

# Telehandlers - Design and licensing

This information sheet provides advice on design and licensing requirements for telescopic handlers, commonly known as telehandlers (also known as variable reach trucks or multipurpose handlers).

June 2017

## Background

A telehandler is a versatile type of lifting plant that includes a telescopic boom fitted with a lifting attachment. The typical lifting attachment used is a fork tyne, but other attachments are used depending on the load lifted.

Telehandlers can vary in function - from their primary use as a telescopic forklift to lifting suspended loads as a crane or being used as an elevating work platform (EWP) by using a work platform attachment.

Each configuration using the varied attachments must comply with specific design requirements. Operator competency also varies depending on the telehandler configuration.

## Design

Prior to the development of AS 1418.19 – *Cranes, hoists and winches – Telescopic handlers, the telehandler* design had to comply with AS1418.5 - *Cranes, hoists and winches – Mobile cranes* or equivalent.

AS 1418.19 specifies the design requirements for telehandlers fitted with forklift tynes or attachments for applications such as earthmoving buckets or jibs.

The Standard does not apply to reach stackers that are designed to handle freight containers six metres or more in length. However, where the container-lifting frame is designed to lift loads in addition to the containers, it should be considered to be a telehandler with a container-lifting frame attachment and designed to AS 1418.19.

AS1418.19 only applies to two crane configurations considered to be telehandlers. These are:

- self-propelled non-slewing telescopic handlers
- self-propelled slewing telescopic handlers that can slew five degrees or less (generally these telehandlers don't slew but incorporate whole chassis rotation or side-shift over the back axle).

Note: If the telescopic handler does not fit these criteria, it is considered a non-slewing mobile crane or a slewing mobile crane (see AS 1418.5) or equivalent.

## Work platforms

Telehandlers fitted with a work platform should comply with AS 1418.10 and either AS 1418.19 or AS 1418.5 or an equivalent published technical standard. AS 1418.10 - *Cranes hoists and winches – Elevating work platforms* is the Australian design standard for mobile elevating work platforms (MEWPs).

Telehandlers fitted with a work platform shall include automatic work platform recognition and shall not rely on the administrative control of coupling cables to provide recognition that a work platform has been fitted.

Consistent with the requirements of AS 1418.10, operator controls shall be positioned within the platform. Emergency controls must be provided and accessible from the ground so the platform can be lowered in the event of control malfunction.

## Compliance

Verification of compliance with Australian Standards or equivalent should be available for each telehandler, including its various attachments. Documentation such as stability and structural test results should be available to confirm any statement of compliance.

If verification of compliance with the Australian Standards or equivalent is not available, telehandlers should not be used to pick and carry suspended loads and are restricted to loads carried by tynes or bale grab attachments.

Verification of compatibility of attachments and the provision of specific load charts for the combination are required before using any attachments. An information plate marking compliance with the Australian Standard should be fitted to the attachment.

# Guidance Note Telehandlers - Design and licensing



Examples of compliance plates and load charts for telehandlers.

## Registration

Design and plant registration requirements apply if the capacity of the telehandler exceeds 10 tonnes.

Design registration also applies to all telehandlers designed to support a work platform. Note: this applies to the combination of a telehandler and work platform, not the work platform attachment alone.

If a MEWP boom attachment or work platform is fitted to a different model/type of telehandler, this is regarded as a new design, even though the basic technical specifications (eg maximum rated capacity (SWL or WLL) or maximum working radius) may be the same. Accordingly, a new design registration should be obtained.

Registration of altered plant design is required if new risk control measures are introduced when using a telehandler and MEWP attachment.

Note: The design registration cannot be transferred or applied to other combinations (based upon make and/or model no.)

## Operator competency and licensing

A mobile crane licence (with the minimum being a non-slewing CN licence) is required if the telehandler has a capacity greater than three tonne and does not have a work platform fitted.

Telehandler operators with a capacity of three tonne or less do not require a licence, but should be competent in their use and have training in relation to the machine and attachment being used.

When the telehandler is operated from a work platform with a boom length 11 metres or greater, a boom type EWP operator licence (WP) is required. If the boom is less than 11 metres, the operator should be competent in their use and have training in relation to the machine and attachment.

Slewing telehandlers (with a slewing limit greater than five degrees) are considered slewing mobile cranes. Operators require the appropriate high risk crane licence (eg C0, C1, C2 or C6).

Note: A forklift licence is not an acceptable or appropriate alternative licence for the operation of a telehandler with a capacity greater than three tonne.

Table 1 – Minimum competency levels

Operation/configuration	Competency
Fork tynes, jib or attachments other than a work platform - three tonne and under.	No licence is required but operators must be competent in the use and be trained in the operation of the machine and its attachment.*
Fork tynes or jib greater than three tonne.	Crane licence to perform high risk work category.
Work platform boom length less than 11 metres.	No licence is required but operators must be competent in the use and be trained in the operation of the machine and its attachment.
Work platform boom length 11 metres or more.	MEWP licence to perform high risk work category.
*Due to different operational requirements, a forklift licence does not establish telehandler competencies. If a person operating a telehandler of three tonne or less seeks competency confirmation via a licence based competency system, the appropriate licence is a non-slewing (CN) mobile crane licence.	

Note: When a telehandler is configured with a work platform and is:

- operated from the ground, the appropriate licence is a CN (greater than three tonne) or operators should be competent in the use and trained in the operation of the machine and its attachment (three tonne or less).
- operated from the work platform, the operator requires a WP (11 metre or greater boom) or should be competent in the use and trained in the operation of the machine and its attachment being used (less than 11 metre boom).

## Further information

Contact the WorkSafe Victoria Advisory Service on **1800 136 089** or go to **[worksafe.vic.gov.au](http://worksafe.vic.gov.au)**

### Related WorkSafe publications

AS 14181.9 – 2007, *Cranes, hoists and winches*  
– *Telescopic handlers*

AS 1418.5 – 2002, *Cranes, hoists and winches*  
– *Mobile cranes*

AS1418.10 – 2004, *Cranes, hoists and winches*  
– *Elevating work platforms*

**Note:** *This guidance material has been prepared using the best information available to the Victorian WorkCover Authority and should be used for general use only. Any information about legislative obligations or responsibilities included in this material is only applicable to the circumstances described in the material. You should always check the legislation referred to in this material and make your own judgement about what action you may need to take to ensure you have complied with the law. Accordingly, the Victorian WorkCover Authority cannot be held responsible and extends no warranties as to the suitability of the information for your specific circumstances; or actions taken by third parties as a result of information contained in the guidance material.*

*This guidance has been reviewed and updated for the sole purpose of amending year and regulation references relating to the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, in line with amendments which came into effect on 18 June 2017.*