you don't get hit from behind. Be especially careful when returning to the cab. Approach your cab door from the front of the truck to minimise exposure time and allow you to face the traffic. Look around the corner of the cab before stepping out on the road because motorists will not see you coming.
4. **Lifting:** Always practise safe lifting practices, being especially careful when you are tired. Avoid bending your back. Use your legs. There are lots of books and leaflets on how to lift objects safely. Ask your boss for copies.

Nine ways... *continued*

5. **Slippery surfaces:** Beware of slippery surfaces on the truck (load platforms, chassis frame, steps) and around the vehicle (wet or oily surfaces) and around the work area.
6. **Changing a wheel:** If possible, move your truck well clear of the roadway to avoid danger from passing traffic. Switch on hazard warning lights and set up warning triangles or lights. If you have a reflective safety vest, wear it. Take extra care when working on the side of the vehicle.
7. **Working at heights:** Working at heights is a common hazard within the transport industry. Your boss should be using one or more of the following things to reduce your need to work at a height:
 - Tautliner trailers.
 - Tarp spreader – for example, the Barney’s Beam.
 - Harness or fall arrest systems.
 - Ladders.
 - Scaffolding.
 - Safety cages on forklifts.
 - Roll top tarps.

Nine ways... *continued*

8. **Walking about:** Remember that you are a pedestrian exposed to moving traffic. Many workers are injured when they are hit by trucks or forklifts. Your employer has a responsibility to develop a traffic management plan which separates pedestrians from moving machinery. When high visibility vests are provided they should be worn by everyone.
9. **Tripping over things:** A common cause of injury is workers tripping over rubbish that is left around the depot such as broken pallets, strapping, shrinkwrap, cardboard, drums, etc. It's important that your boss puts in place a housekeeping program to ensure regular cleaning of the workplace to minimise the chances of injury.

Getting injured ... in a forklift

Many of the injuries you can suffer in a truck, with poor seating, can occur in a forklift too. And a careless or tired forklift driver can injure others badly. Luckily, forklift operators have to undergo extensive training to get a certificate of competency. Your boss is responsible to make sure that this happens. However, if you are a transport worker and know that a forklift driver is not trained, qualified or experienced to drive a forklift, tell your boss immediately.

Your boss should make sure that a forklift:

- Is mechanically sound.
- Is properly maintained.
- Has appropriate seating.
- Has a cage to protect the driver.
- Has reversing lights and beepers.
- Has a seatbelt and that the seatbelt is worn.

For further information about forklift training contact the Transport Training Centre, telephone (08) 8268 6066.

How poor manual handling can injure you

Manual handling involves lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling, carrying, holding or restraining any person, object or thing.

Your spine has 500 bones and muscles, numerous joints, nerves, ligaments, tendons and discs, so it is little wonder that manual handling injuries are the single largest area of compo claims.

Far too often workers are expected to handle loads which are too heavy, the wrong size and shape, arrive too frequently or arrive at the wrong place.

Does this sound like your workplace?

- Are there sufficient rest periods in between tasks?
- Are the work systems and the workplace well designed, and do you have the right equipment and enough people to do the work?
- Is there sufficient training in manual handling techniques?
- Are there jobs that are difficult or painful to do?

Your boss has the responsibility to ensure that manual handling problems don't occur at work, and they should carry out an assessment with you and whoever you have chosen to be a health and safety representative. If you're in a big company, there also might be an occupational health and safety committee. Members of that should be involved too.

Important checks for you and your boss to make

1. Look for and get rid of any unnecessary manual handling tasks (everyone who does them will know what they are).
2. Make sure there are the right tools and equipment to assist with manual handling (everyone will have suggestions for how to make things better).
3. Ask your boss to organise the proper training for everyone, including subbies, so that they lift, lower, push, pull, carry, hold or restrain things the right way.
4. Constantly watch out for hazards.

You are the key. You work in the job. You know what is really going on; speak with your boss.

Your boss should refer to the “Safe Handling of Freight” kit developed specifically for the transport industry in order to find solutions to common problems in the industry. The kit can be obtained by calling the Transport Training Centre on (08) 8268 6066.

