

## SKILLS FOR LOGISTICS SECURE FUNDING TO DEVELOP NATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL STANDARDS FOR ESCORTING

Skills for Logistics have secured funding from the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (part of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills) to develop National Occupational Standards (NOS) for Heavy Haulage Escorting. NOS are the basis for qualifications, so in short, this funding will provide the resources to develop the qualifications required and to consult with the Police and other stakeholders that need to recognise those qualifications.

The project will involve wide consultation with industry, employers, stakeholders (police, government departments/agencies, awarding bodies etc) and is expected to be completed by the end of 2012.

John Bowman, Head of Skills for Skills for logistics commented "the competition for NOS funding was fierce; around half the propositions were rejected, so the UKCES support represents high level, national support for this work. This funding gives us a real chance to make quick progress."



## NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL BACKS DOWN OVER CHARGE FOR ASSESSMENT OF ABNORMAL LOAD NOTIFICATIONS

Earlier this year North Yorkshire Council sent out a notification to state that they intended to introduce a charge for the assessment of abnormal load notifications for vehicles travelling on roads maintained by the Council that are over 90 tonnes gross vehicle weight and/or above 12.5 tonnes single axle load.

This statement caused much concern and anger amongst Members. HTA Secretary John Dyne responded to the Council on 8th March 2012 to say that their notice was wrong in law. The RHA and CPA also wrote to the Council on behalf of their members.

The HTA received a letter on 23rd March from the Highways department at North Yorkshire Council to say "that their legal services team had revisited the issue and based on the advice we have taken the decision not to go ahead with the proposal to charge for this service. There will therefore be no changes to the existing procedure".

It is hoped that in the future the Council will consult with their legal department before sending out similar notifications.

## MERSEYSIDE POLICE AND NOTIFICATIONS PROCEDURES

Members will recall that last year Merseyside Police sent out a notification to say that from 1st of November 2011 "Merseyside Police will only accept Abnormal Load notifications that contain all of the information as shown in Schedule 5 of The Road Vehicles (Authorisation of Special Types) (General) Order 2003 and that it will no longer be acceptable to give a 'monthly' notice, exact time and dates of movement are required. The driver must be in possession of the notification and be able to produce it if requested by a Police Officer. Failure to comply with the relevant legislation may result in prosecution".

The HTA Secretary wrote to Merseyside Police on 8th December 2011 in response to that statement and the HTA invited representatives to attend our January 2012 meeting in the hope that the issues regarding the above statement could be discussed and a sensible outcome reached. At the last HTA Meeting representatives from Merseyside Police attended to give a presentation on STGO. It appears that the risk assessment policy makers at Merseyside Police have requested that all notifications must indicate the route, date and time. They are unable to assess a movement without that information. It was pointed out that in the haulage industry it is not always possible to stipulate the exact date or time that an abnormal load is able to move and that their risk assessment appears to discriminate against STGO operations which does not make sense. There would also be the risk that Merseyside would receive too many notifications.

The HTA have invited Merseyside Police to another meeting to discuss the matter further and are waiting for their response.



## ROAD TRANSPORT LAW

A new website dedicated to road transport law has been created. For information please visit [www.solicitors4transport.co.uk](http://www.solicitors4transport.co.uk)

## SECURITY OF ABNORMAL LOADS – DO'S AND DON'TS

Legal requirements and common sense demand all loads carried on vehicles are secured whatever the journey length.

Both loading and unloading should be subject to a risk assessment as required by the Management of Health and Safety at Work regulations 1999. Generic Guidance for haulage operators does exist in the form of a Code of Practice issued by the DfT entitled Safety of Loads on Vehicles now in its third edition. The variety of loads, vehicles and operating conditions make it impossible for the code to cover all the circumstances likely to be encountered by drivers and operators and so the code must not be regarded as exhaustive or exclusive.



The key to load security is appreciating that any load has its own dynamic independent of the vehicle on which or in which it is being carried. A common fallacy is the heavier the load the less the need to restrain it. Nothing could be further from the truth. The heavier the load the greater the potential kinetic energy it exerts. If the vehicle stops or changes direction its load will continue to exert a dynamic force in the direction

it was travelling and if unrestrained may overcome the coefficient of friction between the load and the surface of the vehicle that keeps it in place. This could result in the load moving forwards, sideways or even backwards relative to the carrying vehicle with disastrous consequences.

An illustration of this was some three years ago when an unsecured 50 tonne press slid off a low-loader trailer because the vehicle which was doing no more than 1.5 mph changed direction. The load carried on in the direction that it had been travelling and slipped off the bed of the trailer causing a fatal accident.

As with every other type of load an abnormal load must be secured. Due to the nature and characteristics of abnormal loads securing them can be a challenge. It is nevertheless the operator's responsibility to ensure that the method used to secure the load is adequate and, therefore, safe.

Normally the available methods are:

- Ropes
- Chains
- Straps
- Chocks
- Brakes (when the load is a wheeled or tracked vehicle)
- Wooden blocks



**Chains** will be tensioned by using a Stilson, or some similar equipment, designed to tighten the chain. Straps will be tightened by using a 'tensioner'.

**Chocks** are used to help to prevent the load moving, particularly if the load is wheeled or tracked.

**Ropes and Nylon straps** with tensioners, are the most common means of securing a load.

**Wooden blocks** (often railway sleepers) are used to separate the load from the bed of the trailer to prevent the load moving.

