



## USE THREE POINTS OF CONTACT EVERY TIME TO REDUCE THE RISK OF INJURY

Small actions can have big impacts for workers who drive on the job. You would be surprised how many injuries are caused through routine, seemingly harmless actions. Getting in and out of your truck correctly and with awareness of your surroundings is a perfect example of something workers don't always think about—and should.

Jumping from the cab floor or the top step of parked trucks and flat decks is a common cause of injuries—as jumping from heights can create an impact force of five to seven times a driver's body weight. That means if a driver weighs 91 kg (200 lbs) the impact force of jumping from the floor of the cab is 680 kg (1500 lbs). Jumping from heights can seriously impact joints and increases the risk of a lower back or lower limb injury.

It's also important to avoid facing outwards when exiting the cab, or while only loosely gripping one handhold. I recall a worker who was only holding on using one hand when getting out of his truck, when he started to slip he grabbed a handle to stop the fall and thought he was okay, but after a couple days, the pain in his shoulder was unbearable; eventually he ended up in surgery.

### It's critical to maintain three-point contact until you are firmly on the ground:

Mitigating the risk is simple. Employers must instruct new drivers—and remind experienced drivers—to use three points of contact every time. This means keeping two hands and one foot—or two feet and one hand—on the equipment at all times. Using the correct three points of contact, and carefully stepping down

from the lower step creates an impact force of only one to one and a half times the driver's body weight; greatly reducing the risk of injury.

Getting out of your truck when carrying items such as paperwork or a coffee cup can also result in injuries. Workers should always leave all items on the floor of the truck or trailer and only pick them up when they're safely on the ground.

### The entire workplace is affected when someone is injured:

Healing from a fall is time consuming and costly for both employers and workers. Aside from the obvious lost wages, the longer someone is off work the more disengaged they become. Being off work for a long period of time slows physical healing and also has negative consequences for the worker's

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mental health. For employers, the costs associated with workplace injuries show up as increased premiums, time spent replacing and re-training staff, and overall lower morale.

In 2019, WorkSafeBC had 21 time-loss claims for forestry truck drivers where injuries occurred when entering or exiting their vehicles. Almost 62 per cent of these injuries happened when falling or jumping from the vehicle. The majority (57 per cent) resulted in sprains and strains, while fractures and concussions accounted for another 24 per cent and 10 per cent respectively.

More than half of the injuries occurred during the winter due to cold, wet, and snow covered surfaces, increasing the risk. The effectiveness of your shoes and work boots also changes in winter; in summer heat, rubber soles are great, but in winter rubber hardens, increasing the chances of falling.

**Safety is always worth it:**

It takes some time and effort to employ three points of contact and ensure you've



Photo courtesy of WorkSafeBC

checked the ground, but workers must make the extra effort as barriers to safety are often psychological. Drivers are in a hurry, they've always done it that way, or they don't want to appear to be overly cautious. They think, "I've been getting out of my truck for years this way, nothing has ever happened." Well, let me tell you, I've seen it enough times to know your luck is going to run out. 📌

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- Always use two hands and one foot—or two feet and one hand—when getting in and out of your truck.
- Don't carry anything like coffee cups or papers.
- Employers: You're responsible for reminding **both new and experienced drivers** to use three points of contact every time they enter or exit their vehicle.




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