Procedure for Lifting

Save your back and lift safely:

- For good balance, keep your legs shoulder width apart and one foot slightly in front of the other.
- Get close to the load and bend at your knees and hips, not your waist. Keep the natural curves in your back when bending and lifting.
- To reduce the load on your back, tighten your stomach muscles and lift using your legs.
- Lift smoothly; don't jerk as you lift and hold the load close to your body at waist level.
- To avoid twisting when lifting, turn with your feet, not your back.

Where possible use well-maintained mechanical equipment.



Move feet and avoid twisting.



Athletes warm up to prevent injuries. You should do the same.

Lower back exercises

Lower back arches

Put your hands in the small of your lower back.

Gently lean backward.

Trunk twist

With feet shoulder width apart and arms folded in the front with elbows at shoulders height – slowly and gently twist the upper body to the left and then to the right.

Arms and shoulder exercise

With one hand touch the other side of the shoulder. To have an extra stretch place your hand on the elbow and gently push down.

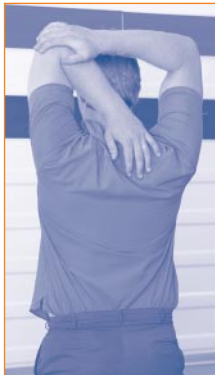
Lower back arches



Trunk twists



Elbow pull to the back



Shoulder exercise

Shoulder rolls

Standing, keep your arms relaxed by your side. Rotate shoulders in as full a range of movements as possible – up, back, forwards and backwards.

Shoulder rolls.



Exercises to do at a red light in your cabin seat

Tighten your buttocks.

Interlace your fingers above your head. Push your arms slightly back and up.

Sit back in the seat with hands behind your head. Squeeze shoulder blades together.

Gently rock from side to side and backwards and forwards.

Put the heel of your hand on each side of the seat and raise yourself slightly off the seat.

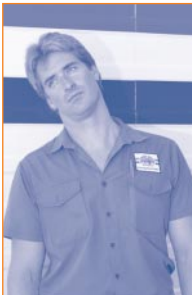
Neck exercises

Neck stretches

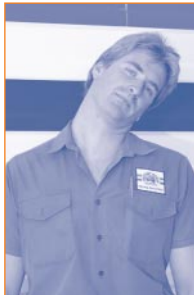
Look down.



Look left.



Look right.



Look up.



Spot walk.



Leg exercise

Spot walk

Walk on the spot by placing your weight on the balls of your feet. Continue to alternate right and left sides.

Procedure for dog and chain work

- Push the correct dog bar over handle of the dog. Raising the lever as far as possible, release the tension to unlock the jaws of the dog.
- When load is secure, wrap the excess chain around the dog. This minimises the possibility of the dog springing open.
- When releasing the tension of the dog, stand to one side with your face clear of the handle.



Procedures for gate removal and placement

Use two people to lift the gates, or use a forklift. If you lift the gates by yourself you are at greater risk of getting an injury. At depots drivers must be given adequate assistance for gate removal and placement.

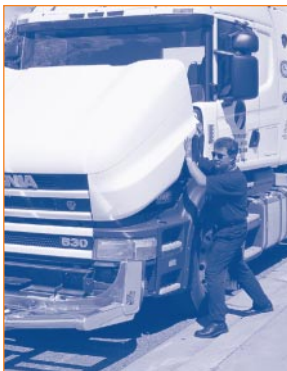


Procedure for opening the bonnet from the side of the truck

- Open the bonnet clips and eye bolts for the bull bar.
- Drop down the bull bar.
Keep the knees bent and let your legs and not your back take the weight. Place your hands under the wheel arch.
- Lift the bonnet up while walking forwards until fully opened.

Closing the bonnet from the side of the truck

- Closing the bonnet is the reverse of opening the bonnet.



Procedure for tautliner curtains

Loosening the curtain

- Push up the securing buckle with thumb. Important – keep your face well away from buckle.
- Loosen strap off and release the buckle.
- Release tensioner on side of tautliner and take the vertical bar out of locating point.
- Using two hands grab the side of the tautliner curtain and walk backwards. Don't slide the whole curtain at once - do it in sections. Avoid twisting your body and use your body weight to do the work.

