

# REDUCING RISKS: An Insurance Perspective

## Motor Vehicle Operations on Job Sites

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by  
Sarah Reinert, ARM  
Risk Control Consultant

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### Introduction

Structural moving companies are in the business of moving various structures, houses and equipment on a regular basis. Every site where these moves occur should be considered a job site because workers are raising and lowering various structures to be transported. One of the hazards associated with working on these job sites where this process is taking place is the close proximity to motorized vehicles in operation. Structural movers use their vehicles for transporting to and from the job site, for operating on the job site, and ultimately, for moving structures from one job site to another. With so much of their time spent on construction sites, structural movers need to be aware of the unique motor vehicle hazards that are present and the ways to reduce the potential risk of loss and accidents.

In 2002, nearly 3.7 million workers in the U.S. were classified as motor vehicle operators. More than 40 percent (1.5 million) of these motor vehicle operators were employed as heavy truck drivers. (Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. <http://stats.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/cfoi.pdf>)

Job sites are dangerous by nature and that danger increases when vehicles are being operated on the site. But having effective safety measures and precautions in place can prevent serious accidents from occurring.

The purpose of this article is to provide some assistance to the structural movers involved with vehicle operations on job sites. By following rules and regulations, conducting pre- and post-trip vehicle inspections, and adhering to proper operational procedures, the potential for vehicle accidents may be reduced.

### Establishing rules

The rules established by the controlling contractor on site should include checking if all drivers have a current and valid driver's license to run the specific vehicle they are using, as well as any other type of equipment they may potentially use. In many cases, the controlling contractor on the site is the structural

mover. Therefore, it is that company's responsibility to verify that all operators have the proper licensing qualifications.

A commercial vehicle, requiring a commercial operator's license to run, is generally defined as:

- A vehicle with a gross combination weight of 26,001 pounds or more, inclusive of a towed unit with a gross vehicle weight rating of more than 10,000 pounds
- A gross vehicle weight rating of 26,001 pounds or more
- A vehicle used to transport 16 or more passengers, including the driver
- Any vehicle placarded to transport hazardous materials

An operator's license is required to operate all other equipment. All operators must comply with the proper state and federal U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) regulations.

### Steps to take before operating a motor vehicle

Create and maintain the pre-trip inspection checklist which documents that the operator has checked the following:

- Tires for proper inflation, wear or damage
- Windshield for signs of damage or distortion
- Exterior lights, turn signals, brake lamps and reflectors
- Mirrors
- Fluids for proper levels and leakage
- Coupling devices
- Horn and back-up alarm system
- Brakes
- Debris flaps
- Gauges
- Seat belts and anchorages
- Fire extinguisher and emergency kit in the vehicle
- Properly secured load

Be sure to maximize your ability to see and be seen by cleaning windows, mirrors, lights and reflectors before moving the vehicle.

### While on the construction job site

While on the job site, always be aware of your surroundings. Pay close attention to the activities of other vehicles as they are moving and changing position throughout the course of the day. Be sure to park your vehicle(s) a safe distance from ongoing operations, keeping in mind that these operations are always changing. Always use caution when driving on the job site and drive in a slow and controlled manner.

### Driving to and from the construction job site

Structural movers need to be safe on the roads, as well as on the construction job sites, while pulling a load or traveling to and from a job site. A company fleet safety policy should be established and enforced with all drivers. Drivers should only be allowed to operate vehicles for which they have the proper qualifications, and they must obey the rules of the road. While pulling a load, whether it is a structure or moving equipment, always use caution and proper load securement practices. All federal and state DOT regulations should be followed.

### Conclusion

Motor vehicles play an important role in the structural movers operations. With the proper policies and procedures in place, motor vehicles can be safely operated on the job site, as well as traveling to and from the job site, helping to reduce exposures to risk and losses for your company.

### Please Contact Us

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