

What is a hazard

A hazard is any thing or situation that has the potential to cause harm or loss.

Hazards may include physical things that are clearly visible, such as worn load restraints, behaviours such as a worker not following loading guidelines, or a business practice such as not ensuring workers are trained and competent to undertake assigned tasks.

If it has the potential to cause harm or loss, it is a hazard.

Why reporting hazards matters

Reporting hazards can help a business fix problems before they turn into incidents.

In heavy vehicle operations, small issues can escalate quickly. A loose strap, a faulty brake light, a blocked walkway, or unclear delivery instructions can all lead to serious consequences on the road or at a customer site.

When hazards are reported early a business can:

- prevent injury and vehicle damage
- avoid delays, breakdowns, and costly disruptions
- protect the public and other road users
- keep its fleet compliant and safe
- strengthen your safety culture and Safety Management System

Benefits of reporting hazards

Reporting hazards creates real, practical benefits across the whole transport operation. These may include:

- Safer work environment – fewer incidents, near misses and surprises
- Better equipment reliability – issues are fixed before they fail
- More efficient operations – less downtime, fewer reworks
- Stronger compliance – supports Chain of Responsibility and Heavy Vehicle National Law responsibilities
- Shared awareness – everyone knows what to look out for and the controls implemented to prevent the hazard from being realised
- Continuous improvement – hazard trends help a business improve systems, training, and procedures

Every hazard report adds to the over all safety of your business and helps you to make smarter safety decisions.

What to report

Anything that does not look right or has the potential to cause an incident or injury should be reported. This may include:

- damaged or worn equipment
- unsafe work practices or unclear work instructions
- vehicle defects or unusual noises coming from the vehicle
- poor site design and layout or poor traffic flow or congestion
- fatigue risks or time pressures that may encourage a driver to continue whilst fatigued or exceed speed limits
- near misses – even if no actual incident occurred.

If you are unsure whether something does constitute a hazard, report it anyway.

How to report a hazard

Once someone has identified a hazard, a Hazard Report form will encourage and enable them to:

- document and report the hazard
- advise of what immediate actions they have taken, if appropriate, to eliminate or minimise the associated risk
- become involved in finding a solution

Once completed the Hazard Report form should be promptly forwarded to your supervisor, manager, or the person responsible for managing safety in your business.

Important

If the hazard has the potential to cause immediate harm or loss, then straightaway:

- make the area safe
- report the hazard to the appropriate person – this may be in person or by way of a telephone call
- complete a Hazard Report form as a record and submit it to the appropriate person.

Once a hazard has been reported, a business has a duty to assess it and take appropriate corrective action to eliminate or minimise the risk.

The NHVR has developed a simple Hazard Report form template that you may wish to adopt and use within your business. This template can be found [here](#).

Hazard Reporting – Quick Guide

Key points regarding hazard identification and reporting

- Everyone in your business should be encouraged to report hazards and safety concerns.
- Encouraging everyone to report hazards may include offering them alternatives to completing a form (e.g. raising and discussing hazards at toolbox talks and safety meetings).
- All hazards should be documented and investigated, including verbally reported hazards, so you can show a trail of the corrective actions you have taken.
- Consultation with all the parties involved is essential when investigating a hazard and determining corrective actions.
- You should communicate all hazard reports and corrective actions to all affected parties in your transport activities.



Hazard Reporting Process

Further information about hazards and risks in the transport industry can be found in the 2026 Master Code. The Code provides guidance on managing hazards and risks, and about risk assessments and risk controls. It is a key safety tool that helps parties in the Chain of Responsibility (CoR) meet their Primary Duty under the Heavy Vehicle National Law (HVNL). The 2026 Master Code can be found here: [2026 Master Code | NHVR](#)