



# Preventing workers falling from trucks

## Campaign report

The transport industry has a high rate of injuries and fatalities resulting from workers falling off trucks and trailers.

The goal of this campaign is to reduce falls related incidents within the transport industry and its associated supply chain.

This report provides information about the outcomes of the campaign and practical guidance to enable businesses to better manage their own falls risks.

## Key issues

According to the *Work-related injuries and fatalities involving a fall from height, Australia*<sup>1</sup> report:

- there were 12 fatalities in the transport industry during the period 2008 to 2011
- falls from trucks resulted in 3100 serious injury claims from 2009 to 2011
- truck drivers accounted for approximately half of the falls from trucks claims
- the average time away from work for truck drivers after a fall was six weeks.

## The campaign

The campaign's main objectives were to work with industry to find out what the problems were and develop practical tools and case studies to address these. It involved:

### **30 workshops held across Queensland in 2013.**

Targeted at transport operators and the supply chain, the workshops aimed to:

- increase awareness about the risks of falls
- facilitate industry consultation to identify the factors contributing to how and why falls occur.

### **145 workplace assessments in 2014.**

The workplace assessments focused on:

- working on or getting in and out of the cab of a truck
- working on, walking and climbing on a trailer
- working around trucks at ground level on site.

### **Development of a simple facilitated falls risk identification process.**

The process was piloted by WHSQ at 12 workplaces from mid-2014.

<sup>1</sup>Safe Work Australia: <http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/swa/about/publications/pages/work-related-injuries-fatalities-involving-fall-from-height-australia>



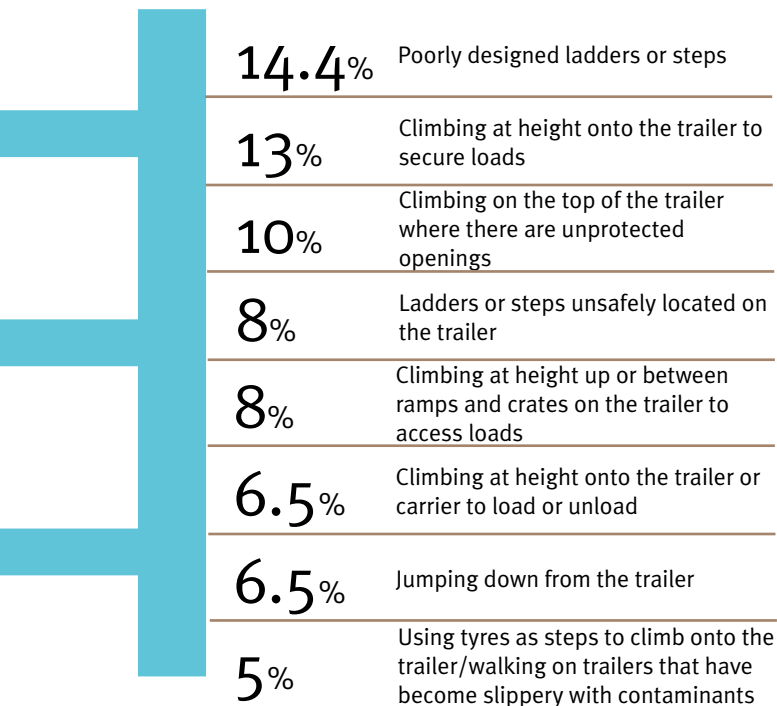
WHSQ inspectors observed...

