

TELESCOPIC HANDLER BUYER'S GUIDE – NEW or PRE-OWNED

Introduction

The Telescopic Handler Association of Australia (TSHA) was formed in 2011 to act as a representative body for this specialised industry.

There are over 100 members, including manufacturers, rental fleet companies, sales and service suppliers, end users and trainers delivering the Gold Card industry training program for telehandler operators.

The TSHA also acts to assist operators, owners and purchasers of Telescopic Handlers with issues such as:

- Australian Standards Compliance
- Training
- Operations
- Maintenance and Annual inspection requirements
- New products
- Purchasing information

Thinking of buying a Telehandler?

A cost effective way to become an owner of a Telehandler is to buy a pre-owned or privately imported machine, as long as the machine meets the regulations and conforms to Australian Standards.

Before you commit and hand over your hard earned (or yet to be earned) dollars, please take some time to read this information.

Telescopic Handlers are a potentially high-risk product to own. Before “buying a bargain” you should be able to satisfy yourself of the compliance status of the Telehandler being considered for purchase, and the level of risk you are prepared to take on.

This information has been prepared so you can make an informed decision. There are also a list of questions you can use to help check you are getting what you think you paid for.

If you need any other information or advice, you can contact the Telehandler Association:

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WHS/OHS Legislation relating to Telehandlers

Manufacturers, rental fleet owners, owners and end users work together with the relevant statutory bodies to ensure Australia maintains a high safety standard and documented compliance and maintenance history for Telehandlers.

The WHS/OHS Acts and Regulations put the emphasis on all involved with the design, manufacture, sale, repair, maintenance, transporting and operating of Telehandlers on the “Duty of Care” requirement.

This means that a supplier of Telehandlers must ensure the unit meets legal, safety and operational standards. Also, employers/PCBU’s have to ensure all operators have been adequately trained in the safe use and operation of the Telehandler.

Key legislation currently in place includes:

- Workplace/Occupational Health and Safety Acts and Regulations (WHS/OHS)
- Plant Regulations and Codes of Practice
- AS10896.1:2019 (replaced AS1418.19.2007) - the Australian Standards covering the design, testing and operational requirements of Telescopic Handlers including:
 - Annual Inspections
 - Major Inspections, i.e. Ten Year Test (thereafter every 5 years)
 - Maintenance history/Manuals
 - Log Books
 - Operating Instructions

Telescopic handlers sold in Australia are tested to meet specific stability requirements unique to Australian conditions.

Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEM’s) who build and import machines for the Australian market generally comply with these standards and requirements.

When assessing compliance to AS10896.1:2019 (replaced AS1418.19.2007), potential buyers should be wary of being supplied ‘generic’ documentation that appears to cover the machine being considered.

With many manufactures, machines can bear the same model name worldwide, but be structurally different in other markets/countries.

This could mean that a particular model number imported by a non OEM authorised seller may not include the additional safety features of the same model imported by and complied to Australian Standards by an Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) authorised agent, seller or dealer.

OEM appointed Australian importers may undertake alterations and modifications to machines for compliance.

In assessing any machine purchase, the buyer should also check the following key safety features:

1. Is the machine fitted with an external boom angle indicator?
2. Are both lateral and longitudinal stability (bubble gauges) fitted?
3. Are Telescopic boom length indicators (i.e. A.B.C.D etc static marks on external boom extensions) clearly marked and visible from the cabin?

4. Are load charts fitted that relate correctly to:
 - 1200mm long forks?
 - @600mm load centre?
 - Maximum permitted slope when lifting (stationary)?
 - Maximum permitted slope when travelling (pick and carry)?

5. Is a longitudinal stability limiter (the minimum safety device for forks) fitted on the rear axle and is it supported by the following mandatory functions:
 - Audio alarm?
 - Visual alarm?
 - Hydraulic cut out?

6. Is a safety device fitted for jibs, hooks, winches etc. There are two options available:
 - Maximum Capacity Limiter (MCL)
 - i. Each attachment must be fitted with a maximum capacity limiter,
 - ii. The telehandler must be pre-arranged (i.e. factory set up) with a boom end plug to allow the attachment to be plugged in.
 - Rated Capacity Limiter (RCL)
 - i. A load management system (LMS) which is normally post factory fitted and includes a screen of some type in the cabin and various boom length reel cables.

7. If fitted with a man basket, does it come equipped with the following mandatory requirements:
 - Do all safety devices operate without the need for operator intervention?
 - In-basket controls?
 - Emergency manual-recovery pump at ground level?
 - 3 emergency stops – one in basket – one in cabin – one external near cabin?
 - Basket locking pin light sensors to ensure basket is correctly aligned and attached to the carriage?

Load Charts

Telescopic handlers sold in Australia should meet the minimum requirements for load charts. When assessing the load lifting capabilities of a telehandler, a buyer should confirm that specific Australian compliance load charts are present for the specific model of machine and attachment combination you are looking at.

A machine without the correct load charts **SHOULD NOT BE USED** as the lifting capabilities and parameters are not clear to an operator. Mistakes here could cause the machine to become unstable and tip over.

