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Handling and Lifting Goods Risk Assessment

Issue 2 Revision date: 3 October 2026 Next review: 3 October 2027

Scope

Routine handling of packaged goods into and out of cars and vans at collection and delivery premises. This assessment applies to drivers, subcontractors and staff. Specialist goods, abnormal loads, cranes and forklift operations require separate arrangements.

Responsibilities

Management provides suitable equipment, information, instruction and task assessment. Drivers follow this method, agree local arrangements with the customer or site contact, and stop and contact the office if conditions are unsafe. Only trained and authorised people may operate lifting equipment.

Safe working method

- Plan the task. Confirm weight, dimensions, contents, stability, grip, access and assistance required. Avoid hazardous manual handling where possible.
- Make the area safe. Park on firm level ground, apply the parking brake, control vehicle movement and separate people from traffic.
- Inspect doors, load space, restraints, trolleys, ramps and tail lifts. Observe payload, axle and equipment limits.
- Use a trolley or other suitable aid first. If manual lifting is suitable, keep the load close, use a stable grip and stance, avoid twisting and never carry a load that blocks vision.
- Keep clear of pinch points and raised loads. Open doors cautiously, check for shifted goods, load evenly and secure goods against movement.
- Confirm safe placement, recheck remaining load security, clear the area and report injuries, near misses, damage or unsafe conditions.

Emergency stop rule

Stop if the load, route, equipment or handling ability is unsafe. Make the area safe without putting yourself at risk, obtain first aid and call 999 for a serious emergency. Do not handle leaking or unidentified hazardous goods.

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Risk assessment

Method: H = a realistic risk of serious harm or a risk needing immediate control; M = a foreseeable risk needing planned controls; L = a low residual risk when all stated controls are working. Initial risk is before controls. Residual risk is the competent assessor's judgement after controls. Stop and complete a task-specific assessment whenever the actual load, person, vehicle or location differs materially from this assessment.

Hazard or possible harm	Who may be harmed	Initial	Required controls	Residual
Heavy, awkward or repeated handling; strains and back injury	Drivers and helpers	H	Check weight, grip, distance, frequency and individual capability. Use aids, smaller loads or planned assistance. Pause for fatigue. Complete a task-specific assessment for difficult tasks.	L
Slips, trips and falls; sprains or fractures	Drivers, site staff and visitors	M	Inspect the route, ensure lighting and grip footwear, remove obstructions, use steps and handholds, and stop if safe access cannot be provided.	L
Moving vehicles; collision or crushing	Drivers, site staff and public	H	Use designated loading areas, parking brakes and site controls. Separate people from traffic and wear high-visibility clothing where required.	L
Falling or shifting goods; impact or crush injuries	Drivers, helpers and recipients	H	Check stability before opening doors or releasing restraints. Stack securely, clear falling-load areas, secure remaining goods and never stand under raised loads.	L
Doors, restraints and load edges; cuts or trapped fingers and feet	Drivers and helpers	M	Inspect packaging and use suitable gloves. Keep hands and feet clear, control doors in wind and use stable set-down points.	L
Trolleys, ramps and tail lifts; crush, fall or equipment failure	Drivers, operators and bystanders	H	Use suitable checked equipment within capacity. Trained and authorised operators only. Keep maintenance and examination current and the operating zone clear.	L
Poor conditions or unsuitable capability; loss of control or injury	Drivers and helpers	M	Check space, slope, wind, rain, lighting, fatigue, pregnancy, disability and health restrictions. Adapt, assist, postpone or stop where conditions or ability are unsuitable.	L
Damaged or leaking packages; exposure or contamination	Drivers, site staff and public	H	Do not touch unidentified leaks. Isolate the area, notify the site and office, and use a separate goods-specific procedure where required.	L

Implementation

Management confirms this assessment suits the operation, provides the controls and briefs workers before use. Tim Watson, Despatch Manager, owns implementation. Drivers and site contacts complete local checks for each job. Any missing control is an outstanding action and the task must not proceed until Tim Watson or the duty manager confirms a safe alternative. Stop and reassess if residual risk is unacceptable.

Approval

Assessed and approved by Tim Watson, Despatch Manager, on 3 October 2026. This is the unsigned public copy; the approved controlled master is held by Roadrunners Despatch Ltd.

Review

Review by 3 October 2027, or sooner following an incident, changed loads or equipment, a material change in working conditions, or evidence that the controls are not effective.

Guidance

HSE manual handling at work: hse.gov.uk/msd/manual-handling/
HSE safe driving loading and unloading: hse.gov.uk/workplacetransport/factsheets/loading.htm