For guidance on managing construction health risks go to
www.hse.gov.uk/construction

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Loading & Unloading Small Plant

The rules and procedures in force where people are at work may require the person responsible for this equipment to carry out a specific risk assessment.

It is important to read this entire leaflet BEFORE using the Loading & Unloading Small Plant

1. This leaflet is to advise you on the safe loading and unloading of small plant such as mini excavators, skid steer loaders and small dumpers; and of the extra requirements needed when loading a trailer being towed by a vehicle.
2. Loading and unloading plant can cause injury or damage if it is not done in a careful and controlled way.
3. You should not attempt to load or unload the plant from a truck or trailer unless you are fully competent to do so. You should have had previous experience, or a course of instruction from a responsible body. You should have at least a current site safety awareness certificate.
4. A Certificate of Training Achievement (CTA) for Construction Plant Operators is required on many construction sites. Training to achieve a CTA is available from CITB appointed bodies.
5. Plan your work and think ahead to make sure that you will always be working safely.
6. Wear all the personal protective equipment specified for each type of plant, which will include most or all of the following:
   ear muffs or plugs giving protection up to the required levels;
   safety helmet to EN397 or BS5240;
   sturdy shoes as a minimum, ideally, safety boots to EN345 or BS1870/4972;
   high visibility vest or similar reflective garment if you are on a public road.
7. If the plant you are unloading is fitted with a flashing beacon, switch it on when moving.
8. Loading or unloading must not be done by minors, or by anyone under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
9. Loading or unloading must only be done by an able bodied adult. Anyone with either temporary or permanent disability must seek expert advice before doing so.

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Please keep this leaflet safely as it may be required for future reference

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Before Starting Work...

WORK AREA

1. Do not load or unload where there is a danger of explosion. The plant's engine will ignite fumes from petrol, or gas cylinders.
2. To reduce the risk of serious or fatal injury from breathing toxic fumes do not load or unload inside a building or closed space unless the area is well ventilated.
3. Never drive the plant on any public road or highway unless it is insured, and complies with road traffic regulations. In addition, you must have an appropriate driving licence.
4. You should find a safe, clear area of flat, hard ground to load or unload any plant.
5. Check that the area is clear and that there are no tree branches, scaffolding or other obstructions you may run into. Take into account the extra height when the plant is on the vehicle.
6. Make sure you are not working near any overhead power lines unless they are at least 5m (16ft) above the highest part of the plant when loaded. Do not forget that high-voltage electricity can jump across large gaps.

OPERATORS

1. You must wear the relevant items of personal protective equipment (ppe) whenever you load or unload plant. Particular jobs or environments may require a higher level of protection.
2. Wear ear mufts or plugs giving hearing protection appropriate for the plant you are driving.
3. Wear sturdy shoes as a minimum, ideally, safety boots to EN345 or BS1870/4972.
4. You will need to wear a safety helmet (EN397 or BS5240) if you are on a construction site.
5. You must wear a high visibility vest or similar reflective garment if you are on a public road.
6. Anyone assisting you should also wear appropriate personal protective equipment.

LOADING AND UNLOADING

THE VEHICLE TO BE LOADED

1. All vehicles, including trailers being towed, must always be loaded on level, solid ground.
2. Before starting to load any plant you should check that there is enough fuel in the plant's tank to complete the loading and the following unloading at your destination.
3. In heavy traffic or awkward situations get someone to act as lookout.
4. Make sure loading ramps are fully extended and if adjustable are set to the width of the plant's wheels or tracks.
5. In muddy or icy conditions use sand or ash to aid traction on slippery ramps.
6. Always reverse the plant onto the vehicle. Line up before climbing the ramps so that a minimum of steering is required.
7. Tracked mini excavators may be loaded with the body slewed 180 degrees so that the blade is at the front. Immediately after loading, return carefully to the forward position.
8. Any equipment with a slewing body must have the turntable locking device engaged before transport.
9. When loading ensure that the plant or the means by which you secure it does not restrict your vision for transportation.
10. Wheel driven plant such as skid steer loaders should have the parking brake set and be left in gear. Buckets must be lowered flat onto the vehicle deck.
11. Always be aware of the height and width of your load.
12. Never transport plant with its engine running

SECURING YOUR LOAD

1. Remember, before you start to secure the load that it is the driver's legal responsibility to ensure that it is secured at all times.
2. Ensure that the anchorage points on your vehicle are of sufficient strength for the load and that they are not broken or damaged and that the platform bodywork is sound.

BE AWARE

1. While loading or unloading, stay aware of what is happening all around. Do not assume that other persons have seen you and will get out of your way.
2. Always stop and park on firm level ground away from the work area and other traffic.
3. Apply the parking brake, remove any ignition key and secure the plant before leaving it unattended.
4. You may want to read this leaflet again. Please keep it until you finish the work.

EXTRA INFORMATION FOR TRAILERS AND TOWING VEHICLES

1. If the carrying vehicle is a trailer being towed, you should comply with all of 'LOADING AND UNLOADING' above, and the following.
2. The trailer should be coupled to the towing vehicle, which must have the parking brake set on. Also, the engine should be switched off, a low gear engaged and the ignition key removed. The trailer parking brake should be on and any prop stands extended for stability.
3. An appropriate breakaway or safety chain should be fitted between the vehicle and trailer.
4. Check that the total gross train weight will not exceed traffic regulations. The hire company will be able to give you the weights of equipment they supply. If you use your own vehicle or trailer it is your responsibility to comply with the relevant road traffic laws.
5. When you have finished loading and securing your load restore any prop stands to their travel position, check the lights and release the trailer parking brake.

Useful Reference Points • www.hae.org.uk/businessguard