

Safe Loading and Unloading Procedure

Template safe system of work · adapt the wording to match how your site actually works

Loading and unloading is where the vehicle, the machine, the load and the people all come together, and it is where most yard injuries happen. This procedure sets out how it is done here.

Scope and limitations — read before use

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1. Scope and responsibility

Field	Entry
Applies to	All loading and unloading of vehicles on this site
Site	
Procedure owner	
Date / version	
Review date	

2. Before the vehicle arrives

- The loading area is clear of obstructions, debris and standing water or ice.
- The surface is sound and level enough to take a laden machine.
- Lighting is adequate for the time of day.
- The machine to be used has had its pre-use check and is fit for use.
- The operator is authorised in writing for that machine.
- The load is known: what it is, roughly what it weighs, and how it will be handled.

3. When the vehicle arrives

1. The driver reports to reception or the agreed contact point.
2. The driver is given the site rules card (WTS-06) and signs to acknowledge it.
3. The driver is directed to the designated loading position.
4. The vehicle is positioned, engine off, parking brake applied.
5. Where the trailer is uncoupled, the trailer parking brake is applied and the wheels are chocked.
6. The driver goes to the designated safe waiting area, OR remains in the cab if that is the rule here. State which applies on this site:

On this site, during loading and unloading the driver must:	Tick
Leave the cab and wait in the designated safe area	
Remain in the cab with the engine off	

Whichever rule you choose, it must be written down, briefed, and applied consistently. The danger to avoid is a driver wandering into the working area, or a vehicle being driven away while loading is still in progress.

4. Controlling vehicle movement during the operation

A vehicle driving away mid-operation is a recognised killer. Use one of these controls and record which one applies here:

Control	How it works	Used here
Key control	Keys are handed to the loading supervisor and returned only when the operation is complete and signed off.	
Traffic light system	A red and green light at the bay controls when the driver may move.	
Signage and physical control	Clear signage plus a barrier or cone across the front of the vehicle.	
Supervised release	The marshal or supervisor gives the driver a positive instruction to move, and only then.	

5. During loading and unloading

- An exclusion zone is maintained. Nobody other than the machine operator is in the working area.
- Before removing straps, curtains or sheeting, the load is inspected for movement or damage in transit. Loads shift, and they fall when the restraint comes off.
- Nobody stands where a load could fall on them, including on the far side of the vehicle.
- The operator carries the load low and travels in reverse if the load obscures the view forward.
- Loads are placed over the axles, tight together and against the headboard, and are not stacked so they can topple.
- The vehicle's balance is watched as weight is added or removed. Do not leave all the weight at one end or on one side.
- Nobody climbs on the load or on the vehicle bed unless there is a controlled means of access and the fall risk has been assessed.
- If anything unexpected happens, stop. Do not improvise around a problem with a suspended or unstable load.

6. Finishing

7. The load is confirmed stable and correctly positioned.
8. The machine is withdrawn and parked, forks lowered, keys removed.
9. The exclusion zone is stood down.
10. The driver is told the operation is complete and is responsible for securing the load for transit.
11. Chocks are removed and returned to their place.
12. Any damage, near miss or problem is reported and recorded.

Note on load security: the vehicle driver is responsible for the security of the load in transit. Your responsibility is that it was placed safely and that the driver was not endangered while on your site.

7. Briefing record

Name	Role	Briefed by	Date	Signature

Prepared by	Approved by	Date