

# DOS & DON'TS: [û] Do Train Workers on New Jobs or Equipment



You must provide [safety training](#) to workers not only when they start work at your organization but also when you assign them to a new job or to work with new equipment. Providing a safety orientation for new employees is a basic component of any OHS program. But training duties don't end after the orientation. Any time workers are confronted with new tasks or equipment that may pose hazards to them, they need training on the hazards associated with the new job or equipment and how to protect themselves from such hazards. In fact, the OHS laws may specifically require a safety orientation be given to any worker who's moved from one work activity or worksite to another that differs with respect to hazards, equipment, facilities or procedures (see, [Know the Laws: New & Young Worker Safety Orientation Requirements](#)). Without such training, a worker may be justified in refusing to perform the new job or work with the new equipment.

That's what happened at a federally-regulated transportation company. A truck driver was hired to pull tankers and did so exclusively since he started working there. But when the company told him to pull a 53' trailer, which was taller and longer than a tanker, he refused on the grounds that he didn't feel safe because he hadn't gotten any road training for such trailers or any training on pulling, loading or securing loads on them. An MOL official investigated the work refusal and

concluded that it was justified. The company appealed, arguing that the driver had 20 years' experience and didn't need additional training for this new job.

The OHS Tribunal upheld the refusal. Over the nearly four years the driver had worked for the company, he'd only driven tankers, which were smaller and handled differently than the 53' trailer. 'Performing this new activity without having received the appropriate and mandatory training presents inherent risks or hazards,' said the Tribunal. There was a serious threat to the driver's life and health since he was required to operate a motor vehicle of significant weight that was different in important respects than the vehicles he normally operated and to do so without any additional training, it added. So the Tribunal concluded that the company should've informed the driver of the hazards associated with this new task and given him the instruction and training necessary to protect himself from these hazards *before* asking him to perform it [[Keith Hall & Sons Transport Limited v. Robin Wilkins](#), [2017] OHSTC 1, Jan. 27, 2017].

**Insider Says:** For more on safety orientations, see '[Training: Answers to 5 FAQs about Safety Orientations for New & Young Workers](#).' And for more on work refusals, see '[Work Refusals: Answers to 10 Frequently Asked Questions](#).'