

Tractor Unit Handbrakes and Vehicle Runaways

What happened?

Unfortunately we have suffered 2 more vehicle runaways due to tractor unit hand brakes not being applied, one of which has very sadly ended in a fatality. We are also aware of others in the industry:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/press/2013/rnn-em-0313.htm>

27th November 2012 - Driver had parked in loading bay and was waiting in the Safe zone. He had not applied the hand brake prior to exiting his cab. When loading commenced and the coil was lowered and positioned, the vehicle and trailer moved approximately 1 metre forward. Driver ran to vehicle to get in and apply handbrake. Truck does have a handbrake alarm.

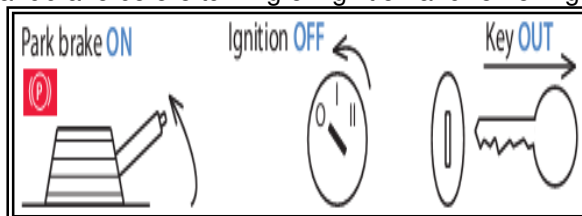


25th January 2013 – Driver has arrived to collect a loaded trailer on hauliers premises. He has exited his cab without applying the hand brake. At some point during the coupling up process the truck and trailer have started to roll backwards fatally crushing the driver. Trailer park brake was applied. Unknown at present if truck has a handbrake alarm.



Initial Recommendations

- Drivers must check, check and check again – visually and physically that they have applied their handbrake before turning off ignition and removing keys



- Traction operators, hauliers and transport managers **must** consider the handbrake alarm specification and system when purchasing and leasing new trucks. Handbrake alarm **must**:-
 - Operate when engine is on and off
 - Sound when the door is open and the handbrake is off
 - Loud enough to be heard clearly and above other noises and alarms (90dB recommended)
 - Audible outside the vehicle
 - Only stop when the handbrake is re-applied