

Preventing falls from vehicles

Advice for workers



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More than 2000 serious injuries to people falling from vehicles are reported to HSE each year. Many of these injuries are broken arms or legs, resulting in weeks off work and possible loss of earnings. There are probably many more injuries that are not reported.

Getting on and off the vehicle

- **DON'T** jump down – this is bad for your knees and you are more likely to fall.
- Always use steps and handholds if provided.
- Take a few seconds to climb down from the cab, load area or catwalk facing the vehicle and use the handhold.
- Report missing or damaged equipment.
- Before stepping off the vehicle, check for uneven surfaces such as potholes or kerbs which may cause you to slip.

Keeping your vehicle safe

- Carry out pre-use checks on your vehicle. For example, check any steps or handholds are in good condition.
- Report broken boards and any other objects that could cause a fall.
- Keep the load area tidy – pick up loose ropes, packaging etc.
- Check that the straps are safely stored on curtainsiders so people don't trip on them.
- Clean up spills and dirt such as diesel or mud on the catwalk or load area to stop people slipping in them.
- On refrigerated vehicles, check the floor conditions for ice or water and follow any systems in place for reducing the amount of water produced.

How you can work safely

- Wear well-fitting, slip-resistant safety footwear when working on vehicles.
- Keep the soles of your footwear clean to reduce the risk of slipping.
- Follow safe systems of work for loading and unloading vehicles.
- Make sure you have been trained in and follow the company's safe ways of working if you have to use equipment such as tail-lifts or lorry loader cranes.
- Use safe ways of getting on or off the vehicle when carrying out maintenance above ground level, for example by using gantries or tower scaffolds.
- Look at what other companies do – if you see a good idea suggest it to your safety adviser or supervisor.

What your employer should do

- Plan loading and unloading to avoid the need to work at height on the vehicle.
- Ask for good, well designed access when purchasing vehicles.
- Retro-fit equipment if necessary.
- Provide protective equipment such as slip- resistant safety footwear.
- Keep equipment in good order.
- Respond to ideas for preventing falls from vehicles.
- Make sure supervisors check how people are getting on and off vehicles.

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

This leaflet is available in priced packs of 25 from HSE Books, ISBN 978 0 7176 6256 2. A web version can be found at: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg413.

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