

Road freight transport industry

Loading and unloading vehicles

The safe loading of trucks is important in preventing injury to people and in preventing damage to property. The National Transport Commission has developed a Load Restraint Guide to assist freight transport companies.

The guide sets out some general principles to follow to ensure the safe carriage of loads:

- any load carrying vehicle should be loaded and driven in such a way as to prevent danger to any person, or damage to any property
- a vehicle should be of a design suitable for the type of load carried and must have adequate load space and load capacity
- the load should be positioned on a vehicle in such a manner that the vehicle maintains adequate stability and steering and braking performance, and that the tyres and axles are not overloaded
- vehicle restraint structures and attachments should be strong enough for the particular application and should be serviceable and functional
- load securing equipment should be strong enough for the particular application and should be serviceable and functional
- during a journey, the driver should periodically check the load and its restraints to ensure that it cannot become dislodged.

Securing and unsecuring loads

Hazards and risk factors

- Throwing load securing equipment such as ropes, chains and straps over freight (people working on the other side of the truck have a chance of being hit)
- Loss of balance whilst standing on top of unsecured loads or after a chain releases itself whilst chaining and dogging a load
- Standing on the truck tray to direct and supervise the forklift driver during loading and unloading operations
- Tightening the load by winching the leverage bar with the operator's feet
- Tightening the load with the leverage bar in only one hole of the winch
- Securing loads without using gloves
- Handling and carrying heavy tarps.

Possible solutions

- Improve communication between people loading the trucks (e.g. calling out "coming over" each time equipment is thrown)
- Ensure that workers test straps and chains periodically and place feet shoulder width apart while chaining and dogging loads to minimise the potential for falling
- Ensure leverage bars are operated with hands only, not feet, and check that the bar goes through both holes of the winch before tightening the load

- Provide heavy duty gloves for tying down loads to prevent friction burns to the hands and improve grip and control of load
- Where possible, get a forklift to lift tarps on top of the freight. The tarp can then be rolled down.

For more information on loading and unloading loads and other workplace health and safety issues visit www.dir.qld.gov.au

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