

Plant

12.01.09

Plant – telescopic handlers >

This bulletin provides information on the responsibilities under the Workplace Health and Safety legislation of persons using Telescopic handlers.

Legislation

Under the Workplace Health and Safety Regulations certain plant such as cranes and forklift must only be operated by persons holding the appropriate licence. For details see Schedule 3 – Licences – Regulation 15.

Telescopic handlers

A telescopic handler (also known as a variable reach truck, multi-purpose tool carrier or telehandler) can be fitted with a range of attachments that include:

- Hydraulic winch
- Hoisting block & hook
- Bucket
- Jib
- Bucket with grab
- Grab
- Earthmoving blade
- Concrete skip
- Earthmoving hoe
- Forks
- Elevating work platform
- Tyre handler

Typically, telescopic handlers are used to travel with their load. When the load is supported on forks, it should be lowered as close to the ground as possible and the boom retracted during travel. However, when the load is freely suspended, it needs to be elevated to prevent it snagging on the ground or other obstacles. This, coupled with the fact that the load can swing and exert additional dynamic forces, may adversely affect the stability of the telescopic handler. When operating on sloping ground, the potential for instability is increased, as the load will swing further from the point where it is connected to the telescopic handler.

Many telescopic handlers are designed to a European Standard, EN 1459 *Safety of industrial trucks - Self-propelled variable reach trucks*. This standard specifies the safety requirements for telescopic handlers used to lift loads rigidly supported by forks or other means and explicitly excludes the design of machines used to lift freely suspended loads.

When a telescopic handler is used with a crane attachment, it is classified as a mobile crane under the Workplace Health and Safety legislation. If a telescopic handler is used with a crane attachment, the design must also comply with AS 1418.5 *Cranes, hoists and winches* (Part 5 Mobile cranes).

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Competency requirements

The type of attachment fitted and whether it is a slewing or non-slewing machine will determine the requirements for operator training. A licence will be required as detailed below.

Operators of telescopic handlers must hold an appropriate class of license for the work performed and attachments used in addition to the training requirements listed below.

Attachment Fitted	Licence required	Training required
When machine is non-slewing and fitted with a jib or used as a crane with a rated capacity of 3 tonne or less	No Licence is specified by legislation.	Operators must be trained and instructed in the safe use of the plant and in the relevant competencies from the non-slewing crane competency standards.
When machine is non-slewing and fitted with a jib or used as a crane with a rated capacity greater than 3 tonne	Operators must hold a non-slewing mobile crane Licence (code CN).	Operators must be trained and instructed in the safe use of plant and non-slewing mobile cranes.
When slewing and fitted with a jib or used as a crane of any description	Operators must hold a slewing mobile crane Licence appropriate for the rated capacity (for example a C2 certificate allows for a rated capacity up to 20t)	Operators must be trained and instructed in the safe use of plant and slewing mobile cranes.
When machine is fitted with forks and similar attachments	Operators must hold a forklift truck operation Licence (code LF)	Operators must be trained and instructed in the safe use of plant and forklift truck operation
When machine is fitted with a loader bucket	No particular Licence is specified by legislation.	Operators must be trained and instructed in the safe use of plant. This training must incorporate competencies appropriate to front end loader operation.

Under the National Licensing Standard, licences are required when a multipurpose machine is configured as described below:

- Non-slewing mobile (greater than 3 Tonne) crane with a boom and/or jib (licence class CN).
- Elevating work platform where operating controls are in the basket and the boom length has a capacity of 11 metres or more (licence class WP).
- Forklift truck operation (licence class LF)
- Slew mobile cranes (C2) allows for a rated capacity up to 20t

Duty of Care

The person who supplies telescopic handlers to hirers of those who employ operators of multipurpose machines, or has control of the workplace where multipurpose machines are operated, have duties under the *Workplace Health and Safety Act*. These duties include ensuring hirers, users or those who supply persons to use or operate telescopic handlers possess relevant occupational licences for the use of telescopic handlers. This includes providing information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary to ensure the operators can perform their work in such a manner that they are not exposed to hazards. To fulfil this obligation an appropriate risk assessment must be done to determine the additional information, instruction, training and supervision on the various attachment(s) fitted to any multipurpose machines, which must be provided to the operator. This must occur even though the operator may be the holder of a relevant class of licence for high-risk work. For further licensing information see NT WorkSafe bulletins [10.01.01](#) - Occupational health and safety licence information, and [10.01.09](#) – Crane & hoist operation licences.

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