

Wickes makes home improvements

Reduction in accidents thanks to vehicle changes

Reducing falls from vehicles case study 11

This case study is part of a series, which give examples of good practice to reduce injuries due to falls from vehicles, through sensible management of health and safety risks in the workplace.

The challenge

Wickes Home Improvement Stores operate a national home delivery service, delivering to thousands of customers every week throughout the UK.

A review of their operations identified a potential risk for employees to fall off the vehicle when unloading products.

The solution and benefits

Wickes trialled a number of different solutions, including the use of a lorry-mounted forklift truck, which is used successfully in other parts of the Group. However, due to the diversity of customer locations, this did not work in every situation, and the final solution was a combination of several individual ideas to create a bespoke vehicle. This solution is being progressively fitted to the fleet as the vehicles come up for replacement, with 36 new vehicles planned for 2007.

Edge protection is provided to the tail lift, to prevent people falling from the sides of the lift. The initial design of edge protection is a manual push-fit system, with the bars stored at the rear of the vehicle when not in use. Other more permanent solutions are also being investigated.



Figure 1 Edge protection on the tail lift

The new lower storage area for kitchen worktops, removes the need for access to the bed of the vehicle. This also releases valuable space inside the vehicle for alternative storage. A two-man delivery operation ensures the safe manual handling of these larger items.



Figure 2 Worktop storage area

A moveable unloading platform with harness, hand rails and steps to assist access onto the bed of the vehicle, is provided for all the items that cannot be readily unloaded via the tail lift.

The platform and harness attachment provides a safer working area for the operative, who may have to work near the edge of the vehicle when passing materials to colleagues on the ground. The platform is fitted to both sides of the vehicle and will run the full length to give maximum flexibility to the operatives making the deliveries.



Figure 3 Platform and harness