



Driving off road vehicles safely

WHAT HAPPENED?

Driving Four-Wheel Drive (4WD) vehicles or All-Terrain Vehicles (ATV) off road is a key activity for Transpower Service Providers to deliver our works. This includes maintaining our assets to building new assets in remote locations such as towers and transmission lines. Accessing these assets poses the risk of vehicle slippage on tracks including rollover and injuries to our people.

Known contributing factors for this risk are off-road track conditions such as incline, unevenness, winding & narrow tracks, vegetation, wildlife and type of ground or surface. The ground or surface condition can be worsened by inclement weather events such as heavy rain causing ground softening or movement and wind causing vegetation damage.

Recently there has been a number of 4WD vehicle slip incidents which have had potential to cause injury. This alert aims to remind anyone driving off-road of this risk when driving 4WD vehicles and the controls.



Photos of 4WD vehicle slipping off the track. (Obtained with permission from the Service Provider.)

LEARNINGS: Controls when driving off road

- Use a suitable type of 4WD vehicle when accessing the site. Ensure that the 4WD vehicle is fitted with Roll Over Protection System (ROPS) or roll cage. Use designated access track.
- Check recent weather conditions (past rain may have caused soft ground) and monitor future conditions before driving 4WD vehicles as part of the risk assessment. Where practicable, assess the ground conditions through surveys. Consider rescheduling works or access after inclement weather.
- Ensure only drivers competent in driving 4WD vehicles and familiar with the vehicles' capabilities are used. Adapt the driving to the terrain by using low-range gears and driving at low speeds.
- In an emergency where the vehicle slides off the track, ensure that a rescue plan is in place to make safe and if required get help.
- Ensure you have the correct rescue equipment in the vehicle including satellite phone, shovels, etc.

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