Tightening the curtain

- Close the tautliner curtain.
- Place vertical bar in slide.
- Vertical bar is placed in locating point and bar tightened.
- Refasten securing buckles.

Use gloves when releasing the buckle.



How noise can injure you

Prolonged exposure to noise may cause anxiety, stress and hearing damage. Exposure to noise such as wind, exhaust systems and other traffic through an open driver-side window may cause more pronounced hearing loss in your right ear than in the left ear. Close the window!

Noise sources

- Engine and gearbox.
- Two-way communication systems.
- Wind rushing past open side-windows.
- In-cabin sound systems.
- Tyre and road surface noise.
- Exhaust and exhaust brake noise.
- Parking brake and air starter noise.
- Other traffic noise.

If your boss doesn't show much interest in the ideas listed opposite, remember that the law supports you in your quest. Chapter 5 tells you all about it. See especially the section titled *Taking more control if your boss won't*.

Ways to help control noise

1. Ask your boss to install air conditioning in your cab, to reduce outside noise.
2. If you don't have air conditioning, close your driver-side windows to reduce external noises.
3. Position two-way radio and speaker systems for easier hearing at lower volumes.
4. Fit sound and vibration absorbing materials to reduce engine, gearbox and road noises.
5. Talk to your boss about fitting improved exhaust systems such as "Residential" type mufflers, or in extreme cases, "critical Residential" type mufflers.
6. Talk to your boss about fitting exhaust systems on the passenger side and air silencers to park brakes and air starters.
7. Ask your boss to introduce hearing protection programs and provide hearing protection.

Two final things that can seriously risk your health and safety at work

Drugs

It's dangerous to drive or to operate any ancillary transport equipment (forklifts, cranes, lifts etc) while under the influence of any drug. Even drugs prescribed by a doctor can affect your driving ability. If your doctor prescribes medication, check that it is safe for you to drive when you are taking it. Illegal drugs (such as marijuana) can seriously affect your driving performance. You should also avoid taking stimulants to keep you awake while driving. Combinations of drugs, or alcohol and drugs, can have unpredictable and dangerous effects and should be avoided.

Alcohol

Everyone knows that it's an offence to drive with more than the prescribed concentration of alcohol in your blood. But did you know that, in some cases, it's also an offence to drive within 24 hours of drinking alcohol regardless of how much you drink? (This is in relation to a law called the Dangerous Goods Act, for carriers of dangerous goods.)

Accident statistics show that alcohol is a factor in 40 to 50 per cent of all fatal road accidents and that three in four drivers or riders killed in single vehicle road accidents have been drinking alcohol.

3. Fatigue, stress and sun – what to do about them

Fatigue

Fatigue is a common problem in both short and long-distance truck driving. It can badly affect your driving performance.

Fatigue is one of the main factors in road crashes

Most health effects resulting from working at night and working long hours are heart diseases and gut diseases. Commonly reported symptoms include:

- Very tired, wanting to sleep.
- Gut discomfort.
- Upset appetite.
- Dizziness.
- Anxiety, irritability, mild depression and mood disturbances.
- Other health effects, diabetes.

Are you getting enough sleep? Some useful tips...

The law says that your boss is required to have a Fatigue Management Program in place to manage your hours of driving and rostering schedules. Your boss also needs to give you the chance to ensure that you can get enough sleep.

Pointers which will help get you home alive

- Stop driving every two or three hours, take a break, get out and exercise. Frequent short stops are better than occasional long ones. These breaks are also an ideal time for checking your vehicle (load, tyres, etc).
- Make sure there is plenty of fresh air entering the cabin. Many drivers find it helpful to direct fresh cool air onto their faces.
- Maintain cabin temperature at a comfortable level, a little on the cool side.
- Avoid large, heavy meals before driving. Light meals, plus snacks during driving, will help you stay alert.
- Keep your eyes moving, constantly switching your gaze as you drive. If you find yourself tending to stare straight ahead with a fixed gaze, or have difficulty in maintaining focus, you are becoming fatigued. Stop and take a break.

