



Avoiding falls from vehicles



■ CASE STUDY 2

A worker was crossing a gap between a loading bay and vehicle to empty a trailer on a dark, damp night. He fell 1 m, breaking a leg.

The accident occurred because the employer failed to identify a 1 m drop as a possible cause of serious injury. This was despite the fact that other trailers, where the drop was only slightly more, were provided with a bridging device to eliminate the gap and prevent falls.

The company concerned was fined £2000 and £969 costs. The man who broke his leg was in hospital for three weeks.

■ FURTHER READING

Health and safety in road haulage Leaflet INDG379
HSE Books 2003 (single copy free or priced packs of 15 ISBN 0 7176 2765 9)

Danger: Vehicles at work Video HSE Books 1995
ISBN 0 7176 1874 9

Inspecting fall arrest equipment made from webbing or rope Leaflet INDG367 HSE Books 2002 (single copy free or priced packs of 10 ISBN 0 7176 2552 4)

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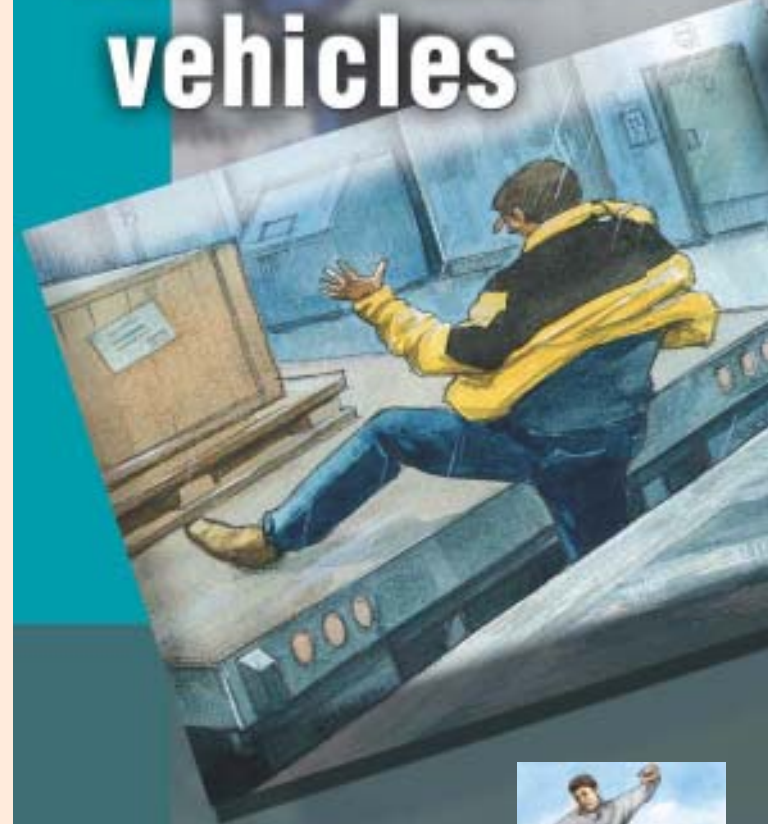
You can also find advice on falls from height at: www.hse.gov.uk/falls/index.htm and workplace transport at www.hse.gov.uk/workplacetransport/index.htm

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 20 from HSE Books, ISBN 0 7176 2824 8. Single free copies are also available from HSE Books.

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INTRODUCTION

Every year 700 people die or are seriously injured falling from vehicles. This leaflet sets out the basic steps you can take to prevent falls and also provides details of other sources of further information and advice.

It can also be used as a poster to help get the message across to drivers and others who are involved in loading and unloading vehicles.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

As with all work at height, there are basic steps you should take to reduce the chances of people falling and being injured.

- If you can avoid the need for work at height then do so.
- When you can't avoid working at height you must take steps to prevent falls.
- If there are any remaining risks of falls you should take steps to minimise them.

SAFETY CHECKLIST

If you address the issues covered in the following checklist you will be going a long way towards tackling the problem of falls from vehicles.

- Always use all equipment provided to avoid work at height. If work at height is unavoidable then use fall arrest systems if possible, especially when roping and sheeting.
- Don't jump from the lorry or loads.
- Report damaged, loose or inadequate steps and handholds - ensure the steps are safe for you to use.

- Report damaged or broken sheeting devices.
- Report slippery surfaces, for example those that are oily or greasy.
- Keep the lorry tidy - avoid creating tripping hazards.
- Wear suitable footwear for the job.
- Ensure steps and work areas are well lit.
- Use edge protection on tail-lifts (where it is fitted).
- Do not walk backwards near the rear or side of the vehicle bed.
- Only use equipment such as ropes, straps, curtains, sheets, nets etc if you are sure it is well maintained and is in a good state of repair.



CASE STUDY 1

A joiner suffered severe head injuries when he fell approximately 2 m from the top of a stack of timber on the back of a flat-bed lorry.

The joiner was helping to unload a delivery of timber when he climbed on top of the stack. While edging along the stack, he lost his footing and fell. A raised bay with a concrete platform was available to provide safe access for unloading vehicles, but was not used.

The joiner should have received instruction on how to unload safely, eg by using the unloading bay. Better supervision would have ensured that he complied with those instructions. Climbing on top of loads should be avoided wherever possible.