

MEMBERS HANDBOOK 2008

By now you should have received your copy of the Members Handbook 2008, which we hope you find useful. We are very grateful to everyone who placed an advertisement in the Handbook (which helped cover the costs of publication), and thanks also to everyone who wrote an article.

NEW BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY FOR HTA MEMBERS

New Business opportunities for HTA members are gratefully received and none more so than the 21st century trend to utilise *Light Rail Systems* as a cost effective, non-polluting alternative to the conventional diesel powered bus in cities. London, Manchester, Sheffield, Newcastle and Wolverhampton have all adopted Light Rail, as the mode of choice with further network extensions planned in Birmingham, Croydon and Nottingham.

As always, new business opportunities represent new challenges and Light Rail is no exception. For much of this *Metro* style rolling stock is 'articulated', in that it has three rail bogies supporting two passenger carriages (cars). So they must be transported in made-up sets, not split into two sections unless they are to be craned on and off. A good example of this 'articulated' arrangement is depicted in the City of Bilbao, the Basque capital of Spain.



Light Rail represents a significant new business opportunity for HTA members. This type of electric rolling stock must be delivered by road transport, as Light Rail sets of this type are neither equipped nor certificated for main line running and cannot be delivered by rail. Moreover, the rolling stock itself will go back to manufacturers for refurbishment on a pre-planned basis. So HTA members will get a second bite of the cherry by uplifting, then re-delivery a second time round in 2015 or 2020.

This particular *EuskoTram* Light Rail set depicted, has four rail bogies supporting three carriages and can be transported either as (a) fully made-up three car set of 20 metres long; or (b) split into three sections, of which the middle car would have no rail wheels as these are attached to cars one and three.

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The second challenge is to get each set on and off HTA member's trailers. The methodology is to assemble a long steel ramp made up of flat bottom bullhead section rail, set to the standard gauge conjoined by gauging bars and married by means of fishplates to form a chamfered ramp with a maximum inclination of 15 degrees, as light rail cars have very limited clearance underneath. A hydraulic winch with a single drum is almost obligatory for loading, as this gives fine control of all loading or unloading procedures, with the ability to power unload by means of reverse blocks. Better still would be a two drum hydraulic winch with long 19mm ropes providing continuous control at all times, while hauling each set on and off low loader trailers in complete safety.

The STGO hardware required is a heavy haul unit and trailer of step-frame design, as low as possible to minimise the overall height. Together with a hydraulic detachable swan-neck and extendable lower deck of 20 metres (65 foot) with a full size track panel overlaid on trailer floor, or better still with the main rails set to the standard gauge. This would allow the rail wheel flanges to be loaded into the ISO gauge gap in the trailer floor, thereby saving 225mm extra height caused by the overlaid track panel.

While having the correct trailer hardware is vitally important, what is even more salient is the importance of good planning, for proper planning and risk-assessment is vital to ensure each light rail set gets to its destination without damage, delay or disruption.

As the low-loader driver who took a wrong turn in Birmingham some years ago with a 45 ton Terex Dumper would confirm, "Proper planning is vital to avoid being 'grounded' on a city centre roundabout for 24 hours, like I was", with massive road and rail disruption as a direct result *and* extra cost. The third ingredient is 'training' as all staff must know in advance the safe systems of work required by Law with all hazards identified and plans in place to minimise them, by training and practice.

In summary, the ever increasing cost of black gold oil, means yet more and more applications for Light Rail in UK cities, with rolling stock to be delivered by road from manufacturers' plants in EU states. Every one provides a showcase for HTA members to display their uniquely impressive blend of expertise and operational creativity. In the longer term, this could even lead to more joint ventures between STGO and Crane Hire members with each partner lifting, then hauling heavy rail carriages and locomotives. The benefit of which will be to the ultimate profitability of all HTA members... and its illustrious history.

Signed: HTA member Mike Ponsonby BA, CMIOSH & CPC.

Sources: The Management Regulations 1999.

Dept for Tpt Code of Practice on Load Safety. ISBN.0115525475.



This 70 tonne transformer was transported from Linz, Austria to Truro, Cornwall in March 2008, by HC Wilson Transport Ltd. The transformer was unloaded and positioned onto the plinth in Truro by fellow HTA member J.B. Rawcliffe & Sons Ltd.

Directors Simon Wilson and Graham Wilson kindly hosted the HTA Committee Meeting last December at the HC Wilson Transport Ltd premises in Elmswell, Suffolk.

ALCOHOL, DRUGS AND EMPLOYMENT LAW

A quarter of all accidents in the work place are attributable to staff working whilst under the influence of either drugs or alcohol, and an estimated one in ten employees abuse drugs and alcohol. The impact on their performance is very costly to their employer. They are:

- 3.6 times more likely to be involved in an accident at work
- 3 times more likely to have sick leave.
- 5 times more likely claim compensation.
- 33% less productive
- 10 times more likely to be late.