Eight ideas to help you get a good night's rest when you get home

1. Tell relatives, friends and close neighbours about your work schedule and sleep times so they won't disturb you unnecessarily.
2. Don't eat immediately before sleeping.
3. Install curtains with backing or blinds to reduce the light level in the day time.
4. Sleep in cool conditions. This helps in getting to sleep and staying asleep. An air conditioner may also help.
5. Control noise around your bedroom by using heavy curtains and sound insulation on doors and windows.
6. Consider how the background hum of an air conditioner may mask minor noises from the outside.
7. Use an answering machine for the phone.
8. Suggest family members use headphones for the TV, stereo and radio while you are sleeping.

Managing stress

The symptoms of stress include fatigue, anxiety, and depression. These are some causes:

- Conflict with the boss or co-workers or lack of company support.
- Abuse, threats and harassment (bullying).
- A road accident.
- Shift work.
- Driving a poorly maintained truck.

Stress can also cause changes in your behaviour, such as hostility or aggressiveness. Serious health effects can include:

- Raised blood pressure and heart rate, increasing the risk of heart disease.
- Hypertension, increasing the risk of strokes and heart attacks.
- Reduced ability to fight off illness or infection.
- Stomach ulcers.

Reducing excessive stress makes good health sense. Your boss has a legal responsibility to ensure the health and safety of all workers, so reducing stress should be a high priority.

Seven ways to cut stress

1. Have regular exercise and rest breaks.
2. Eat a well balanced diet.
3. Cut back on alcohol and tobacco.
4. Set realistic workloads and timeframes (talk to your boss if you think that they are not).
5. Drive defensively.
6. Get enough sleep.
7. Plan ahead for eventualities, such as knowing what to do in an emergency.

Too much sun

Skin cancer is a major public health problem in Australia. Two out of three people require treatment for some form of skin cancer during their lifetime. Exposure to ultraviolet radiation from the sun is a major cause. Avoid working in the sun as much as you can!

Three useful tips to help avoid skin cancer

1. If you can, work in shaded areas. Talk to your boss if there's not enough shade. Ask for something to be done.
2. If you have to work in direct sunlight, do it before 11 am or after 3 pm (daylight saving time).
3. At all times (including cool and overcast days) protect yourself against ultraviolet light (which is what gives you sunburn) by wearing a broad brimmed hat, clothing and applying 15+ broad-spectrum sunscreen.

Your boss should encourage you by providing appropriate clothing and sunscreen for the conditions.

Some ideas about keeping cool

Did you know that when it's really hot you can lose one litre of water per hour through sweating? To replace it, have small but regular drinks. Don't add salts or other supplements unless you get specialist advice.

Maintain an adequate airflow within your truck. Open a vent and turn on the fan or the air conditioner.

When you stop for a break, do it in a well ventilated, shaded area. Rest, don't run around.

4. Gas, explosives and poisons – what you need to know

How to work with hazardous substances and live to tell the tale

A hazardous substance is any gas, vapour, liquid, particulate or fibre which has the potential to affect the health and safety of someone in a workplace. Most often the substance is harmful chemicals.

These substances have potential to affect your health when you use them or are exposed to them and there is some probability that the substance will make you ill as a result of its use and/or exposure. You can be exposed to it by breathing it in, getting it on your skin, or swallowing very small amounts of it (if it gets on your fingers, for example).

Your boss has special responsibilities about hazardous substances. Your boss must:

- Assess the hazardous nature of the substance prior to its purchase, or when re-ordering. This will be written down in a record called the Hazardous Substances Register.
- Obtain a Material Safety Data Sheet (from the supplier) before the supply of the material, then ensure that the sheet complies with the law and place it in the appropriate Material Safety Data Sheet Register.

You should be able to get this Material Safety Data Sheet Register anytime you ask.

Keep yourself safe

1. Ensure that the container holding the hazardous substance is properly labelled in accordance with the regulation. Don't use a hazardous substances container for any other purpose.
2. If you take out some of the hazardous substance and put it into another container, and is not used immediately, the new container must be labelled with the product name, relevant risk details and safety details.

