

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland

Smash repair industry (including spray painters) – Vehicle hoists, jacks and frame straighteners

Vehicle hoists, jacks and frame straighteners can cause serious injury if they are not used or maintained properly.

It is essential that vehicle hoists and frame straighteners are regularly serviced and maintained as recommended by the manufacturer. *AS/NZS 2550.9: 1996* states that routine and annual inspections are mandatory and are conducted by a suitably competent person and that records of the services and maintenance be kept.

Vehicle hoists

- Train people who will be operating the hoist in safe use and how to inspect it for faults/damage.
- Know the load limits of the hoist – ensure they are displayed on the hoist and are not exceeded.
- Use the proper support grip pads in the recommended positions for the type of hoist and vehicle – don't use home made adaptors or wooden blocks.
- Keep people clear of the hoist when a vehicle is raised or lowered.
- Ensure locking devices are in use while the vehicle is in the raised position.
- Wear appropriate eye protection when working under a vehicle to prevent oil, rust etc. falling into workers' eyes.

Vehicle jacks

- Keep jacks well maintained – regularly inspect for excessive leaks and damage.
- Ensure the safe working load is displayed on the jack and always work within the jack's limits.
- Only use vehicle jacks on a hard and level surface.

- Make sure the vehicle is restrained from rolling before raising (use wheel chocks/apply parking brake etc.).
- Use the correct lifting points on the vehicle (refer to workshop manuals to identify vehicle lifting points).
- Never go under a vehicle that is only supported by a jack – use, for example, vehicle or axle stands to support the vehicle (or use vehicle ramps instead).

Frame straighteners

- Use the frame straightener in a dedicated area with an exclusion area of a diameter in excess of the length of the wheel chains.
- Regularly check and inspect the straightener for damage such as cracks and misalignment (consult the manufacturers regarding inspection and servicing). Also be cautious of contamination on pistons and clamps, which could cause loads to slip.
- Regularly check the hydraulic fluid level and check for leaks from hoses, connections and jack seals.
- Train people who will be operating the straightener in safe use and how to inspect it for faults/damage.
- Ensure clamps are tight and securely attached to solid metal (for example, not rusted or thin trim panels).
- Have the vehicle secured to the frame straightener or on its wheels when performing realignments.
- When performing alignments, workers should be behind a barrier for protection from clamps that slip off, or other projectiles. Barriers can be made with metal mesh, safety plastics etc.

- Make sure the manufacturers intended safety devices, including safety chains, are used as per the recommendations.
- Avoid going under the vehicle whilst the chains are under tension.
- Loosely wrapped heavy material such as a fire blanket or hessian can be used to assist in energy absorption if a chain breaks while under tension.
- Erect signs around chains, such as 'watch your step'.

For more information on plant and equipment and general workplace health and safety issues call 1300 369 915 or visit www.deir.qld.gov.au

To prevent slips and trips around vehicle hoists and vehicle straighteners:

- keep the area around them clear of materials and other obstacles
- paint the edges of the straightener or hoist in a bright colour to make them easier to see
- provide adequate lighting in these areas.

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