

## Workplace Health and Safety Queensland

## Road freight transport industry - Cabin seating

Truck drivers spend a large amount of time sitting in a relatively fixed position for long periods of time whilst driving. A comfortable ride is important and it is essential for the driver of the truck to have the seat set in the correct position.

### Main risk factors associated with truck seating include:

- lack of lumbar support in the backrest of the seat (can cause spinal stress)
- vinyl upholstery reducing comfort (promotes sweating thereby promoting poor sitting posture, postural fatigue)
- poorly adjustable seating and inadequate seat suspension (causes increased spinal stress due to vehicle vibration and poor sitting posture, postural fatigue)
- controls too high and too far in front of the driver (may cause shoulder and back strain from over-reaching particularly in the long term)
- poor visibility due to lack of full length windscreens and the positioning of external mirrors (promotes bending of spine with awkward neck positions and may cause long term neck and back strain).

### How can these risks and injuries be prevented?

The risk of these long-term injuries may be reduced by improved truck seating design and driver control layout. These risks may not cause immediate injury. Wear and tear of the bones, ligaments and muscles over many years will cause damage and may lead to eventual injury.

### Driving seats should be easily adjustable:

- to avoid putting more strain on your back, the seat should be adjusted far enough forward so knees are bent and the knees are slightly higher than the hips when fully compressing foot pedals
- for high frequency pedal work (i.e. couriers), knees should be bent slightly greater than 90°
- the thighs should also be parallel to the floor
- the front edge of the seat should be rounded to prevent sharp edges from compressing the back of the thigh.

Seats should have obvious, prominent cushioning at the level of the lumbar spine. When sitting on the seat, the middle of the lumbar support should be near level with the driver's hips.

Preferably, the lumbar support should raise and lower for various heights of drivers. A pillow, a rolled up towel or back rest cushion may be used if a seat does not provide enough back support.

Seat suspension should be adjustable to a driver's weight and height. Suspension parts should be in good working condition. When driving, seats should be adjusted far enough forward so knees are bent and slightly higher than hips when fully compressing foot pedals. This avoids putting more strain on your back by stretching for pedals and steering wheel. Use a firm cushion if the seat is too low.

The front edge of the seat should also be rounded to prevent sharp edges from compressing the back of the thigh.

**REMEMBER:** Constant sitting fatigues and strains the back. Try and vary your posture as much as possible on long trips by:

- keeping fit
- taking short, frequent breaks
- getting out of your truck and walking around for a few minutes.

## More information

For more information on access to cabins and other workplace health and safety issues visit [www.worksafe.qld.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au)

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