

**CHAPTER 12**  
**OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY**  
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**CHAPTER 12**  
**OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY**

1. GENERAL. Departmental policy requires all employees to perform their duties in a manner that assures a safe working environment for themselves and their coworkers, and requires Commanders to promote work habits consistent with this aim and instill in all employees a continuing awareness of the need to eliminate occupational injuries. Statistically, three principal causes have contributed to the majority of occupational injuries: lack of emotional control, distractions, and preoccupation with personal matters.

2. SAFETY RULES FOR SPECIFIC WORK AREA ENVIRONMENTS.

a. Departmental Vehicles.

- (1) Before operating a vehicle, inspect for fuel, oil, or water leaks on the ground underneath; dangling parts; underinflated tires; body lean or sag; and body damage.
- (2) Clear the front seat of all loose items not incidental to work requirements.
- (3) Keep vehicle windows clean and free of vision-obstructing or distorting objects and defects.
- (4) Unless permanently secured, do not place or store objects of any kind on the rear window ledge.
- (5) Before starting the engine, securely fasten lap and shoulder belts. Keep belts fastened during all times the vehicle is in motion.
- (6) Before placing a vehicle in motion, check and adjust all rear and sideview mirrors. When backing a vehicle, utilize rearview mirrors and physically check any rear area of visual restriction.
- (7) Drive your vehicle in a professional manner, bearing in mind that you represent the Department at all times.

b. Tool Cabinets and Working Equipment.

- (1) Store equipment and tools in appropriate compartments, and never in such a manner as to create a safety hazard. Large items must be properly secured to prevent movement within the vehicle.

- (2) Avoid unsafe lifting movement that could cause strained muscles or back injury. When lifting heavy objects, keep your back straight and use your leg muscles as leverage. As needed, use vehicle rear or side doors for accessibility. Use the full depth capacity of cabinet drawers when removing and replacing equipment.
- (3) Utilize door latches, if applicable, when doors are to remain open.
- (4) Wear all required personal safety equipment, such as your "scalpguard" cap, appropriate to the type of inspection being conducted.
- (5) Wear shoes appropriate for the working environment.
- (6) When temporarily not in use, stand the creeper in an upright position out of the path of foot traffic.
- (7) Use the proper tool for the job.
- (8) Do not carry puncture-type tools (screwdrivers, long pliers, prybars) in your pockets. Falling or bending over with such equipment in your clothing could cause serious injury.

c. Commercial Vehicle Inspections.

- (1) Before beginning a vehicle inspection, put wheel chock blocks in place to immobilize the vehicle(s) being inspected. For the most effective control, place the chock blocks, against the front and rear of a tire on the motor vehicle drive axle. When vehicles are on a grade, be especially cautious of the more flexible radial tires, and tires that are low in air pressure. If necessary, have the vehicle moved to a safer location.
- (2) Make certain that the vehicle transmission is in neutral before starting the engine, and apply the service brake before engaging the clutch.
- (3) Do not get underneath, behind, or in front of any vehicle while its engine is running except as necessary for inspection of items such as exhaust systems and engine accessory drive belts. Before placing yourself in these more hazardous positions, ensure that at least one wheel is blocked, both front and rear. If, during the inspection, a person other than the Specialist is to operate the controls, verify that he/she is qualified and understands the limited operation desired.
- (4) Do not place yourself between the front or rear of any vehicle and any other vehicle or permanent installation such as a dock, wall, or fence, nor underneath any vehicle resting on jacks or blocks.

- (5) Establish clear vocal signals with the operator in the cab in directing him/her to apply or release brakes, or to move any driving controls. Use precise terminology- "brakes on," "brakes off," etc. -Do not use simply "on" or "off." Do not rely on tapped signals.
- (6) During inspections, do not start an engine or move a vehicle without first ensuring that no one is underneath it.
- (7) Do not get under a motor vehicle or combination or in the engine area of a bus without first placing your warning device, CHP 347, advising "INSPECTOR UNDERNEATH," on the steering wheel.
- (8) Be alert to vehicles adjacent to the one you are inspecting, and be especially wary of unoccupied parking areas adjoining the vehicle being inspected. Be cautious of yard hazards such as loose material, slick spots, pits, and stairs. Remember. you are in an unfamiliar working environment.
- (9) Under no circumstance jump over a pit. Either walk around or use bridges when provided for crossing.
- (10) When mounting and dismounting truck cabs, use stirrups and grab handles. Remember that wet weather creates special hazards.
- (11) When inspecting vehicles, wear eye protection (safety glasses or goggles). The glasses or goggles shall meet the standards established by the Department (HPM 10.6). Specific danger areas are exhaust systems, exhaust ports of air brake systems during brake application and release, relay valves, relay emergency valves, quick release valves, gladhand disconnects, etc.
- (12) Stay clear of moving parts - do not use fingers as probes.
- (13) Avoid contamination by or contact with unknown liquids and solids (caustics, pesticides, poisons, etc.). In event of contamination, flush the area (except eyes) thoroughly with soap and water. For the eyes, use only water, flush continuously for five minutes, then seek medical assistance. If possible, determine the trade or chemical name of the contaminant and inform medical personnel. Remove contaminated clothing and wash the skin area beneath. Isolate all contaminated clothing or equipment until it can be decontaminated.
- (14) Be cautious in raising up quickly. Protect your head and back. Avoid awkward or straining positions which might cause rupture or muscle strain.
- (15) Avoid placing yourself in such a position that failure of a pressurized or spring-actuated brake component could result in injury. Any position near a spring brake assembly during actuation should be considered dangerous.

There have been severe injuries caused by the fragments of an "exploded" spring unit casting.

(16) Remember that brake drums and air compressor discharge lines operate at high temperatures and can cause serious burns.

(17) Do not smoke during vehicle inspections, because of the proximity o

(18) flammable liquids and possible hazardous-'cargo.

(19) Be wary of a raised dump body when inspecting dump vehicles. Never place yourself in a position of danger, in the event of a fall of the dump body.

(20) Under all circumstances, stay clear of load-release gates when inspecting hopper vehicles.

(21) If an inspection pit is not available when inspecting vehicles equipped with air suspension systems which have low ground clearance, the vehicle(s) shall be driven onto inspection ramps which raise the vehicle sufficiently to allow inspection without placing yourself at risk should an unintended loss of air occur in **suspension** components. As vehicles vary widely, specific instructions regarding practices and devices other than ramps is not practical. The use of blocking devices to support vehicles by their frame members or suspension components could damage the vehicles and also give you false sense of security. The use of portable hydraulic jacks is not acceptable, **as** they may fail without warning.