

Safety Bulletin

Mitigate the Risk of Sustaining an Injury When Entering and Exiting a Vehicle

When you get in and out of a vehicle multiple times per day, it's very easy to get complacent. However, with complacency, you risk serious injury. According to a report a few years ago from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, truck drivers had more non-fatal injuries than any other industry.



One common area often overlooked is safety risks associated with entering and exiting a vehicle. Below are some common practices to remember.

- **Three-point Contact:** By successfully using a three-point contact (one hand and two feet, or two hands and one foot), you can minimize your chances for an accident. When entering a vehicle, always remember to face it. Use the grab bar for leverage. If a grab bar is unavailable, grasp the seat or another fixed object in the vehicle.
- **Plan your steps:** Plan your steps into the vehicle so that you are standing on the same leg as the side you are entering. To enter the left/driver's side, stand on your left leg and lift your right leg up. Keep three points of contact with the vehicle at all times. Be sure to maintain the three-point rule until you are securely seated or firmly on the ground.
- **Check out the ground:** To exit the vehicle, be sure to check out the ground before you step out. Take extra precautions when encountering snow, ice, water or uneven pavements. Face the vehicle and step down backward while holding onto the grab bar or other stable surface. Use all the steps until you reach the ground. Never jump down or "fall" down forward out of a vehicle; you can catch your clothing on the door handle, seat adjustments, seat belt, etc., causing a serious, uncontrolled fall.
- **Jumping:** Jumping out of a cab-over-engine tractor increases the force and strain on your bones and joints (mostly ankle, knee and back). For example, jumping from the top step can apply 7.1 times your body weight to your back and leg joints (1,420 pounds of force for a 200-pound man). Jumping from a delivery step-van with a package in hand causes an impact of 3.5 times the body weight plus package weight. Add these impacts to frequent entries and exits, and you are at risk for an ergonomic injury.