

SSOW 05: LOADING/UNLOADING PLANT TRANSPORTERS

Issue Number: 08

Date of Issue: 31/01/2026

Based on: RA21

PURPOSE

To ensure plant is loaded and unloaded from transporters safely and in a controlled manner, preventing falls, vehicle roll-aways, load shifts, contact with overhead power lines, and harm to personnel or property. This SSOW sets out the safe working practices, competency requirements, and control measures needed to manage loading and unloading operations in accordance with legal and site-specific standards.

PPE REQUIREMENTS

For this activity, the following PPE must be worn



High-vis Vest / Jacket (BS EN 471)



Safety Boots (EN ISO 20345:2011) (S3)



Safety Gloves (Cut resistant) (EN 420:2003)



Safety Helmet (EN 397:1995)



Safety Glasses (EN 116:2001)



Only where noise levels exceed 80 dB

TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

- In-house Transport Safety Manual training
- Plant Loader/Unloader training (NPORS/ALLMI/RTITB equivalent)
- Banksman / Signaller training (where applicable)
- Manual Handling awareness
- Overhead Power Cable awareness (GS6)
- Load restraint training (including SWL, WLL, and correct use of chains, slings, timbers)
- Site induction and/or client-specific rules

EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

- Transporter / low-loader with ramps
- Jacklegs / stabilisers
- Anti-slip matting
- Lashing chains, binders, slings, timbers, edge protectors
- Measuring stick for height checks
- Barriers / cones for exclusion zone
- Spill kit (for oil/grease on ramps)
- Shovel / brush / sand for clearing debris and improving grip

SAFE SYSTEM OF WORK

- Load bed and ramps to be kept free of debris, mud, oil, grease, waste, ice etc. Sand to be spread where necessary to aid grip. Tracks/Wheels of plant to be cleaned, if necessary, before loading.
- Lashing chains, slings, timber, ropes etc. to be stowed safely when not in use so as not to create trip or falling hazards.
- Maintain 3 points of contact, if possible, when working near the edge of the load bed.
- Only competent, authorised personnel to load/unload.
- Staff to follow safe loading procedures for each machine type in the Transport Safety Manual when loading/unloading.
- Plant to be secured to Transporters as per manufacturer's procedures and Transport Safety Manual procedures and guidance.
- Keep unauthorised personnel away from transporters. Use banksmen where possible to control pedestrian movement.
- Plant to be guided by a competent banksman standing in a safe place during loading/unloading.
- Drivers to receive familiarisation training for each item of plant being transported. Training records to be maintained.
- All drivers must ensure that they check the height of the load prior to exiting the yard and delivering on site ensuring that height restrictions are prepared for.
- Ensure the transporter is parked on firm and level ground, if this is not possible, and on incline ensure that

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the vehicle is facing uphill.

- Anti – Roll bars fitted to dumpers, rollers and mini excavators etc. are to be locked in the raised position at all times during loading/unloading. Seat belts are to be worn on all machines at all times.
- To prevent drivers/operators being crushed in the event of a plant machine rolling over – **Never try to jump clear – stay in the seat with the seat belt fastened**
- Do not jump off the transporter load bed. Walk down the ramps or sit down and lower yourself gently off the edge.
- The height of the GS6 will be physically checked prior to the low loader transporting any item on site i.e. check as each GS6 is approached when entering or leaving site.
- Never work directly underneath overhead power cables.
- Never work within 9 metres horizontally of overhead power cables supported on wooden poles.
- Never work within 15 metres horizontally of overhead power cables supported on steel pylons or structures.
- Always follow safe systems of work and routes provided on construction sites when driving under overhead power cables.
- Keep hands clear of pinch points and crush zones on ramps and trailers.
- All loading/unloading to be carried out slowly and safely – do not rush.
- When collecting plant machines from site ensure plant is free from defects which could affect safe loading. If in doubt stop work, do not move plant and seek advice from the transport office.
- Always liaise with our clients site staff to ensure on site risks are understood and controlled.

LOADING/UNLOADING PROCEDURES

- Identify area for loading/ unloading. Ensure the vehicle is parked on firm and level ground, if this is not possible, and on incline ensure that the vehicle is facing downhill, auxiliary brake applied where required. Loading/ unloading must not be carried out in proximity to excavations and overhead obstructions.
- Keep clear of pedestrian and vehicle routes wherever possible. If this is not possible ensure the area is appropriately segregated.
- Set load bed for operation to take place; if the load projects 1/3 of the tracks or wheels deploy outriggers or widen bed.
- Deploy vehicle/trailer jacklegs during all plant loading / unloading activities.
- If the load projects 305mm or width of 2.9m (but not more than 3.5m) fit red / white markings (if at night fit lights).
- Identify machine and configure it for operation.
- If using a banksman confirm lines of communication.
- Ensure only those involved in the operation are in the working area. Establish an exclusion zone where possible.
- Plant operator to leave plant/machine outside exclusion zone and hand over to vehicle driver.
- Only the HGV / plant delivery driver with A50/68 competencies are permitted to load plant/machine onto vehicles/trailers.
- Confirm (visual check) that the machine is as central to the load bed ramps as possible (equidistant).
- Select the correct gear / engine speed for the loading/unloading operation.
- Commence loading being as steady and fluid as possible; DO NOT RUSH.
- Position the item of plant on the load bed, in optimum place for safe restraint and transit.
- If using the low loader neck, ensure that the supplied ramps are used to load the neck of the vehicle. Where loading attachments onto the neck, this is to be placed at the optimum load point and secured accordingly.
- Plant loaded as low as possible, as narrow as possible as short as possible.
- Secure plant to load bed or trailer as per manufacturers guidelines and L Lynch Transport Safety Manual.
- Secure attachments as required.
- Make transporter ready for transit. Also ensure that you stow all loose items prior to departure.
- Measure highest point of transporter/ load using measuring stick.

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- Change in cab height indicator.
- After a short time in transit stop and check load restraints.
- If the load situation or condition changes STOP and check load / call Transport Office.
- If unsure, STOP call Transport Office.
- Always make sure you have had the correct Information, instruction and training prior to commencement of any plant operation or transportation.

IDENTIFIED RISKS

The SSOW above has been compiled after identifying the following risks from this activity

- Falls of people or objects from the transporter load bed and ramps
- Falls of vehicles from the transporter load bed and ramps
- Slips & Trips
- Personnel being struck by moving or falling vehicles
- Electrocution from contact with overhead power cables
- Personal injuries

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE REFER TO RISK ASSESSMENT RA21

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