

THE SAFE USE OF CONSTRUCTION SITE DUMPER TRUCKS

This document outlines the legal requirements applied to the use of dumper trucks on construction and building sites on the Isle of Man and gives advice on safe site practice.

What does the law require on the Isle of Man?

The key legal requirements for construction mobile plant are contained in the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 as applied to the Island by Order 1998 and the Construction (Health and Safety) Regulations 1985.

The Act impose duties on employers and the self employed to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of their employees and persons not in their employment who may be exposed to risk from the work activity. It also place duties on operators to ensure that they take care of themselves and others and that they do not interfere with safety equipment.

The Construction Regulations address a wide range of site activities. Most relevant to the safe use of site dumpers are requirements relating to the condition and use of vehicles, carrying passengers, loading materials and work near excavations.

What do I need to do about training?

Anyone driving a site dumper truck must have been properly trained for the task. Training should involve a formal course of instruction: experience and competence are not a substitute for training. For experienced operators a refresher training session followed by a formal training assessment may be undertaken to determine if more detailed training is needed.

Whilst training courses are offered by a number of organisations, employers are strongly advised to contact the Department of Trade and Industry Training Services Division at Hills Meadow (tel: 687151) for advice on arranging suitable training courses.

Employers (and the self-employed) will be expected to demonstrate that only trained drivers are permitted to operate dumper trucks. In exceptional cases, employers who have not trained all their drivers may until 31 August 2002 allow existing operators to continue working so long as they can demonstrate that they have taken full account of the characteristics of the site (surface, gradient etc), the type and condition of the dumper truck, the competence of the operator and the quality of site supervision before reaching such a decision.

What is meant by information and instruction?

Instruction should be related closely to the site operations. Whilst training is designed to ensure that an operator has the necessary core skills, information and instruction must be provided so that vehicle operators are fully aware of the tasks they are expected to undertake, the rules of the site and the operation of any vehicle with which the operator is unfamiliar.

What if a new employee claims to be fully trained?

Employers are expected to take steps to check any claims of training undertaken. As a minimum, certificates of training achievement should be inspected. In the cases of doubt, employers should contact the issuer of the certificate or the Department of Trade and Industry for advice.

Safe systems of work

Managers play a key role in ensuring the safe use of compact dumpers. Managers need to ensure that safe vehicles are provided and that safe systems of work are planned and put into practice. Managers should ensure that all site vehicles:

- Are capable of safely performing the tasks they are expected to perform;
- Are operated and maintained according to the manufacturer's instructions; and
- Are driven by competent drivers.

Site managers should pay attention to the provision and maintenance of a safe work environment for compact dumper operations by ensuring vehicle traffic routes are safe. In particular, site managers should ensure that:

- Stop blocks are positioned a safe distance from the edges of excavations, pits, spoil heaps, etc, to prevent dumpers falling during tipping;
- Edges of roadways and tipping points are supported where necessary to prevent collapse and provided with physical protection to prevent vehicles running off the roadway;
- The public are not put at risk from site operations.

Workers on site need to know the site health and safety rules, so the provision of site induction training is an important part of ensuring compact dumpers are used safely. When selecting people to drive dumpers, managers should ensure that they:

- Are competent to safely operate the specific vehicle and carry out daily maintenance checks;
- Hold valid driving licences and training certificates; and
- Are not unfit to drive due to the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Drivers should be instructed to always follow safe systems of work, specific site traffic routes and refrain from taking shortcuts. Particular attention should be paid to ensuring drivers use seat belts where rollover protection structures ("rollcages") are fitted to compact dumpers. Rollover protection and seat belts should be fitted to all site dumper trucks by 31 December 2002.

Managers should make regular checks to ensure the effectiveness of systems of work. Examine the work environment to ensure precautions, such as stop blocks, are maintained in a safe condition. Review maintenance records to ensure compact dumpers are kept in good

working order, paying particular attention to braking systems. Monitor the performance of drivers and give them feedback and any appropriate retraining.

Safe driving practices

Drivers have a key role to play in ensuring the safe use of compact dumpers. Drivers should always:

- Read the manufacturer's instruction book before operating an unfamiliar vehicle;
- Understand the differences in performance when loaded and unloaded, particularly relating to braking and stability on slopes;
- Know the difference handling and braking characteristics of the vehicle in wet or icy conditions;
- Check tyres, brakes, etc, to ensure compact dumpers are safe to use at the start of the working day;
- Wear appropriate protective equipment, eg ear defenders, high visibility jacket, etc;
- Use seat belts where they are fitted;
- Check that nobody is at risk of injury before moving off, particularly in the area obscured by the skip when going forward, and behind the vehicle when reversing;
- Keep to designated vehicle routes and follow site rules and safe systems of work;
- Drive at appropriate speeds for site conditions;
- Follow directions given by traffic signs and signallers;
- Load only on level ground with the parking brake applied;
- Get off the dumper when it is being loaded and ensure that the skip is not overloaded;
- Check that loads are evenly distributed and that they do not obscure visibility from the driving position;
- Stop, select neutral gear and apply parking brake, when the machine is tipping into excavations while stationary;
- Use proper towing pins with jump out restraints (not bent pieces of reinforcement bar); and
- Apply the parking brake, switch off the engine and remove the key when leaving the driver's seat.

Further information

Further guidance on safe working practices is contained in the HSE publication "The safe use of vehicles on construction sites", available from HSE Books, PO Box 1999, Sudbury, Suffolk, CO10 2WA, telephone 01787 881165.

Further guidance on Isle of Man legislation is available from the Health and Safety at Work Inspectorate, 23 Athol Street, Douglas, IM1 1LV, telephone 685952.

This information document is current at 19 February 2002 and is issued to clarify existing duties under health and safety law. It does not replace any other guidance or affect any existing enforcement procedures.