

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 practice guidelines and comply with all Health and Safety requirements when working in MPS vehicle pounds.

Only professional recovery operators are permitted to work at the pounds. Recovery operators should conform to PAS43 and SURVIVE best practice guidelines and must be adequately trained on all equipment used or activities carried out at the pounds. All licences or other documents applicable to these activities must also be held by the recovery operator.

Recovery operators must have adequate insurance in place to cover all activities carried out at the pounds and as a minimum requirement must have motor insurance and public liability insurance in place. Where applicable employer liability insurance must also be in place.

Safety is paramount whilst driving, loading and unloading at the pounds. Pound staff have the authority to immediately stop unsafe practices and prevent the use of defective or inadequate equipment. Spot checks will be conducted to ensure that recovery operators are compliant with the guidelines and where they are breached recovery operators may be temporarily suspended from operating at the pounds until any issues have been rectified.

2. General Health and Safety

- All equipment should be inspected daily, must be in good working condition, be adequate for the task and compliant with PUWER. In addition to this, lifting equipment must also be compliant with LOLER.
- Where five or more members of staff are employed by the company then risk assessments, COSHH assessments and method statements must be in place.
- Recovery operators must carry out a dynamic risk assessment prior to entering, loading or unloading vehicles.
- Recovery operators must pay attention to pedestrians and moving vehicles while operating at the pounds.
- Recovery vehicles that are 3.5T or over must comply with the TFL Safer Lorry Scheme (Exemptions apply).
- Recovery vehicles over 12T must comply with the TFL Direct Vision Permit Scheme from Mar 2021 (Exemptions apply).
- Repairing vehicles is not permitted on site, includes changing tyres, inflating tyres, refuelling, jump starting, etc.
- The following personal protective equipment must be worn:
 - High visibility clothing and appropriate work wear
 - Safety helmets (Must be in date) or bump caps, whilst operating street lifters or working under vehicles
 - Safety footwear
 - Work gloves
 - It may be necessary to wear additional PPE which will be identified through a risk assessment

3. Driving

- The 10 mph speed limit in the pounds and 5 mph speed limit in the hangars must be observed.
- Mobile phones and other devices 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 recovery operator's own risk assessment.
- It is not always necessary to work on the deck of a recovery truck.
- It should only be undertaken by operators with the equipment and training to complete the work safely.

5. Loading and Unloading

- Vehicles must not be driven on or off of recovery trucks, but may be driven on or off of spec lifts.
- A winch must be used when loading or unloading vehicles so that the ascent and descent can be controlled.
- To place the winch in a central position the vehicle should be attached to the winch using a set of brothers or a chain stop. Although this method is favoured, the MPS does understand that some vehicles cannot be loaded or unloaded in this way and that the towing eye must be used.
- Where the towing eye is used, a secondary restraint in the form of a strap or chain must be used to prevent the vehicle from rolling away in the event that the towing eye fails.
- The correct use and fitment of these recovery items is paramount so as not to damage steering, suspension and brake components.
- Vehicles must be secured to recovery trucks using a minimum of four straps or two chains.
- The designated loading and unloading bays at the pounds must be used. The vehicle must be positioned so that in the event of the recovery equipment failing and the vehicle rolling off of the recovery truck, it would roll directly into the crash barriers.
- Only when the vehicle is stationary on the ground with the handbrake fully applied or adequately secured to the recovery truck with four straps or two chains should recovery equipment be removed from the vehicle.
- The vehicle must not be loaded or unloaded if anyone is standing behind it.
- Using jacks to lift vehicles is not permitted at the pounds.
- Where fuels or oils have leaked during loading or unloading, the recovery operator must report this to the pound staff before leaving the site so that they can be cleared up immediately.
- Pound staff are not permitted to assist with loading or unloading vehicles.
- Be mindful of any height restrictions, especially when operating within the hangars.
- Do not exceed the load capacity of any equipment or the recovery truck.
- Recovery operators are not permitted to use VRES equipment.

6. 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 and wheels must be chocked.
- 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.

7. Motorcycles

- Recovery operators must take extreme care when loading or unloading motorcycles, especially where manual handling or working at height are concerned.
- Motorcycles must not be driven, pushed or lifted onto recovery trucks or vans, instead equipment that will enable loading or unloading of the motorcycle must be used.
- Two recovery operators may be granted access if required to assist with manual handling of motorcycles.
- Motorcycles must be secured to recovery trucks or vans using a minimum of four fixing points or straps.

8. Lorry Loader

- All stabiliser legs must be deployed properly when loading or unloading and stabiliser pads must be used.
- Check to ensure that stabiliser legs and lifting equipment are stowed away and secure before driving off.

9. Spec Lifts and Second Car Lifts

- Each wheel that is lifted must be secured to the spec or second car lift by a strap.
- A trailer board with working lights, bearing the registration mark of the recovery vehicle must be clearly displayed.