

Telehandler Licencing / Training Explained

What is a Telehandler?

A telescopic handler or telehandler is a versatile type of mobile lifting plant incorporating a telescopic boom fitted with a lifting attachment. The most common means of lifting is by forks, but telehandlers can be fitted with a variety of attachments for different types of loads. The range of attachments that can be used will depend upon the design of the particular telehandler. The most popular attachments are:

- Fork tynes
- Earth moving bucket
- Work platform
- Lifting jib

Telehandlers are also known by a variety of names, including multi-purpose handlers/cranes/tool carriers and telescopic forklifts, as well as common proprietary names.

Do I need a high risk licence, if so which one?

The telehandler is such a versatile piece of equipment that there has been a lot of confusion as to what type of High Risk Licence is required, if any. The regulators nationwide have agreed that a telehandler will fall under the high risk licence category of either non-slewing or slewing crane if they have a lifting capacity greater than 3 tonne. However, throughout Australia there are some variations to the training and licencing parameters. Please refer to State regulators.

The Association has a licencing and training document on their webpage under the telehandler tab.

It is important that you do not try to form your own opinion about which type of licence is needed. The high risk licence is about the machine (telehandler) not the attachment. In some cases or states additional high risk licences may be required to operate the telehandler with a specific attachment fitted.

If the telehandler fits into the high risk licencing category in your state and the machine does not slew, then the high risk Licence to Operate a Non Slewing Mobile Crane (CN licence) is sufficient.

If the telehandler is of the slewing variety then a Slewing Mobile Crane Licence (C2, C6 or greater) is required.

Why would I need a Gold Card?

A regular question asked of the Association is 'why do I need a gold card when my State regulator has just told me that I do not need to have a licence?'

If the telehandler does not fall under the high risk licencing requirements then that answer is correct. However, the regulators do have other instruction/training requirements that will need to be met.

Every State and Territory in Australia has in place an Occupational Health and Safety Act (OH&S), or have adopted or in the process of adopting the new Workplace Health and Safety (WH&S) Act 2011 which aims to protect the health, safety and welfare of employees at work. In both of these Acts, it is clearly stated that there is a duty of care to ensure workplace safety, and specifically mention the following:

OHS Act 2000

- Employers must provide the information, instruction, training and supervision necessary to ensure the health and safety of employees at work.
- Manufacturers and suppliers of plant must ensure equipment is safe to use and must make available adequate information about the conditions for the safe use of the equipment manufactured or supplied.
- Employees must co-operate with efforts to comply with OH&S requirements.

WHS Act 2011

Duties of a Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU) Primary duty of care:

- A PCBU has the primary duty of care to ensure the health and safety of workers while they are at work in the business or undertaking.
- A PCBU is also responsible for ensuring work carried out does not carry risk to the health and safety of others.

This means the PCBU must:

- Provide and maintain a safe work environment;
- Provide and maintain safe plant and structures;
- Provide and maintain safe systems of work;
- Ensure the safe use, handling and storage of plant, structures and substances;
- Provide adequate facilities (and ensure access is maintained);
- Provide instruction, training, information and supervision; and
- Monitor the health of workers and conditions at the workplace.

What this means, is that an employer will need to show some form of proof that the operator has been instructed on the safe use of a telehandler. Verbal instruction is not an effective method of training as it lacks proof of training evidence. The Telehandler Operator Training (Gold Card) has been created by the Telescopic Handler Association as a means of helping industry to comply with this OH&S or WH&S Acts.

The Gold card is not a licence. The Gold Card is evidence that the holder has successfully completed a structured training course.

What are the alternatives?

The Telescopic Handler Association Gold Card is the Association's method of meeting the duty of care responsibilities. However, other methods can be used. Such methods include having in-house training schemes or user specific programs. The key elements are that any programs need to have a structured training format, delivered by a suitably qualified trainer. The training content should meet the Australian Standard AS2550.19, manufacturers' safe operating procedures and be in line with the unit of competency TLILIC3008A Licence to Operate a Non Slewing Mobile Crane. The training outcomes are to be documented and a certificate of participation or proof of training issued.

What if I do nothing?

To disregard the law (the Act is law) can result in hefty fines and or jail.