## poor design, high risk activities and risk taking behaviours

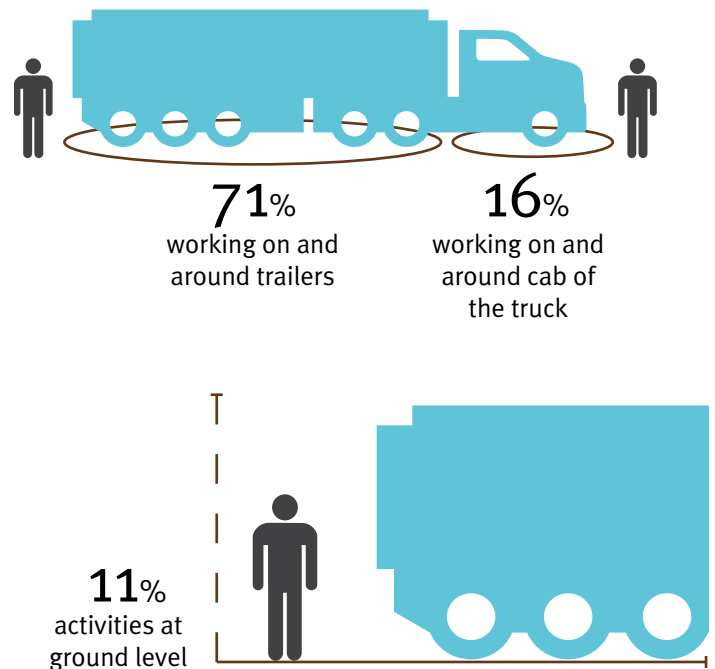
...in more than **30%** (one third) of the assessments.



### The risk of falls from trailers was associated with:



### Of the high risks recorded, most were associated with:



### The risk of falls from the cab of the truck were noted in the following areas:

- No 'three points of contact' to the entry of the cabs.
- Climbing at height to perform mechanical maintenance on the truck.
- Climbing at height to clean the truck.

### The risk of falls at ground level were noted in the following areas:

- Walking on surfaces around load areas and ramps contaminated with water, diesel, mud or ice.
- Walking on surfaces around load areas and ramps that have ground hazards and/or signs of unsafe levels of wear and tear.
- Using unsafe access steps around load areas and ramps.

## Campaign resources

The transport industry used the Risk identification and action plan tool to develop the industry initiatives listed below. The tool shows businesses how to conduct a low-level risk identification process on their trucks and trailers, and implement a solution in consultation with workers.



Risk identification and action plan tool (pdf, 529KB)

## Industry initiatives

### Working on or getting in and out of the cab of the truck

#### Patrick Stevedoring Pty Ltd

**Risk:** Hidden handholds inside truck doors  
**Solution:** Coloured handholds

Patrick Stevedoring identified that the internal handholds on some of their trucks were hard to see. Because drivers could not see the internal handholds, they were sometimes using the inside of the door to climb up into the cab. The risk of falls was increased because the inside of the door is not designed to support the weight of a driver or be used as a point of contact.

Patrick mechanics identified the options using the Risk identification and action tool. They evaluated the identified risks and their options, and agreed to trial changing the colour of the handholds on the highest risk trucks to yellow, using an inexpensive and long lasting paint.

Patrick has since retro-fitted half its Brisbane fleet with this safety feature, as well as distinguishing the cabin access handles on any new prime movers purchased. Patrick is also making it safer for drivers to access their cabins at night. Using the same process with the Risk identification and action plan tool, workers suggested fitting spotlights on the driver's side mirror to angle down on to the driver's steps.



*The yellow handholds are much easier to see at night.*

#### Followmont

**Risk:** Slippery footholds on trucks  
**Solution:** Non-slip material applied to footholds

Followmont consulted with its drivers to identify that some of its older trucks had slippery footholds. Drivers provided feedback on how the trucks were being accessed and which footholds posed the highest risk. Followmont scoped suitable non-slip materials for the footholds and presented a proposal to management detailing the process, benefits and costs of trialling the non-slip material.

Followmont is undertaking a trial on some vehicles with a view to modifying other high risk trucks in its fleet as part of its regular maintenance program.

#### Toll Group, Karawatha depot

**Risk:** Slippery handholds on the doors of prime movers  
**Solution:** Non-slip material applied to handholds

Toll Karawatha workers identified that some of the handholds to help drivers climb in and out of their cabins on the prime movers had a tendency to become slippery from water, diesel and other substances.

After consulting with drivers and mechanics, Toll is trialling applying non-slip materials to the handholds.

#### Blenners

**Risk:** Getting in and out of trucks safely  
**Solution:** Training and improved safe work procedures

Blenners identified a need to improve processes and training around entering and exiting trucks, as its drivers embark and disembark their truck cabins up to 50 times a day.

Blenners' drivers reviewed the company's fleet and its safe work procedure (SWP) was updated with current pictures of its different trucks. Depot managers then delivered toolbox talks using the revised SWP to retrain drivers in safely entering and exiting truck cabins.

