



Safety alert 04/2013

Improving communications for truck drivers working alone

Background

In 2011 a truck driver working alone died from heatstroke when he walked away from his bogged vehicle near Wiluna. In 2013/2014, WorkSafe will be conducting a campaign to raise awareness of the Coroner's recommendations and to ensure compliance with legislative requirements related to truck drivers working alone.

Contributing factors

The Occupational Safety and Health Act and Regulations require:

- The supply of clean, cool drinking water.
- That a means of communication is available for drivers to call for help in the case of an emergency.
- That there is a procedure for regular contact to be made with the driver.
- That drivers are trained in these contact procedures.

These are minimum compliance requirements for workers working alone.

Action required

Employers shall:

1. Ensure the supply of cool, clean drinking water.
2. Assess all routes to ensure that a means of reliable communication is available at all times.

This relates to drivers who are isolated due to the nature of their work, and not only to those in remote locations. In most instances, a solitary truck driver is considered an isolated employee regardless of their geographical location.

Extra care should be taken where ordinary means of communication may be unreliable or where it may take some time for assistance to arrive in the case of an emergency. Current technology, such as GPS messenger devices, offers a practicable, simple to use and inexpensive communication option.

Further information

- Commission for Occupational Safety and Health Guidance Note, [Working Alone](#).
- [Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996](#),
 - Regulation 3.3. Communication with isolated employees and
 - Regulation 3.16. Water.

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