

VRES Best Practice

Loading and Unloading Guidelines for Recovery Operators

1. Introduction

To reduce the risk of injury and damage, all recovery operators must follow these best working practices and comply with the Health and Safety requirements when working on Metropolitan Police premises.

Only professional recovery operators are permitted to work on site. Operators should conform to BSI/PAS43 and SURVIVE best practice guidelines and are responsible for carrying out their own dynamic risk assessment.

Safety is paramount whilst driving, loading and unloading. Pound officers and managers have the authority to prevent unsafe practices and to prevent the use of defective or inadequate equipment.

2. General Health and Safety

The following personal protective equipment must be worn:

- High visibility clothing and appropriate work wear
- Safety helmets (in date) or bump caps, whilst operating cranes or working under vehicles
- Safety footwear
- Work Gloves

3. Driving

The 10 mph speed limit throughout the pounds must be observed. Mobile phones must not be used whilst driving.

4. Working at height

- Working at height must only be undertaken when absolutely necessary and in accordance with the operator's own risk assessment.
- It is not always necessary to work on the deck of a recovery vehicle.
- It should only be undertaken by operators with the equipment and training to complete the work safely.

5. Loading

- Vehicles must not be driven onto recovery vehicles, but may be driven onto specs.
- A winch must be used when loading vehicles onto a slide bed, fixed bed or multicar transporter.
- The vehicle should be attached to the hook using a set of brothers or a chain strop, to place the hook in a central position. Although this method is favoured, the Metropolitan Police Service does understand that some vehicles cannot be recovered this way and that the towing eye must be used.
- Where a towing eye is used, a secondary restraint strap or chain must be used to reduce the risk of damage and injury, in case the towing eye fails. The secondary strap may be secured to one side of the vehicle only.
- The correct use and fitment of these recovery items is paramount so as not to damage steering, suspension and brake components.
- If the vehicle is being transported via a spec lift or second car lift, then each wheel that is lifted should be secured. A trailer board with working lights and bearing the registration number of the recovery vehicle must be displayed.
- VEHICLES ON TRANSPORTERS MUST BE SECURED BY A MINIMUM 4 STRAPS.

- VEHICLES ON A MULTICAR TRANSPORTER MUST BE SECURED BY FOUR STRAPS OR TWO CHAINS.

6. Unloading

- Vehicles must not be driven off recovery vehicles, but may be driven off specs.
- When unloading, use a set of brothers or a chain strop to place the hook in a central position on the vehicle.
- If it is necessary to use the towing eye, a secondary restraint strap or chain must be used to reduce the risk of damage and injury, in case the towing eye fails. The secondary strap may be secured to one side of the vehicle only.
- The descent of the vehicle must be controlled. If necessary a control method must be used.
- If possible, the designated loading and unloading bays at the pounds should be used.
- Only when the vehicle is stationary on the ground and the handbrake fully applied should the recovery equipment be removed from beneath the vehicle.
- The vehicle must not be unloaded if anyone is standing behind it.

7. Commercial Vehicle Recovery

- Bump caps or safety hats/helmets must be worn when operating under a commercial vehicle.
- Whilst working under a vehicle, safety stands must be in place.
- The vehicle must be returned to the same condition as before they were recovered. For example, prop shafts or half shafts must be refitted. If the brakes were wound off, they must be wound back on. If a police officer has requested that the vehicle is left in the same state as it has been recovered, then this must be clearly noted at the top of the 955 document.
- If any oil is spilled, the recovery operator must deal with the spillage and report it to the pound staff before leaving the site.

8. Motorcycles

- Operator's must ensure that motorcycles are loaded and unloaded in the correct way according to the type of equipment/recovery truck. Pound staff are not permitted to assist recovery operators.
- Operators must be mindful of manual handling and working at height risks.
- Operators must be trained in the use of motorcycle recovery equipment.
- Operators shouldn't drive or push motorcycles onto transporters.
- Motorcycles must be secured by four fixing points or straps.

9. Lorry Loader

- All stabiliser legs must be deployed properly when loading or unloading.
- Operators must check that stabiliser legs and lifting equipment has been stowed and secured properly before driving off.
- Stabiliser pads must be used

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