

No. 018/2024

15 January 2024

Our Ref: V4/24

**To: All Branches**

Dear Colleagues,

**Royal Mail Group (SHE) Safety Flash FY24 001 – Royal Mail Van Roll Away Incident:**

**Introduction, Background and Description:**

Royal Mail Group's Safety Team have issued 'RMG SHE Safety Flash FY24 001 on the subject of 'Royal Mail Van Roll Away Incidents' which can be avoided by following the 'HIT' acronym process ('HIT' – Handbrake on, In Gear, Turn The Wheels).

The incident occurred when a Royal Mail postman driver was carrying out his regular delivery duty. The delivery round normal route was disrupted by a road closure causing the driver to make a 25-minute detour, which the driver reported had caused him some distress, becoming agitated and anxious as he needed to finish his duty on time. When parking the van at the next delivery point address following the diversion, the 3 point 'HIT' process was not followed. The handbrake was applied, but the wheels were not turned and the van was not left in gear. The van's handbrake was faulty and did not hold the vehicle in place. The vehicle rolled backwards approximately 25 metres downhill, through road and street works, where it then collided with a parked BT Openreach van causing damage to both vehicles.

This SHE Flash has been issued to once again raise awareness of the need for drivers to follow 'HIT', highlight the risks of these types of incidents and to communicate the 'HIT' process to all Van drivers.

**Impact/Injuries:**

Two vehicles were damaged but fortunately the two BT engineers working in the roadworks area were not in the path of the runaway Royal Mail van and so were uninjured. The Royal Mail van postman driver has over 35 years of experience of driving for Royal Mail with no previous incidents or road traffic collisions. Due to the incident, the driver was suspended from driving duties pending an investigation. Had the runaway van struck someone, the consequences could have been much more serious.

**The law:**

- **Employers and Managers** are required by the Health and Safety at Work Act (S2) to ensure the health and safety of the workforce and to put in place a safe system of work.
- **Employees/Drivers** are required by the Health and Safety at Work Act (S7) to co-operate with the employer so far as is necessary to enable the employer's health and safety duties and safe systems of work to be performed or complied with. These duties

are mandatory by law. Secondly, the police can charge a driver whose van has rolled away with the offence of driving without due care and attention (careless driving) under section 3 of the Road Traffic Act 1988.

### **Key Messages, Learning Points, Advice and for PiCs, Managers and Workforce:**

#### **Drivers should:**

- Ensure they undertake pre-use checks of their van, including checking that the handbrake engages fully and correctly.
- Fully complete the 'HIT' process when parking their van – handbrake must be fully applied, vehicle to be left in gear, park the van with the wheels turned to/from the kerb or a point of safety.
- Remember that a correctly functioning handbrake will hold the vehicle if correctly applied, but even without the handbrake functioning, the rollaway in this case would not have occurred if the vehicle had been left in gear/park. Whilst there was no kerb present, turning the wheels would have meant the vehicle came to rest safely.
- Not allow external factors to influence or distract them from following driver safety procedures fully and correctly.
- Complete the mandatory pre-use vehicle checks and report any defects using the PMT1 process.
- Speak with their line manager if they feel unable to complete their duty in a safe manner.

#### **PiCs and Managers Key Actions:**

- Ensure all drivers are shown and briefed on 'RMG SHE Safety Flash FY24 001, Royal Mail Van Roll Away Incident.' (Copy Attached).
- Brief all van drivers on SHE Huddle FY23 022 'Roll Aways.' (Copy Attached).
- Promote and display the two 'HIT' safety posters. (Copies Attached).
- Ensure all van drivers are shown the short video 'Why Hit Works' which is at this link: <https://vimeo.com/900843076>

#### **CWU ASR/WSR Actions:**

- ASRs/WSRs please ensure that this Safety Flash is communicated and brought to the attention of all appropriate managers and van drivers, CWU members in Royal Mail and Parcelforce and that the SHE Flash actions are deployed by PiCs/Unit Managers. Additionally ensure all drivers are briefed on the SHE Flash, the SHE Huddle and that they watch the video on the above link.
- ASRs to concentrate attention on this matter during Workplace Safety Inspections and ensure members are briefed.

