



# Preventing Vehicle Roll-Aways

## Information for Persons Conducting a Business or Undertaking

If you require your workers to drive a vehicle for work purposes, whether driving is a major component of the job (for example, transport and logistics operator, bus company, taxi operator, courier, tow truck operator etc) or minor (for example, a contractor or sub-contractor using a vehicle to pick up supplies or going from job to job), the vehicle is considered a workplace under work health and safety (WHS) laws.

Every year, workers and members of the public suffer serious and fatal injuries because of incidents involving uncontrolled movement of vehicles, also known as 'vehicle roll-aways'.

Vehicle roll-aways also account for significant costs in property damage.

Unfortunately, the true number of roll-away incidents that occur each year is unknown as many incidents are not reported.

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### Vehicle roll-away incidents are preventable.

#### What are some of the causes of vehicle roll-away?

There are a number of mechanical, human and organisational factors that can by themselves or in combination cause a vehicle to roll-away including:

##### Mechanical factors:

- Mechanical failure, system failure/failure of a component within the braking system, such as the brake lines.
- Poor inspection and maintenance which leads to a failure of a component within the braking system, such as being worn or damaged resulting in brake deficiencies.
- Poor design of the vehicle's braking systems, that allows the brakes to be released unintentionally by the operator. For example, the parking brakes may be released when the doors of a vehicle are closed without following the correct procedure.
- Loads added to or removed from a vehicle that is supported by stabilisers / outriggers on an inclined surface.
- Forces imposed by the movement of parts of a vehicle supported by stabilisers / outriggers on an inclined surface, e.g. boom on a mobile crane.



### Human factors:

- Driver error, complacency or distraction
- The driver/operator not engaging the parking brake, or not engaging the parking brake sufficiently
- The vehicle being left in gear when exiting the vehicle
- The vehicle not parked on a level surface
- Perception of gradients
- Lack of experience leading to poor judgement by driver
- Poor judgement by an experienced driver/operator
- Driver/operator tired or fatigued.

### Organisational factors:

- lack of or poor training and supervision
- lack of internal guidance, procedures, inductions
- no or poor implementation of safety systems
- control measures not regularly monitored and reviewed.

## What are your duties?

As a person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) you must, so far as reasonably practicable, ensure the health and safety of workers and others at your workplace.

To do this, you must eliminate risks in the workplace that may cause a vehicle roll-away, or if that is not reasonably practicable, you must minimise the risk so far as reasonably practicable.

### This involves four steps:

- Identify hazards to find out what could cause harm.
- Assess the risks (if necessary) to understand the nature of the harm, how serious the harm could be and the likelihood of it happening – this step may not be necessary if you are dealing with a known risk with known controls.
- Control the risks by implementing the most effective control measure that is reasonably practicable in the circumstances, in line with the hierarchy of controls, ie:
  - eliminate the risk
  - substitute the hazard with a safer alternative
  - isolate the hazard from people
  - reduce the risks through engineering controls
  - reduce exposure to the hazard using administrative controls
  - use personal protective equipment.
- Monitor and review the effectiveness of control measures to ensure they are working as planned and revise if necessary.

**Don't wait until something goes wrong and an incident occurs.**

## Consultation

As a PCBU, you have a duty to consult workers who carry out work for your business or undertaking and who are or likely to be directly affected by a health and safety matter.

You may also have duties to consult, cooperate and coordinate with other duty holders including those in the supply chain.

Consultation is an essential part of managing work health and safety in your workplace.

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## How you can prevent vehicle roll-aways

As a PCBU, there are a number of ways you can prevent vehicle roll-aways.

### Safe systems

- Ensure you have a safety management system in place that covers:
  - Safe immobilisation of vehicles
  - Working under and around vehicles
  - Maintenance
  - Coupling and decoupling trailers (if applicable).
- Ensure you have safe systems of work that support safe immobilisation of vehicles when:
  - Drivers/workers exit the vehicle
  - Working around the vehicle such as when loading and unloading
  - Coupling and decoupling trailers
  - Conducting maintenance on the vehicle or trailer (if applicable)
  - A breakdown occurs.

### Before commencing work

- Identify hazards and assess risks associated with working under and around vehicles. Where appropriate:
  - establish an exclusion zone that is clearly marked and enforced.
  - develop and implement safe work procedures for maintenance and repair tasks, and ensure that workers are trained in these procedures.
  - ensure worker training, experience and competency is consistent with the nature and complexity of the task.



## Some practical approaches

### Engineering and other controls

- Consider getting a qualified mechanic to install a park brake alarm system (where available) to minimise the risk of uncontrolled movement of the vehicle by sounding a horn or other alert whenever a vehicle's door is opened without the handbrake being applied: [Australian Design Rules](#) should be considered when modifying a vehicle.
- Where it is not reasonably practicable to employ engineering controls, implement other controls such as operating procedures.
- For work under heavy vehicles and trailers, ensure an appropriate load support is used (e.g. stands or lifting devices).

### Information, training, instruction and supervision, including licensing

- Ensure site inductions include information about safe immobilisation of vehicles.
- Ensure your drivers are provided with information, instruction, training and supervision regarding the vehicle they will be driving.
- Ensure workers have the necessary training, experience and supervision to identify hazards and control the risks associated with the uncontrolled movement of vehicles.
- Ensure your drivers are licenced for the vehicle they will be operating and they are competent to drive that vehicle.

### Maintenance

- Ensure your vehicles are regularly inspected and maintained by a competent person and in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Ensure you have a reporting mechanism for workers/operators to report vehicle maintenance matters.
- Where a concern has been raised about a vehicle, ensure the vehicle is removed from service until maintenance has been conducted and the vehicle is safe to return to service.

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## Further information

[www.comcare.gov.au/safe-healthy-work/prevent-harm/vehicles-as-a-workplace](http://www.comcare.gov.au/safe-healthy-work/prevent-harm/vehicles-as-a-workplace)



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