

Playing It Safe with Motor Vehicles on the Jobsite

It's no secret that a construction jobsite can be an extremely hazardous place. However, when you add motor vehicles to the mix, the area can become an all-out danger zone.

Whether you're working with dump trucks, flatbeds, pickups or any type of vehicle, it's important to follow the proper safety guidelines so every worker makes it through the day unharmed. When workers are operating these vehicles on the highway, they must adhere to all Department of Transportation (DOT) rules as well as state and local traffic laws. Once the worker enters the jobsite in a construction vehicle, they must follow DOT and Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) rules.

Here are some of the key motor vehicles rules as stated by OSHA:

- All vehicles must have a service, emergency, and parking brake system in good working condition.
- All vehicles in use must be equipped with at least two operational headlights and two tail lights, which should be used in dark or low-visibility areas.
- All vehicles must have operable brake lights and a horn at the operator's station.
- No driver can operate a motor vehicle with an obstructed view to the rear—unless the vehicle is equipped with a reverse signal alarm or an observer is present who can tell the driver when it is safe to back up.
- All vehicles with cabs must have windshields and wipers. Cracked or broken glass must be replaced.
- Seat belts must be installed in all motor vehicles.
- Operating levers controlling hoisting/dumping devices must be equipped with a latch or other device which will prevent accidental starting or tripping of the mechanism.
- Dump truck tailgate trip handles must be arranged so that the operator will be in the clear during dumping.
- Employees must be qualified by training or experience to operate any equipment or machinery.
- Never use any machinery, tools, or equipment that is not in compliance with OSHA standards and the manufacturer's operations manual. Broken equipment must be identified as unsafe and be tagged, locked or physically removed from the jobsite.
- At the beginning of each shift, you must check each vehicle you intend to operate for damage to the brake systems, tires, horn, steering mechanism, coupling devices, seat belts, operating controls and all safety devices as well as any lights, reflectors, windshield wipers, defrosters and fire extinguishers when necessary for operation.

If you want to keep your workers safe and sound, make sure that every person who operates a motor vehicle is fully aware of these rules. It's important to constantly enforce these safety guidelines on the jobsite. For more information, visit the OSHA website at www.osha.gov.