#### **Conclusion:**

Royal Mail has been averaging 150 van roll away incidents a year for the last decade. It is imperative for drivers to fully understand the correct procedures to protect themselves, the public and other road users. A van weighing several tons running away out of control can cause death, danger and significant damage to people and property – and we don't want our members learning the hard way how important it is to park their vans safely on a hill, slope or even on the slightest of inclines or gradients. Several campaigns have been repeatedly promoted to raise awareness amongst drivers and ASRs/WSRs are asked to campaign locally on this important driver and road safety issue – REMEMBER the acronym 'HIT' to help avoid more 'rollaway' incidents:

**H – Handbrake firmly on**

**I – In gear (first gear uphill – reverse gear downhill)**

**T – Turn the wheels (away from kerb up hill – towards kerb downhill).**

**'HIT Video'**

See the HIT Video demonstrating the process at this link:  
<https://vimeo.com/900843076>

**Attachment:**

- Royal Mail Group (SHE) Safety Flash FY24 001- 'Van Roll Away Incident'.
- Royal Mail Group (SHE) Huddle FY23 022 – 'Roll Aways'
- 'HIT' Posters.
- Crashed Roll Away Royal Mail Van Images

Yours sincerely



**Dave Joyce**  
**National Health, Safety & Environment Officer**



# Safety, Health and Environment (SHE) Flash (signature not mandatory)



Flash Date:	04/01/2024	Ref:	SHE Flash FY24 001-Vehicle Roll Away	Alert Author:	Abi Stiles
Audience:	All RMG small wheels drivers				

<p><b>What happened?</b></p> <p>On 7<sup>th</sup> November 2023 a Royal Mail driver was carrying out their regular delivery duty. Their journey was disrupted as there was a blockage on their regular route. Due to this they had to do a 25-minute detour, which the driver reports had caused them to become agitated and anxious as they needed to finish their duty on time. When parking at the next delivery address, the 3 points of the HIT process were not followed, the handbrake was applied, but the wheels were not turned and the vehicle was not left in gear. The handbrake was faulty and the vehicle rolled back approximately 25 metres through roadworks, colliding with a parked third-party vehicle.</p>	<p><b>Visuals:</b></p>
<p><b>Impact/injury</b></p> <p>The driver has over 35 years' experience of driving for Royal Mail with no incidents or collisions. Due to the incident, the driver was taken off driving duties pending an investigation. Two vehicles were damaged and with BT workers nearby, the consequences could have been much more serious.</p>	

## Learning points from the incident

- Ensure that you check your vehicle thoroughly, including that the handbrake engages fully
- Fully complete the HIT process – the handbrake must be fully applied, vehicle left in gear/park and wheels turned to/from the kerb or a point of safety.
- A correctly functioning handbrake will hold the vehicle if correctly applied, but even without the handbrake, the rollaway would not have occurred if the vehicle was left in gear/park. Whilst there was no kerb present, turning the wheels would have meant the vehicle came to rest safely.
- Don't allow external factors to influence following procedures fully and correctly.
- Complete the mandatory vehicle checks and report any defects using the PMT1 process.
- Speak with your line manager if you feel unable to complete your duty in a safe manner.

## Actions to avoid similar incidents

1.	• Brief to all drivers <a href="#">SHE Huddle FY23 022 Rollaways.pdf (royalmailgroup.com)</a>
2.	• Promote and follow the HIT process <a href="#">HIT Posters.pdf (royalmailgroup.com)</a>
3.	• Use the film <a href="#">Why Hit Works</a> to raise awareness with your teams.



# Safety, Health and Environment (SHE) Huddle



Huddle Date:	10/04/2023	Ref:	SHE Huddle FY23 022 Rollaways
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Audience:	Processing	Delivery	Collections	Distribution	PFW	Specific Work Area
	All Drivers					

Overview:	We can avoid Rollaways if we apply HIT (Handbrake On, In Gear, Turn the wheels)
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## Message

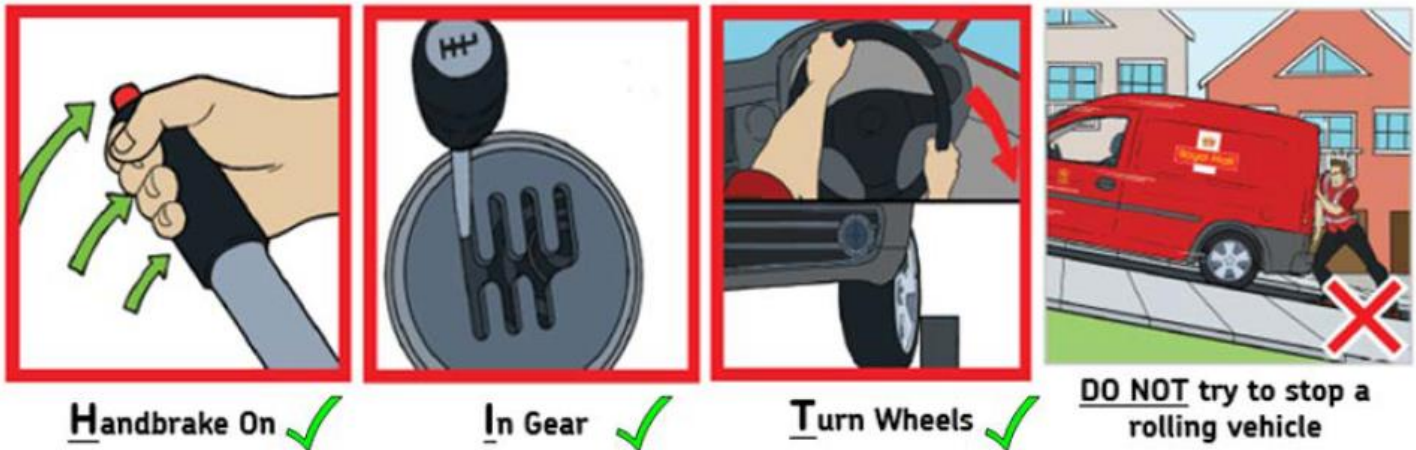
All drivers should be aware of the **mandatory requirement to follow HIT**, every time they park, regardless of whether you are parking on a hill. This is included in our training, in the Driving Safe System of Work and is regularly communicated.