How to work with dangerous goods and live to tell the tale

Dangerous goods are defined in the Australian Dangerous Goods (ADG) Code according to the type of risk. The risk depends on the properties of the substance. They include:

- Explosives.
- Gases.
- Flammable liquids and solids.
- Solids which give off poisonous gases.
- Oxidising agents.
- Poisons.
- Radioactive substances.
- Acids.

The requirements for dangerous goods are continually changing. For the latest information your boss should contact the Transport Training Centre on 8268 6066.

Storage and transportation of dangerous goods can involve high risks. If you mishandle these substances you could be injured or killed from radiated heat, chemicals and gases, fumes and smoke. Depot or yard employees and members of the public also might be involved.

If your boss asks you to carry a load of dangerous goods, you and your vehicle must conform to all the necessary State regulations.

Goods must be labelled and warning signs displayed. Vehicles carrying dangerous goods in prescribed quantities must be licensed. Dangerous goods incompatible with other goods such as food must be stored separately.

Your van or truck may need to be specially licensed for the purpose and you, as the driver, may need to have a special endorsement, registration or licence showing that you have attended a dangerous goods course.

What to do when the load arrives at your depot

Before accepting a consignment, you should receive written information from the supplier or person who sends it to you telling you about:

- The physical properties of the substance to be transported.
- Emergency response measures to be used in the event of an accident.

Rules for the transportation of loads of dangerous goods

1. Display the proper dangerous goods labels (also known as placards) indicating the class of goods carried, and Emergency Information Panels in the correct places on your truck.
2. Attach to your truck the required number and type of fire extinguishers, in good working order. If you haven't got them, tell your boss.
3. Carry a Vehicle Fire and Emergency Procedure Guide AS1678 in a special holder, fitted to the inside of the driver's door. You may also need special guides for the specific type or types of dangerous goods you are carrying.
4. Remember to carry shipping documentation (refer to the User's Guide to the Australian Dangerous Goods Code available from the Commonwealth Government Bookshop, Waymouth Street, Adelaide).
5. Wear suitable protective clothing, including breathing protection and carry a suitable torch.
6. Carry three reflective breakdown triangles.

What your boss is responsible for

The law says that if your boss owns the truck, they are responsible for ensuring:

- Vehicle licensing.

- Driver authorisation.
- Vehicle roadworthiness and current Certificate of Inspection.
- Vehicle marking requirements.
- Provision of safety equipment including protective clothing and equipment.
- Stopping and parking of vehicle.

If your boss owns the truck, they are also responsible for ensuring that you are qualified to transport dangerous goods and are trained to understand:

- The dangers of the goods being carried.
- What to do in an accident.
- Operation of vehicle and safety equipment.
- Routes and parking requirements.

If your boss asks you to transport dangerous goods in bulk, you must have a current Certificate of Authorisation.

Getting ready to leave the depot

You are responsible for ensuring that:

- A 'dangerous goods shipping document' is carried, together with any necessary Emergency Procedure Guides.
- All goods have been correctly loaded and secured to prevent movement and loss of load.
- When the load requires the vehicle to be marked, the load contains only compatible substances and the appropriate signs are clearly and correctly displayed.
- Your vehicle has a current Certificate of Inspection.

5. How the law is on your side – some tips

Getting rid of hazards at work

Every transport worker in Australia is kept safer because of a law called the Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act. It says that your boss must:

- Identify hazards at work.
- Assess and evaluate the risk created by those hazards to you and others entering where you work.
- Minimise or eliminate those hazards.

But you also have an important role to play. When assessing hazards at work, the law says that your boss must consult with everyone who is exposed to the hazard. It's your chance to have your say in keeping safer.

Three ways you and your boss can keep your workplace safer

1. **Identify** the hazard. Regularly inspect your workplace to identify hazards and list these in a book, called a register. It should be available to everyone, anytime. Try to look behind everyday occurrences and say to yourself, "What if this happened"?
2. **Assess** the hazards. Because everything can't be done at once, your boss will probably list in order of importance the hazards that need to be controlled most urgently. Consider the severity of the consequences and the probability of the hazard creating an accident. The book, or hazard register, should list what everyone agreed should be done, and by when.
3. Get rid of or at least control the hazard. **Control** measures can often be extremely cheap and simple. But don't just think that gloves, respirator or ear muffs are a solution to some problems. Think about ways to get rid of the hazard altogether.

