



## ARCH RISK MANAGEMENT

### Arch Fleet Management: Use and Maintenance Management

#### Summary:

Employers are legally obliged to make sure that any work equipment, including vehicles, are in good working order and should be suitable for the purpose for which it is to be used.

As an employer you will need to carefully consider the working environment in which a specific vehicle will be used and the suitability of that vehicle for the people using it.

It should be made clear to your employees that driving in the workplace calls for the same standards as on public roads and often requires even more skill and care.

#### What to take into consideration:

- Are vehicles fit for the purpose for which they are used?
- Are vehicles maintained in a safe and fit condition?
- Are you sure that drivers' health, and possibly safety, are not being put at risk, e.g. from an inappropriate seating position or driving posture?

#### Vehicles used at the workplace should, wherever possible, have the following important features:

- Very stable under working conditions
- Provide a safe way to get in and out, or on and off
- Suitable and effective brakes
- Windows, mirrors and sometimes CCTV providing good all-round visibility
- Suitable warning devices (for example horns, rotating beacons, reversing alarms) should be considered
- Painting and markings to make the vehicle stand out
- Seats and seat belts (where necessary) that are safe and comfortable

Consulting with those who will use it is a key part of developing a vehicle specification.

#### Vehicle Spec:

Pre-driving checks are a sensible part of ensuring a vehicle is fit to use and, for some insurance and / or breakdown cover providers, can be conditions for providing cover for that vehicle.

The Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 set requirements for the safe use, condition, and equipment of vehicles used on public roads.

Most vehicles used in the workplace should meet this standard (but in some cases there are specific supply standards for mobile plant e.g. some lift trucks). Warning devices such as rotating beacons and reversing alarms are often fitted, and conspicuous painting and marking can be used to make a vehicle stand out to pedestrians.

Vehicles should be designed so that, wherever possible, those who use them can do their work from the ground. Where people have to work at height on vehicles, suitable means of safe access onto and around vehicles should be provided.

Drivers should be able to see clearly around their vehicle, so consider measures such as special mirrors where visibility is restricted. Dash-cams may be fitted to provide evidence in the event of a collision and support incident investigation and insurance claims.

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### Maintenance

To keep your fleet vehicles on the road and productive is one of the biggest challenges for service managers. Vehicles that are maintained in good working order will help ensure they remain mechanically sound and any devices function properly.

This requires adequate and timely maintenance and servicing. Without these, vehicles can be subject to unexpected breakdowns which will cause delays and lost productivity. Preventive maintenance also helps in avoiding failures during use. This should be thorough, regular and frequent enough to meet the manufacturer's guidelines and common sense. Special attention needs to be paid to: the braking system; the steering system; the tyres; mirrors and any fittings that allow the driver to see clearly (for example, CCTV cameras); windscreen washers and wipers; any warning devices; specific safety systems; pipes, pneumatic or hydraulic hoses, securing points for ropes, etc.

Vehicles that are not maintained regularly will also incur excess wear and tear that creates bigger, more expensive repairs in the long run. Even something that seems as minor as not checking tyre pressure can result in extra costs as, apart from affecting handling, loss of tyre pressure can increase your fuel use over time. So monitoring and scheduling your maintenance will save you money in the long run and keep your vehicles on the road.

### Driver Checks and Inspections

Planned inspections are a vital part of preventative maintenance. These could range from basic safety checks by drivers before using the vehicle (checking that the tyres are properly inflated, etc.), to regular maintenance inspections carried out based on time or mileage.

Employers may find it helpful to provide drivers with a list of the daily checks to be signed off at the start of each shift. This should be monitored to ensure the checks are carried out properly.

Driver pre-journey checks should include the following:

- Tyres – correct pressures / method to deal with damaged tyres / carrying a spare
- Oil & fluids not falling below minimum levels – keep them topped up!
- Ensuring all-round vision – clearing / keep clean windows, lights – and number plates
- Ensuring lights & mirrors are on the correct setting for that driver