

VEHICLES AS A WORKPLACE

Info Sheet



Info Sheet

Residential & Community Care

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

Over the five years from 2007–08 to 2011–12, around half of the fatalities involving health & community services workers involved a vehicle.

Issues

Provision of service of home care is one of the fastest growing sectors in the healthcare and social assistance industry, leading to increased industry exposure to road traffic hazards. Changes in disability services, particularly with the National Disability Insurance Scheme and National Injury Insurance Scheme, will result in more Australians receiving disability support often in their own home. Many elderly Australians are remaining at home longer on a care package before entering residential care.

There is a wide variety of vehicle ownership and control settings in the residential and community care sector. The responsibility to provide a safe workplace whenever workers use vehicles for work may include the following situations:

- Vehicles operated by the organisation itself
- Vehicles operated by other organisations, or by the client, which workers use as drivers or passengers

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



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- Vehicles owned or leased by workers (“Greyfleet” vehicles).

Many vehicles in this sector are also purpose-built or modified to the needs of the client. This can create a unique set of circumstances for the care worker due to unfamiliarity of function and controls used when operating the vehicle.

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 residential care workers may be exposure to unrestrained equipment within the passenger compartment. It is also important to consider ensuring staff transporting dangerous, awkward goods, or people with wheelchairs, are appropriately trained for the task, have access to appropriate mechanical aids and/or appropriate assistance.

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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