Steps to a safer workplace

1. Eliminate the hazard (or if you can't, go to step 2).
2. Substitute the hazard with a less risky alternative.
3. Isolate the hazard or process.
4. Use specific controls.
5. Implement a safe working procedure.
6. Agree on personal protective equipment procedures.

Things your boss reasonably expects you to do

Even though your boss is responsible to make sure that your workplace is safe, you are also responsible to behave in the right way.

1. Set an example to other workers, particularly new workers, by following all work health and safety policies, procedures, practices and directions.
2. Correct where possible any unsafe situation including any 'near-miss incidents' and immediately report them.

3. Ensure that you don't perform an unfamiliar task for which you haven't received appropriate instruction or training.
4. Report all work-related injuries.
5. Co-operate with and participate in all programs designed to make the working environment safer and healthier.
6. Maintain good housekeeping standards at all times.
7. Observe all warning signs and notices.
8. Wear and/or use, in the proper manner, protective clothing and equipment appropriate to the job.
9. Don't intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse any safety equipment or clothing.
10. Do participate and support return to work programs if you suffer an injury.
11. Co-operate with your boss to help meet their obligations under occupational health, safety and welfare laws.
12. Don't take drugs or alcohol while on the job.

What about owner drivers?

Owner drivers who work for themselves, or contract to deliver freight on behalf of another company, are self-employed and are therefore responsible for their own and other people's health and safety.

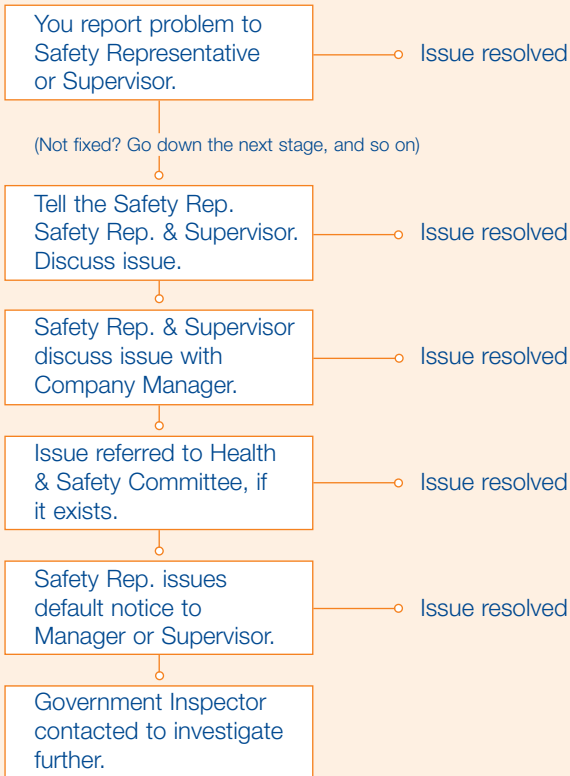
Taking more control if your boss won't

Every transport worker in Australia is kept safer because of a law called the Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act.

It says that if you or your mates want to have more say about making your workplace safer, then you can elect a person to become a health and safety representative. This person then has legal rights and responsibilities. Your boss, for example, must consult with this person about health and safety issues at work.

What if there's a problem?

Follow this flow chart to see what happens when you ask for something to be fixed.



6. What to do if you get injured

Get first aid

The law says that your boss must have first aid facilities and trained people at work to assist if someone gets injured.

Those people could be an office worker or a yard hand or a truckie...or all three. At least one person must be trained and available.

The law says that everyone in the workplace needs to understand what happens in an emergency. Your boss should have told everyone what the emergency procedures are. If you don't know them, ask about them now.

Where's the kit?

The type of first aid kit that you have at your workplace will depend on how many people work there. There are basic kits, occupational (bigger) kits and mobile kits to keep in trucks and other vehicles that operate outside the gates.

You should be able to find a basic kit and, if your workplace has more than 25 people, you should be able to find an occupational kit. If not, look for a mobile kit in one of the trucks.