**H**andbrake on – apply the handbrake **FULLY**, pulling it all the way up on the ratchet (click, click, click!)

**I**n Gear (or ‘Park’ mode) – even if the handbrake fails, your van will not move if it is in gear

**T**urn Wheels – use the kerb to ‘chock’ your wheels or if there is no kerb present, turn to the place of least danger

**DON'T** try to stop a rolling vehicle. You are unlikely to be able to and this is the most common way to get injured.



Always complete your vehicle checks and report any handbrake defect. **NEVER** drive an unroadworthy vehicle.

Familiarise yourself with the vehicle before you depart. If you are driving a new vehicle, make sure you know where the handbrake is and how it operates. Newer vehicles may have electronic park brakes or even automatic park brakes.

**Why is this so important? Do we have to talk about this every year?**

Whilst we have made progress in recent years, we still have over 100 rollaways every year. These are entirely avoidable events which cause damage to vehicles and property and which have caused serious injury and even death.

If everybody follows **HIT**, every time they park their vehicle, we need never have another rollaway again.

## Why does it keep happening?

The short answer is because not all drivers apply HIT all the time. This can be for several different reasons:

- **Some drivers under-estimate the risk** and think that the handbrake is sufficient to secure the vehicle. **“It will never happen to me ...”**. In most cases the handbrake does hold but this builds false confidence and if the driver forgets to apply the handbrake, doesn't secure it enough, or if the handbrake fails then the vehicle is free to roll away. That's why we made this a mandatory control.
- **Some drivers take short-cuts** – there is very little time to be saved by not following HIT but our telemetry data shows a link between excessive idling and rollaways, and we have seen numerous examples of vehicles rolling away whilst left with the door open and the engine running. This is an obvious security risk as well as a safety risk, and drivers rushing in this way are the most likely to forget the handbrake or not apply it fully.
- **Some just forget** – there can be a lot going on when parking, especially when making a delivery, and it's easy to lose concentration especially if you get distracted. It's obviously important to focus on driving until the vehicle is safely parked up, but by making sure you follow HIT every time will quickly develop 'muscle memory' where you almost do it without thinking. This seriously reduces the chances of an error.

Can you think of any other reasons why HIT isn't followed?

If you don't follow HIT, please start doing so. **This is a mandatory requirement.**

If you see a colleague has not applied HIT, please remind them.

## Actions

### Drivers:

- Follow HIT every time you park ... even on level ground.
- Make sure you are familiar with how your vehicle controls work, especially if it is a new vehicle.
- Complete your vehicle checks and report any defects.

### Managers:

- Use Yard Checks and First Class Safety Conversations, to identify whether HIT is being applied and to enforce compliance.
- Consider a survey of all vehicles in the yard for HIT compliance, and drop reminders in vehicles - [LINK](#)
- Ensure that any defective vehicle is repaired by following the PMT1 process.
- Ensure that any vehicle involved in a rollaway, is immediately sent to the workshop for testing.
- Ensure that new vehicles have the required familiarisations document and/or the vehicle handbook, so that drivers can familiarise themselves with controls.



## Supporting Information

See supporting information on the Royal Mail screens and Workplace.

[Click Here](#) to download a poster and other learning material that can be shared on HIT

[Click Here](#) to download a joint statement between CWU and Royal Mail Group on vehicle rollaways.

**Intended Audience: All managers and frontline employees**

Your signature below confirms you understand this safety briefing.

Name (Print)	Personnel No.	Signature	Date
Forename, Surname			

# THINK HIT



## HANDBRAKE ON, IN GEAR, TURN WHEELS





# THINK H.I.T



**HANDBRAKE ON,  
I N GEAR,  
TURN WHEELS**



# Preventing a vehicle rollaway

Follow **HIT** every time  
you park your vehicle

**H**andbrake **ON**

**I**n **Gear/Park** for electric vehicles

**T**urn Wheels



Visit **Workplace** for more information

# Royal Mail Vans – Roll Away Incidents Photographs





