



اوتوريٽي كڻڻ سائڻ ڪنڊا مٿن
ڪڻڻ سائڻ ڊان عالم سڪيٽر
Safety, Health and Environment
National Authority

WORKPLACE SAFETY AND HEALTH NOTICE (WSHN)

TOPIC IMPORTANCE OF COMPLIANCE TO WORKPLACE SAFETY IN TOWING OPERATIONS				Reference Number 2025/WSHN/01
Approved by: Director of Compliance and International Division	Endorsed by: Chief Executive Officer	Issue date: 13 March 2025	Expiry date: None	Revision No: 1

The Safety, Health and Environment National Authority (SHENA) is issuing a reminder on the importance of rigorous safety measures to be undertaken by all towing companies, operators, and personnel when operating towing. Towing operations present unique challenges, including roadside hazards, the handling of heavy equipment, and exposure to varying environmental conditions. By addressing these risks proactively, towing professionals can ensure safer and more efficient operations while maintaining compliance to the Workplace Safety and Health Act, CAP. 277.

CURRENT SITUATION

Various unsafe conditions are observed during towing operations work activities, such as workers failing to adhere to PPE requirements, unsafe positioning of tow trucks or improper setup at recovery sites, inadequate or missing traffic control measures (e.g., cones, signage), pulling winches in poor condition such as damaged wire ropes, and signs of equipment wear or malfunction. Proactively identifying and resolving these issues is crucial to maintaining a safe work environment. These observations underscore the urgent need for towing operators and supervisors to implement stringent safety measures and protocols to mitigate risks and ensure compliance with the Workplace Safety and Health Act, CAP. 277 and its regulations thereunder.

TARGET AUDIENCE AND OPERATIONAL RISKS

The WSHN applies to towing companies and workers engaged in:

- Roadside assistance.
- Recovery and transportation of vehicles.
- Maintenance or storage operations at car workshops.

Key risks include:

- Hit or struck by a vehicle.
- Improper use or failure of towing equipment.
- Slips, trips, or falls during operations.
- Exposure to adverse weather or low-visibility conditions.
- Stress and fatigue from long working hours.

KEY CONTROL MEASURES AND SAFE WORKING PROCEDURES

1. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and suitable clothings:

- Equip all workers with suitable and adequate PPEs such as:
 - (a) high-visibility vests;
 - (b) steel-toe boots;
 - (c) gloves;
 - (d) helmets where necessary during recovery operations;
 - (e) eye protection (and safety goggles) when handling winches or working near moving parts); and
 - (f) hearing protection;
- Weather-appropriate clothing such as waterproof jackets for rainy conditions and lightweight, UV-protective clothing for hot weather will also be useful when conducting towing operations.
- Require eye protection.
- Conduct regular PPE inspections to ensure compliance and proper use.

2. Pre-Tow Vehicle and Equipment Inspections:

- Ensure pre-shift vehicle and equipment inspections to detect potential failures before operations begin.
- Inspect winch ropes, chains, and towing hooks before each use.
- Maintain a logbook for tracking vehicle servicing and equipment checks.
- Use only certified and well-maintained towing equipment suitable for the task.

3. Site Safety and Traffic Control Measures:

- Use cones or warning triangles to demarcate work areas.
- Position tow trucks to shield operators from oncoming traffic.
- Ensure lighting or reflective signage for night or low-visibility work.
- Ensure high-intensity flashing beacons for night and low-visibility conditions.
- Establish radio communication protocols for nighttime or remote operations.
- Ensure appropriate warning lighting is used to enhance visibility and safety.
- Implement coordination with authorities (e.g., police, highway agencies) to manage vehicle flow safely around recovery sites.

4. Emergency Preparedness:

- Develop clear emergency response standard operating procedures or protocols for roadside incidents or injuries.
- Ensure relevant workers are trained in first aid and CPR and they are on-site during towing operations.
- Ensure there is a fire extinguisher in each tow truck.
- Maintain an emergency contact list in every vehicle.
- Conduct periodic emergency response drills to ensure workers are prepared for critical incidents.

5. Safe Work Practices:

- Train employees in correct towing techniques and equipment handling such proper techniques when handling tow chains or heavy equipment.
- Encourage a buddy system or establish radio communication during operations.
- Avoid distractions (e.g., mobile phone use) while operating tow trucks or handling recoveries.
- Obey speed limits and other road regulations during towing activities.
- Prohibit standing in the path of a tensioned winch cable.

6. Risk Assessments:

- Conduct regular risk assessments to evaluate potential hazards prior to performing towing operations.
- Assess and update safety control measures based on new risks or lessons learned from incidents.
- Implement reporting mechanisms for near misses and hazardous conditions.

7. Fatigue and Stress Management:

- Implement work-hour limits to prevent personnels involved with towing operations from fatigue.
- Encourage flexibility on working environments such as rotating shifts for long-haul recoveries.
- Ensure hydration breaks for workers in extreme heat.
- Provide mental health support or stress management training to enhance worker well-being.

All towing companies, operators, and associated personnel are hereby reminded that towing operations involve unique risks that must be effectively managed to ensure safe and efficient operations. Towing-related incidents can pose a significant impact on the people, assets, the environment, and reputation. It is crucial that these risks are mitigated to As Low As Reasonably Practicable (ALARP).

SHENA strongly emphasises the importance of appointing individuals with the necessary knowledge, training, and competencies to perform critical roles such as tow truck operators, recovery supervisors, and ground support personnel. Additionally, SHENA will conduct inspections to ensure compliance with this Workplace Safety and Health Notice (WSHN) and the Workplace Safety and Health Act, CAP. 277.

For further clarifications concerning this Workplace Safety and Health Notice, please submit your enquiries by clicking “General Enquiries” at the SHENA website: www.shena.gov.bn or contact the SHENA office on the general number +673 238 2000 within office hours. SHENA would like to thank all stakeholders for their cooperation in ensuring Brunei Darussalam is a safe place to work and live.

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