What next?

You must report all accidents with your boss, and if you have a 'near miss' accident you must also report that. This way your boss can identify the hazard that caused it, and fix it before someone else gets injured.

Your boss should give you an incident report form. Fill it in and give it back. By writing things down, no-one forgets.

Really serious accidents have to be reported to the government (the Department for Administrative and Information Services). These accidents include damage or malfunction of plant, an explosion, death in the workplace or a work injury that results in a worker being taken to hospital. Your boss should report it, but if not, do it yourself by calling free-call 1800 777 209.

Making a claim for injury

It's really important that you fill in the forms and follow the instructions below. If you find it difficult, get a friend to help. The information you give on the forms will protect you later if things get complicated.

1. Complete the green Worker Report form and pink WorkCover Claim for Compensation form as soon as possible after the accident.
2. See your doctor as soon as possible and ask for a WorkCover Prescribed Medical Certificate. When it has been completed by your doctor, attach it to the Claim for Compensation form.
3. Keep the blue copy of the Claim for Compensation form for your records and give the rest of the completed Claim for Compensation form and the Medical Certificate to your employer or claims agent.

What if things get difficult after that?

If you experience any problems with your claim you can seek advice from:

- Your employer.
- Your employer's claims agent.
- The Employee Advocacy Unit, which is an independent body available to provide assistance.
(contact through the WorkCover general number: 08 8233 2222).
- Your union.

Getting back to work after your injury

The workers' compensation laws aim to get you back to work as soon as you are safely able to. It could be a few hours after the injury, a few days or even several weeks. Your doctor will advise you.

The laws make your boss responsible to plan an effective rehabilitation program to get you working again, even if you don't return to your pre-injury duties.

Some important steps

1. Even before you return to work, talk with your boss about what you might be able to do. Your boss will have some ideas about what alternative duties could be done.
2. Your boss will probably want to talk with the doctor who is treating you for your injury about what you might do, and what might be appropriate to do.

3. At some early stage, you, your boss and your treating doctor will have to get together to design your rehabilitation program. This is really important, because it will outline what you will and won't be asked to do for alternative duties. It will also indicate that everyone is serious about getting you safely back to work.

Your rights

- Your boss must respect your right to choose a doctor and a rehabilitation provider of your choice.
- When you get back to work, work activities must be approved by your treating doctor or your rehabilitation provider.
- The activities must suit your capabilities.
- If not, your boss must train you to do the new duties where available.

Remember that the goal of rehabilitation is to get you back to your old job, but if not, the workers' compensation laws say that your boss must provide you with suitable, meaningful work, that you should accept. If you're dissatisfied about what you end up doing, talk with your employer, your rehabilitation provider, and/or your union.

7. Who can provide assistance

South Australian WorkCover Corporation

Customer Information Centre
Waymouth Street, Adelaide SA 5000
General Enquiries Telephone: 13 18 55
Switchboard: (08) 8233 2222
Facsimile: (08) 8233 2466
Website: <http://www.workcover.com>

Workplace Services, Department for Administrative and Information Services (DAIS)

Retail, Wholesale, Storage and Transport Team
Level 3, 1 Richmond Road, Keswick SA 5035
Telephone (08) 8303 0400
Facsimile (08) 8303 0419
Website <http://www.eric.sa.gov.au>

The United Trades and Labour Council of SA

11 South Terrace, Adelaide SA 5000
Telephone: (08) 8212 3155
Facsimile: (08): 8231 9300

Transport Workers Union

85 Grange Road, Welland SA 5007
Telephone: (08) 8346 9955
Facsimile: (08) 8346 8580
Email: info@sa-nt.twu.com.au

Transport Training Centre Inc.

17 Wirriga Street, Regency Park SA 5010
Telephone: (08) 8268 6066
Email: paulfay@ttc.com.au

Disclaimer

Information provided in this publication is designed to address the most commonly raised issues in the workplace relevant to South Australian legislation such as the Occupational Health Safety and Welfare Act 1986 and the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1986. Similar legislation exists in all Australian States. However, this manual is not intended as a replacement for the legislation.

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