

VEHICLES AS A WORKPLACE

Info Sheet



Info Sheet

Tradies

When vehicles are used for work purposes (either onsite or in road traffic), they become a workplace under work health and safety (WHS) legislation, requiring the risks associated with these vehicles to be managed.

Around 20% of all kilometres travelled by passenger vehicles is for business purposes, excluding travel to and from work.¹ Vehicle use in road traffic is the most significant contributor to work-related traumatic injury in Australia, particularly fatalities.

- Vehicle collisions were the cause of 32% of Australian worker fatalities and 61% of Australian bystander fatalities in 2016-17²
- Vehicle incidents were 2.5% of all serious injury claims in Australia in 2016-17³
- Around one quarter of all fatal road crashes involve a vehicle being used for business, the majority of these involving a car or light truck.⁴

While tradies make up less than one-third (30%) of Australia's workforce, they represent more than half (58%) of serious claims for workers' compensation.

Issues

Tradies are an essential element of a vibrant economy, and while there are some large service companies, the vast bulk are small businesses running a small fleet of vehicles. Tradies are significantly exposed to road traffic hazards given services can be delivered at multiple sites in one day.

In recent reports, there has been a major shift apparent from traditional passenger vehicles to twin cab / utilities (light trucks). Many of these vehicles have less than 5 stars in ANCAP crash testing, but are the workhorse of tradie fleets.

One state-based analysis revealed a 24% increase in light truck registrations in the five years preceding 2018, and a 40% increase in fatality crashes involving these vehicles in the preceding three years.⁵

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics: 9208.0 - Survey of Motor Vehicle Use, Australia 12 months to 30 June 2018

² Safe Work Australia: Work-related Traumatic Injury Fatalities, Australia 2017

³ Safe Work Australia Comparative performance monitoring report 20th edition

⁴ Transport for New South Wales (2018), Road Safety and Your Work: A Guide for Employers

⁵ Transport for New South Wales (2018), NSW Road Safety Progress Report 2017.



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Hazards, Risks and Management

Refer to the separate infosheet relating to addressing WHS hazards, risks and management associated with use of vehicles in road traffic. Key considerations for tradies may be exposure to unrestrained equipment within the passenger compartment.

Publishing information | This info sheet is part of the *Vehicles as a Workplace* guidance downloadable from the Work Health and Safety Queensland website www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/transport.

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