

# Safety and health alert

# 19/05 4X4 vehicle slides out of control

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## Incident

Three workers escaped with only minor injuries when a 4x4 vehicle slid into an elevated work platform.

Two workers were working approximately 6 metres from the ground in the elevated work platform on a rural property. The working area was on the side of a hill with a slope of approximately 6%.

One worker had returned to the site in the 4x4 off-road vehicle, and as he commenced to ascend the slope of the hill he placed the gearshift of the vehicle into first low four-wheel drive.

As the vehicle ascended the slope, it lost traction in the slippery conditions and slid out of control. The vehicle collided with the elevated work platform.

Steady rain had been falling during the early morning, making the ground conditions wet and slippery. Despite having conducted a risk assessment prior to work commencing, weather changing the work conditions were not considered as part of the initial assessment.

The driver had not received training to operate 4x4 vehicles in off-road conditions.

## Factors to consider

- The selected approach to the worksite involved driving downhill over a potentially slippery surface.
- The risk assessment conducted prior to commencing work did not take into account change in weather conditions.
- The driver had not received training in 4x4 off-road conditions.

## Recommendations

1. Hazard Identification and Risk Control Assessment to be carried out prior to taking vehicles off-road.
2. Reassess Risk Controls where circumstances change during the work.
3. Whenever possible, plan the route to worksites so it makes use of constructed tracks and avoids direct downhill approach.
4. Training to be provided to employees required to operate 4x4 vehicles in off-road conditions.
5. Lowering tyre pressure when working off-road may assist traction.
6. Always use low gear when descending steep slopes.

## Further information

Contact any Registered Training Organisation that is approved to deliver and assess 4x4 vehicle driver training.

Contact WorkSafe on 9327 8777 for information regarding Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment processes.

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