The operator has the responsibility for ensuring that the right method of restraint is used, and that the restraint is in good condition and suitable for the purpose.

Ropes, chains, and straps with tensioners will each have a designated Safe Working Load (SWL). The operator must ensure that drivers know the SWL of the equipment they are using and, no less importantly, how to recognise potential faults.

- **Ropes.** Commonly the rope will be 10mm split-film polypropylene which resists chemicals, water, and dirt. It can look extremely worn whilst retaining its strength, but it is easy to cut and can be worn by contact with an abrasive surface. Ropes should always be checked before they are used.
- **Straps and Tensioners.** Nylon straps are very strong and really are only vulnerable to cutting. It is important for this reason to ensure that they are not applied across sharp edges unless those edges are protected by an edge protector. They are comparatively easy to inspect and that should always be done.
- When **chains** are being used it is critically important to be aware of the relevant SWL. Because chains are a symbol of strength it is easy to forget that checking the condition of the chain is important. There should be a record of the date of purchase for each chain, and there should be formal checks carried out into the condition of each chain. Links, for example, can be stretched, with the result that the SWL is reduced. Any evidence of damage should mean that the chain is taken out of service.
- **Any equipment**, such as Stilsons and strap tensioners, that uses ratchets to achieve tension should be carefully checked for wear at regular intervals.
- **Any employee** involved in the loading and securing of abnormal loads should receive formal training both in load security and in the use of the restraining equipment used by the company. There must be accurate and written records of any training given.

The operator must remember that some loads may be damaged by the method used to secure the load. Chains, for instance, clearly have a potential for damage even if they represent the safest method of load security.

The design and construction of the vehicle and its bodywork should be suitable for the loads carried and operators should ensure that the vehicle load platform, bodywork and anchorage points are fit for purpose.

When securing equipment is not in use it must be safely stored. Ideally it will be inspected each time that is taken off a load and put into storage. Obviously these inspections must be carried out by a person who has been trained to recognise any damage that affects the efficiency of the restraint in question.

### Conclusions

- Do confirm the weight of the load with the customer in writing.
- Do check with the customer to see if there are any specific requirements in relation to load security such as 'No chains to be used'.
- Do ensure that the securing method used (including anchorage points) is adequate and suitable for the load.
- Do ensure that your employees have all the equipment they need to ensure the safety of the load.
- Do ensure that all the employees working with the load have received adequate training and that there are written records of the training that has been given.
- Don't take a chance by carrying a load that is not adequately secured having regard to its weight.
- Don't use ropes, straps, or chains that have not been carefully checked for damage and suitability.
- Don't allow employees who have not been trained to have any involvement with the loading or unloading or securing of the load.
- Don't use restraint equipment that has been in service for longer than the time recommended by the manufacturer.
- Don't use a vehicle that is in any way unsuitable for the load in question.

As mentioned at the beginning of this article load security is a question of Health and Safety. As with so many similar issues the key, from the operator's point of view, is to ensure that all personnel involved with the loading, unloading and security of the vehicle have had adequate and formal training. Training needs to be evidenced in writing and needs to have been provided by a competent trainer. The operator must also be able to demonstrate that suitable and adequate equipment is always available to personnel for the proper securing of the load.

Finally and no less importantly the operator must be able to show that its personnel have the means and are required to contact the operator if there is any problem or difficulty with any aspect of the load and its security.

*Jonathan Lawton – Consultant, Dyne Solicitors Limited*



## ESTA NEWS ESTA AWARDS NIGHT

The ESTA awards night in Paris on 19th April was yet another great event, with eleven prizes handed out for achieving significantly particularly difficult crane and STGO tasks, all completed safely.

The ESTA General Assembly meeting was held the next day. Amongst the topics discussed was the fact that the awards night is always dominated by the likes of Sarens, Mammoet and ALE. The reason is that these companies submit so many different applications compared to other members, who in turn submit fewer, or even no applications at all. This led to a request from the ESTA Board for a doubling or tripling of applications by all EC members, irrespective of the size of the member company.

All Members of the HTA are encouraged to apply for the transport job awards- the application does not need to be for a big task, but simply for a difficult job, all completed safely by a small member company with the correct risk assessment and method statement paperwork, attached to the application and with photos (like putting a 4ft wide machine, through a 3 ft wide door. Yes it can be done!)

*Michael Ponsonby*

## 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](mailto:info@hta.uk.net)), for details.

## NEW MEMBERS

The HTA is pleased to welcome the following new member:

### TEAHAN CONVOI SERVICE

Paignton, Devon (Contact: Rob Teahan)

## NOTE

An Article on Wide Loads by Ian Brooks has been published in the Spring 2012 Edition of the Institute of Advanced Motorists Magazine ([iam.org.uk](http://iam.org.uk) SPRING 2012)

## HTA NATIONAL ABNORMAL LOAD NOTIFICATION DIRECTORY

For further information go to [www.convoi.co.uk](http://www.convoi.co.uk) and click on 'shop', or email [caroline.ward@convoi.co.uk](mailto:caroline.ward@convoi.co.uk) for an order form.

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## HEAVY TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION

The White House High Street Tattenhall Chester CH3 9PX  
Tel: +44 (0) 1829 771774 Fax: +44 (0) 1829 773109 E-Mail: [info@hta.uk.net](mailto:info@hta.uk.net)  
[www.hta.uk.net](http://www.hta.uk.net)