

Exiting and Entering Vehicles: Three Points of Contact

Understanding your points of contact when entering and exiting vehicles is crucial to protecting employees from strains, sprains, and even fractures. Many employees and employers have accepted the three points of contact system into their daily routines. Utilizing your limbs correctly can prevent injuries.

The three points of contact system can greatly reduce the potential for injury among your employees. To ensure employees are familiar with the three points of contact system, training should be completed frequently and effectively. An employer could also post graphics near vehicle doors and ladders as a reminder to employees to always use the three points of contact.

Three points of contact

When utilizing three points of contact, your body creates a triangle of anchor points. You are most stable when the triangle is nearest to your center of gravity. It's important to remember to only utilize stable objects when using them as an anchor point — a steering wheel or door frame is not a stable object.

Ensure three limbs are anchored at all times, for example:

- Two feet and one hand
- One foot and two hands

When mounting or dismounting a vehicle, carefully transition between your three points of contact until you have entered or completely exited your vehicle. The three points of contact should only be broken when you've reach your destination and are stable with both feet planted.

Other tips to consider

- Always face the vehicle when entering or exiting
- Before entering a vehicle, dry your hands and wipe excess mud or snow from your boots
- Only enter and exit the vehicle once it has come to a complete stop
- Always use a flat surface to step on — tires are not considered a flat surface
- Load any items into the vehicle first to keep your hands free when entering
- Do not jump off or skip steps when exiting the vehicle
- Be mindful of the ground area to ensure there is no snow, ice, or uneven surface

Three points of contact sounds simple, and it is. You likely do this most of the time already. However, falls from vehicles can lead to significant injuries. Focusing on maintaining three points of contact will decrease your chances of getting hurt.

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