Warranty

Warranty coverage and support is an important factor in any capital equipment purchases.

Warranties are only of value when they are fully supported by a reputable company, and enforceable in the country in which the machine has been sold.

Potential buyers should carefully consider warranty terms, coverage and parts availability on offer by non OEM authorised suppliers if the machine has been privately imported into Australia.

A non OEM authorised importer may not be able to offer warranty on a machine that has not been sold through the OEM's official authorised/appointed Australian agent or dealer network.

Even where the seller may offer their own warranty on such a machine, the buyer should be aware that such warranties may not be backed or recognised by the manufacturer and are therefore subject to the long term viability of the seller (the seller remaining in business for the life of the warranty).

Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) Support

Units imported via non-authorised (OEM appointed) channels will generally not receive notification of factory upgrades or recalls, or important safety/product improvement campaigns.

If you did not act on these notifications, then you may face liability issues in the event of an incident where this was considered a factor. Potentially, this could also lead to insurance cover problems and not being able to meet your obligations under AS2550.19.

Under WHS/OHS Regulations, the seller of these machines is viewed as the importer and therefore assumes all the responsibilities of the manufacturer. Can the seller genuinely meet these requirements?

Resale

From a WHS/OHS perspective, plant and machine compliance is viewed as a high priority by prime contractors, and more and more sites will continue to 'tag out' machines that cannot produce their Australian Design Verification.

Selling this type of machine will then mean a very limited pool of buyers or industries where the machine could still be used.

Documentation

Failure to have accurate inspection, maintenance records and service history for the machine can result in potential breaches of WHS/OHS Regulations, and could lead to substantial penalties.

In the event that no records exist, under Australian Standard 2550.1, a privately imported machine must have a mandatory 10 year inspection as per Australian Standard AS2550.19 before it can be operated.

This could be costly and may also require some major modifications to meet Australian Standards.

Grey, Parallel or Private Imports

The terms grey or parallel import refer to an item that has been privately imported into a country legally, but without the agreement or knowledge of the Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM).

The terms 'grey' and 'parallel' imports are both used interchangeably but are generally taken to mean:

- **Grey imports** – In Australia, as far as it applies to telescopic handlers, grey imports are used machines purchased (usually wholesale) in another country, then imported in limited numbers.
- **Parallel imports** – typically, a new machine which is imported without any involvement of the manufacturer or the manufacturer's representative in the country.

The Australian capital equipment market is seeing an increased occurrence of this type of importation-

Before you purchase capital equipment from a non OEM authorised dealer or agent, consider that machines imported into Australia this way:

- are generally not subject to OEM manufacturer warranty or support.
- may not be serviceable by a local OEM authorised importer or dealer.
- may not be supported by consumer advisories such as recall notifications and warranty support.
- may not comply with Australian Standards.

Questions to ask and items to consider when purchasing a Telehandler

In relation to Australian Standards:

- Does the telehandler comply with Australian Standard AS10896.1:2019 (replaced AS1418.19.2007) (Design & Manufacture)?
- Does the machine include mandatory safety features? Refer to items on page 3.

In relation to Load Charts:

- Are the load charts written in English?
- Does the load chart for Forks show 600mm load centre capacities, or altered capacities for any other attachments that can be fitted? (500mm load centre charts refer to European Standards and European size pallets, therefore the lifting capacity for Australian pallets will be different).
For telehandlers with a maximum capacity greater than 10.0 tonnes, load charts may also be required for 900mm, 1200mm & 1500mm load centres.
- Is the Telehandler supplied with an Australian compliant Operator Manual as per the Australian Standards?
- Are load charts supplied for all the attachments fitted?

NOTE: If you cannot answer 'yes' to all the questions in this Load Chart section, it is unlikely the machine you are considering is compliant with Australian Standards.

In relation to warranty and OEM support:

- Is there a local Australian warranty provided?
- Is the warranty a manufacturer's or dealers warranty?
- If the machine has been imported, will the OEM's local representative support the warranty?
- What is covered by any non-manufacturer's warranty that is being offered?
- Does the seller offer spare parts that meet OEM specifications?

In relation to the seller of the telehandler, or for later re-sale by you:

- How long has the seller been in business?
- Are telehandlers a key, long term product for the business or is this an opportunistic sale?
- Will you receive manufacturer safety/upgrade notifications?
- How will this happen – direct from the manufacturer or via the seller?
- In the event of an incident, is there any manufacturer's liability if the manufacturer was not involved in the import or the regular maintenance of the unit?
- Can the seller demonstrate the resale value of similar machines?
- Is all the service and compliance documentation available for you to pass on to a buyer in the future?
- Will the seller provide you with a resale channel in the future?
- Is the machine in the condition advertised?
- Can you verify the condition of the machine meets the requirements AS10896.1:2019 (replaced AS1418.19.2007)? (see TSHA compliance checklist in resources section on TSHA website: www.tsha.com.au)
- Does the machine have authentic and sufficient documentation?