



SAFETY ALERT

OPERATING LOADING RAMPS ON TRAILERS (LOW LOADERS)

This safety alert is published following investigation of two recent incidents involving the uncontrolled fall of loading ramps from trailers that resulted in the death of two workers who were in the vicinity of the ramp when it fell. These incidents highlighted the significant risks associated with the lowering and raising of ramps, especially if the hydraulic system malfunctions or a structural failure occurs.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

The *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000* requires employers and those in control of plant to take all necessary steps to ensure that plant and ancillary equipment are safe for their intended use, maintained in a safe operating condition, and that persons operating them are provided with adequate information to ensure their safe use.

RISK CONTROLS

Due to varying site conditions, the loading and unloading operation can be different for each site. A site-specific risk assessment should be carried out to identify and control new hazards or conditions. Factors such as ground conditions (soft, sloping or uneven), overhead powerlines and potential dislodgement of the load during transfer need to be considered and controlled.

Persons involved in the operation and maintenance of loading ramps on trailers must ensure that:

- persons undertaking the lowering and raising of loading ramps have received adequate information and training and are supervised to the extent necessary for safe operation
- effective control measures are put in place to prevent workers and/or members of the public being in the 'swing arc' area when ramps are being lowered or raised, or when the ramps are in the raised position but not secured
- procedures to deal with hydraulic system malfunctions or structural failures are in place and followed
- ramps are used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions
- ramps and their ancillary equipment are regularly inspected and maintained by a competent person.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information regarding the safe operation of plant can be found in chapter 5 (plant) of the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001*.

Further information is also available at www.workcover.nsw.gov.au or from the WorkCover Assistance Service on 13 10 50.

Disclaimer

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