

BULLETIN

Telescopic Handler Operation - Licence Requirements

This bulletin outlines the licensing requirements to operate a telescopic handler in the Northern Territory. The use of a telescopic handler is considered high risk work and requires the operator to hold an appropriate licence to perform high risk work issued by NT WorkSafe.

The licensing of workers aims to ensure that they have the skills and knowledge to perform high risk work in a safe manner so to reduce the health and safety risk to themselves and other persons in the workplace.

Telescopic Handlers

A telescopic handler (also known as a variable reach truck, multi-purpose tool carrier or telehandler) can be fitted with a range of attachments that include hydraulic winch, hoisting block & hook, bucket, jib, bucket with grab, grab, earthmoving blade, concrete skip, earthmoving hoe, forks, elevating work platform, tyre handler.

Typically, telescopic handlers are used to travel with their load. When the load is supported on forks, it should be lowered as close to the ground as possible and the boom retracted during travel.

However, when the load is freely suspended, it needs to be elevated to prevent it snagging on the ground or other obstacles. The stability of the telescopic handler may adversely be affected as the load can swing and exert additional dynamic forces. When operating on sloping ground, the potential for instability is increased, as the load will swing further from the point where it is connected to the telescopic handler.

Operators of telescopic handlers must hold an appropriate class of license for the work performed and attachments used in addition to the training requirements listed in the table listed below.

Training and Licence Requirements

Attachment Fitted	Licence required	Training required
When machine is non-slewing and fitted with a jib or used as a crane with a rated capacity of 3 tonne or less	No Licence is specified by legislation.	Operators must be trained and instructed in the safe use of the plant. This training may incorporate competencies appropriate to non-slewing crane operation.
When machine is non-slewing and fitted with a jib or used as a crane with a rated capacity greater than 3 tonne	Operators must hold a non-slewing mobile crane Licence (code CN).	Operators must be trained and instructed in the safe use of plant and non-slewing mobile cranes.
When slewing and fitted with a jib or used as a crane of any description	Operators must hold a slewing mobile crane Licence appropriate for the rated capacity (for example a C2 licence allows for a rated capacity up to 20t)	Operators must be trained and instructed in the safe use of plant and slewing mobile cranes.

When machine is fitted with forks and similar attachments	No Licence is specified by legislation.	Operators must be trained and instructed in the safe use of plant. This training may incorporate competencies appropriate to forklift truck operation.
When machine is fitted with a loader bucket	No particular Licence is specified by legislation.	Operators must be trained and instructed in the safe use of plant. This training may incorporate competencies appropriate to front end loader operation.
When machine is fitted with a boom-type elevating work platform greater than 11m	Operators must hold a boom-type elevating work platform Licence (code WP)	Operators must be trained and instructed in the safe use of plant and boom-type elevating work platforms.

Obtaining a Licence

The minimum age to hold a high risk licence is eighteen (18) years old, however training may commence at an earlier age.

A high risk licence to operate a telescopic handler can be obtained by:

- Undertaking training and competency assessment through an [accredited assessor](#)/Registered Training Organisation (RTO) to the competency standards set out in Schedule 4 of the Regulations¹, or
- If you hold a National License, transition to a High Risk Licence by complete the [Application for a High Risk Licence form](#) (provided your licence falls within the transitional timeframes²)

Interstate Issued Licences

Licences issued in another jurisdiction of Australia are recognised in the Northern Territory provided the licence is still valid under the issuing jurisdiction's transitional arrangements. For information on if a state or territory licence is still valid and accepted in the Northern Territory, refer to the Bulletin [Licensing Persons Performing High Risk Work](#).

Non-Australian Issued Licences

Non-Australian issued licenses are not recognised in the Northern Territory.

A worker carrying out high risk work with only a non-Australian issued licence is not considered licensed and will be in breach of the [Work Health and Safety \(National Uniform Legislation\) Act](#) and [Regulations](#).

To undertake high risk work in the Northern Territory, a worker must first go through an accredited Northern Territory assessor to obtain the competency and then lodge an application to obtain a licence within 60 days of the assessment. A list of accredited assessors can be found on the NT WorkSafe Website under Service Providers.

Trainees and Unlicensed Persons – Supervision of High Risk Work

Under the repealed Workplace Health and Safety legislation, an unlicensed worker was able to carry out high risk work if they were under the supervision of a worker who had the relevant licence. This is no longer the case and a worker who does not hold the relevant licence must not carry out high risk work until they have completed the appropriate training with an approved RTO.

¹ Please note that these assessments must be lodged with an Application for a High Risk Work Licence within 60 days of the date of the assessment, failure to do so will result in you having to complete a further assessment.

² For transitional timeframes please refer to the bulletin Licensing Persons Performing High Risk Work.

The only time an unlicensed worker can carry out high risk work under the supervision of a worker with the relevant license, is via a structured training program, formulated by the RTO, undertaken to obtain a licence.

Duty of Care

A Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU) who supplies telescopic handlers for hire or a PCBU with control of the workplace where telescopic handlers are operated, have duties under the legislation.

These duties include ensuring hirers and operators possess the relevant high risk work licence to use the telescopic handler. The PCBU will also be required to provide information, instruction and training as is necessary to ensure the operators can perform their work in such a manner that they are not exposed to hazards.

To meet these duties, an appropriate risk assessment must be done to determine what additional information, instruction and training on the various attachment(s) fitted to any telescopic handler, must be provided to the operator. This must occur even though the operator may be the holder of a relevant class of licence for high-risk work.

Further Information

The following information on high risk licensing is available on the NT WorkSafe website.

Guides

- [Guide to High Risk Licence](#)

Bulletins

- [Licensing Persons Performing High Risk Work](#)
- [High Risk Work Licensing – Worker Obligations](#)
- [High Risk Work Licensing – PCBU Obligations](#)

For further information please contact NT WorkSafe on 1800 019 115 or go to www.worksafe.nt.gov.au