## Working, walking and climbing on a trailer

### Arkwood Organic Recycling

**Risk:** Ladders, and the dangers of falling off a truck

**Solution:** Improving existing ladders and installing safer ladders

Arkwood Organic Recycling identified that some of its tipper trailers had either unsafe ladders or no ladders at all. This was a risk, as drivers frequently need to climb up on the trailers to view or adjust the load.

Consultation with Arkwood's mechanics and drivers generated a range of solutions which have since been implemented, including:

- installing new, safely designed ladders on trailers
- adding hi-visibility non-slip material to the rungs of the existing ladders to make them easier to climb
- providing refresher training during toolbox talks for drivers and workshop staff on how to use ladders safely
- attaching '3 points of contact' stickers next to the ladders and near the doors on the trucks as a reminder for drivers.



*'Three points of contact' stickers will be placed on all vehicles*

### Toll Group, Karawatha Depot

**Risk:** Lack of access at height onto the trailer

**Solution:** Introduce portable ladders

Staff in Toll's North Queensland depot identified there was a lack of safe access to restrain freight at height when trucks were away from the depot.

Toll developed a process for drivers to report risks at external sites, and for them to consult with other drivers about what type of equipment might help to reduce the risks. This process led to Toll identifying and purchasing portable ladders to use at sites that did not have sufficient working from height standards. Toll provided training in how to use the new portable ladders.

## Working around trucks at ground level

### Australian Amalgamated Terminals (AAT)

**Risk:** Different operators, freight and vehicles on one site

**Solution:** Consultation across the supply chain resulting in truck stands and training

AAT operate a multi-user terminal at the Port of Brisbane, with a number of different businesses, vehicles, trailers and load types coming into the terminal.

AAT formed two consultative groups to consider how to address the risks of falls from steel transporters and roll-on, roll-off (RORO) high and heavy machinery transporters. Some of the known falls risks for these load types were identified and solutions created around best practice, including:

- transport operators to provide a spotter or second person to assist drivers when loading machines
- access stands to be used for accessing/egressing trucks, tarping and load restraint operations
- training to be provided to drivers by transport operators on their access/egress requirements (e.g. using ramps rather than jumping from trailers)
- having a designated fixed stand area within the terminal
- discharging RORO cargo to specific areas close to stands
- new site rules including no jumping or stepping off trailers.

AAT has since implemented a number of additional control measures. One of the more significant controls has been introducing truck stands to assist drivers accessing and working on trailers. AAT prepared instructions on how to use these and delivered on-site training for operators.

AAT recently developed a short safety film including the use of the truck stands, truck driver safe zones during operations and traffic management. This film is part of AAT's online induction package.



*The mobile stand helps prevent workers from having to climb on the trailer*

## Byrne Brothers

**Risk:** Slippery sites

**Solution:** Improved work instructions and tool box talks

Byrne Brothers identified that drivers were climbing over the bonnet to clean trucks and that they were jumping out of cab, creating the risk of slipping and falling at ground level due to waste material on and around the wash bays.

Byrne Brothers reviewed its truck and bowl specifications, purchasing policy and wash bay waste removal process. It identified that a safe access system should be installed and that the wash bay stairs should be cleaned when the wash bay is cleaned.

The company prepared instructions for washing the trucks, how to operate the slump stand and the wash bay. Byrne Brothers used toolbox talks to explain these new work instructions.

Byrne Brothers is continuing to address falls risks and is now investigating applying 'three points of contact' stickers to the side of truck cabs.



## Future actions

### WHSQ will:

- distribute this report and tool to the transport industry and its supply chain
- facilitate truck, equipment and trailer manufacturers to further review the risk of falls when designing or modifying their products, with a particular focus on the risks associated with trailers and poorly designed ladders and steps
- incorporate a focus on workers climbing at heights on the trailer to secure the load, as part of the Safe handling when securing loads campaign in 2015–16
- expand engagement intervention over the next two years using the risk identification and action plan tool.

### More information

For more information on work health and safety, visit [worksafe.qld.gov.au](http://worksafe.qld.gov.au) or call us on 1300 362 128.

Find us on



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