Non-application and Failure of Handbrakes on Vehicles

What has Happened:

In 2016 there have been 7 incidents of handbrakes not being applied which have resulted in vehicles rolling uncontrolled without the driver in the vehicle and in the 18 months from January 2015 to the end of June 2016 there have been a total of 13 such incidents.

Luckily only one of these incidents has resulted in an LTI while most have resulted in significant vehicular damage and cost.

These incidents have occurred country wide and in all range of vehicles, large Live-Line hoist truck, Unimog, vans and a private car. They have also occurred in all different locations, busy public roads, ESB premises, at an NT's home and in fields (work locations).

On one occasion a defective handbrake cable was discovered as part of a Daily Vehicle Safety Check.

On two occasions in 2016 Mercedes hoist trucks have rolled away uncontrolled.

What Should I do?

Actions to ensure safe parking:

1. Apply the parking brake, ensuring that it is fully engaged.
2. Switch off the engine.
3. Put the vehicle in first gear or reverse, or, in the case of an automatic transmission vehicle, select 'P' (1-3 are the RSA Rules of the Road recommended procedure).
4. When parking on the road turn the front wheels in a direction that will send the vehicle into the kerb thus stopping it from rolling down the road (where possible). Lock the steering wheel.
5. In the event that there is a requirement to operate equipment thus requiring the engine to be left running while the driver is not present in the vehicle:
    a) Apply the parking brake, ensuring that it is fully engaged.
    b) Shift the vehicle transmission to neutral.
    c) Exit the vehicle and immediately 'chock' the wheels.

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