So what can you do to tackle employees you suspect of drug and alcohol abuse and ensure that they will not be able to bring a successful claim of unfair dismissal if they are dismissed?

If a claim of unfair dismissal is made to an employment tribunal there are two tests that they apply to decide if the dismissal is unfair.

- Was the correct procedure followed?
- Was the action of the employer reasonable in the circumstances?

Even if it is decided that you were entirely reasonable in dismissing the employee, if the correct procedure has not been followed then compensation will be awarded.



Many employees are aware of this and are only too willing to pursue claims for compensation if they think they can win something irrespective of the reasons why they were dismissed.

So how do you avoid the compensation trap? You need three documents:

- A contract of employment
- A disciplinary procedure
- A drug and alcohol policy and procedure.

All employees have to be issued with a contract of employment within 8 weeks of joining a company. There can be serious consequences for a company if a contract is not issued. Employment Tribunals can fine employers, and if a contract does not contain a restrictive covenant clause there is nothing stopping an employee leaving and setting up a company in direct competition to you.

If you don't have a disciplinary policy you will not have a document that you can use to ensure that any dismissal is carried out in accordance with minimum requirements and so avoid paying compensation, even if your reasons for dismissal are reasonable.

The minimum steps you must follow when dismissing someone are:

1. Advise the employee that you want to have a disciplinary meeting and advise him what you want to discuss.
2. Have a meeting
3. Give the right of appeal if you take formal disciplinary action.

You need a drug and alcohol policy and procedure so that you have the right to test employees if you suspect that they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol. If you do not have these documents they can refuse to take a test. If you decide to dismiss them without objective evidence that they were under the influence of drugs or alcohol then your chances of defending a claim of unfair dismissal will be greatly reduced.

Ray Hill, PR Consultant to Dyne Solicitors Limited

Cybit Ltd kindly hosted the February HTA meeting at their premises in Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire. We thank Jason Laight and Phil Hibbert for their very interesting demonstration of their vehicle tracking systems and presentations and also everyone else at Cybit who helped with the organisation of the meeting.

Cybit are the UK's leading provider of total asset management applications delivering an extensive portfolio of advanced vehicle tracking systems to over 1,500 businesses operating fleets across a wide range of industries. Cybit's solutions provide visibility of your mobile workforce activity and enable businesses to identify, measure and target specific areas impacting operational cost, productivity and duty of care compliance. Such areas were highlighted at the February HTA members meeting, hosted at Cybit's headquarters. Representatives from Cybit discussed the impact of rising fuel costs and Duty of Care obligations and how Telematics can be utilised to assist with these and other aspects of successful fleet management. www.cybit.co.uk



Tony Lovell, who has been Treasurer for the HTA for the past 15 years, has announced his retirement from the post. Heartfelt thanks to Tony for all his hard work in keeping up with the accounts for us. Luckily we do not have to say goodbye to Tony, as he will continue as a Member of the HTA Committee.



Graham Robbins (John Hudson Supermarket (Bawtry) Limited) is to take over as Treasurer and will be officially voted in at the AGM in May. We look forward to welcoming Graham on the HTA Committee.

ADVERTISEMENTS

If anyone wishes to advertise in an issue of Heavy Talk, please contact Katharine Narici on 01829 771774 or by e-mail (info@hta.uk.net), for details.

DATES TO REMEMBER: HTA MEETINGS

Thursday, 12th May 2008

Century House, High Street, Tattenhall, Cheshire

WELCOME TO THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS

The HTA has been joined by:

M CURTIS LIMITED, SCUNTHORPE, N. LINCS

(contact: Mark Curtis)

MICHAEL J PONSONBY LTD (contact: Mike Ponsonby)

PILOT CAR SERVICES, ZOUCHE, LOUGHBOROUGH

(contact: Paul Simpson)

TERRANOVA GROUP LTD, READING, BERKSHIRE

(contact: Keith Lovejoy)

SOMERSCALES (JOHN SOMERSCALES LIMITED),

IMMINGHAM, N.E.LINCS (contact: John Somerscales)

TRUCKPOL

TruckPol is a nationwide police intelligence service which records information on all aspects of road freight crime. By submitting information to TruckPol you could be helping to solve a serious crime in our industry. Tel: 0247 6516246 www.truckpol.com

DISCLAIMER

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HEAVY TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION

Century House High Street Tattenhall Chester CH3 9PX
Tel: +44 (0) 1829 771774 Fax: +44 (0) 1829 773109 E-Mail: info@hta.uk.net
www.hta.uk.net