

**SAFETY****ScottishPowerExpress****HEALTH & SAFETY MATTERS**

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## Safe Use of Vehicles

It has been noted from several site inspections that basic control measures are not always being observed whilst operating vehicles. The main areas of concern are:

### Seat Belts:

Unfortunately, we have recently found an increasing number of contractor operatives choosing not to wear lap belts and even wilfully bypassing safety systems. This is increasing their risk of serious injury or death should the machine overturn. Seatbelts are a crucial component of 'Roll Over Protection Systems' (ROPS) and it is mandatory that they are worn on all occasions and are in good, operable condition.

### Vehicle Checks:

First impressions and safety count. SPEN vehicles and staff can often be the first face to face contact customers have with anyone from the company. It is important we promote a professional attitude in every aspect of our daily activities. Vehicle checks can identify issues that may seem small but can have a bigger impact on safety for other road users, not just the driver. Any defects should be reported immediately in order to arrange for an appropriate repair or other appropriate action.

Vehicles rolling unattended also pose a significant risk to the public and property. Failure to apply the handbrake of a vehicle is operator error.

In summary, drivers should be following the "HIT" Acronym "Handbrake On, Vehicle in Gear, Turn The Wheels" when parking vehicles. A slight incline or even just an uneven road surface can be enough to start a vehicle moving.

### Vehicle Loading:

As is stipulated in the SP Driver's Handbook:

Drivers are responsible for the load and weight of the vehicle they are driving. They must know the typical weight of their vehicle and how to calculate payload and gross vehicle weight (GVW). It is a serious offence to use any vehicle in an overloaded condition.

## Recommendations and action points

- Seatbelts must be inspected daily to confirm that they operate correctly and are in good condition. This includes the operation of any installed seatbelt indicator beacons.
- Any vehicle with a damaged or defective seatbelt must not be used.
- It is mandatory for seatbelts to be worn correctly whenever a vehicle is in use.
- Vehicle weights indicated on plates or in vehicle manuals must not be exceeded under any circumstances.
- Vehicle inspections are a legal requirement under the Provision & Use of Work Equipment Regulations, 1998.
- Inspection records must be available if requested and all faults should be detailed on the record.
- Further guidance is contained within the [Driver's Handbook](#) (internal only).
- Complete any driver awareness and/or vehicle specific training as required.



*Dumper lap belt in incorrect position*



*Example vehicle data plate showing GVW as 1234 Lbs*