



## Unite Briefing

# Load security on curtain sided Lorries

Major research commissioned by HSE “Load security on curtain-sided lorries” <http://www.hse.gov.uk/research/rrpdf/rr662.pdf> has confirmed the importance of securing loads on curtain-sided and other lorries to the standards, and using the methods, described in the Department for Transport (DfT) Code of Practice: Safety of loads on lorries (3<sup>rd</sup> edition) <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roads/vehicles/vssafety/> ).

### Findings

The research findings include.

- Loads need to be *restrained* so that they do not move relative to the trailer bed during transport.
- Load *restraint* is not the same as load *containment*. Some loads require a combination of both.
- The curtains and weather protection structures of curtain-sided vehicles are generally not suitable for load securing. Nor can friction alone be relied on as a restraint method.
- Lashing the load to the trailer bed using tensioned lashings such as overstraps as shown in the DfT Code and other authoritative guidance (see below) is the least risk method of load restraint. However, it is not suitable for every type of load. There is no “one size fits all” solution and employers should use risk assessment to determine the load securing arrangements they need to provide in each case.
- Using overstraps can introduce risks associated with work at height when fitting the lashings. These risks must be avoided or managed properly e.g. by providing and using suitable access platforms which are stable and have suitable edge protection.
- Effective communication between people involved in loading, transporting and unloading vehicles will help to avoid and ameliorate load security problems.
- The key to good load security is proper risk assessment and load planning by a competent person.

The research also found that loads are often not secured in accordance with the DfT Code pointing to a need for consignors, hauliers, employers who receive goods, drivers and employees involved in loading and securing loads to take action (see below).

### **What needs to be done?**

HSE believes that a significant number of lorries are carrying loads that are either unrestrained or inadequately restrained, including heavy loads secured only by side straps suspended from rails fitted to the trailer roof. This leads to risks of:

- Loads being shed during transport endangering other road users and causing traffic disruption.
- Vehicles overturning when they become unstable following a load shifting.
- Loads shifting in transit and falling off injuring people when the curtains or doors are opened at the point of delivery.
- People falling from trailers, being struck by loads or suffering manual handling injuries when they climb onto trailers to deal with a load that has shifted in transit.

Employers responsible for loading and transporting loads on road vehicles need to ensure that the loading is properly planned by competent people who understand the principles set out in the DfT Code and that loads are restrained and secured properly to the standards described in the Code and in other authoritative guidance.

### **What is HSE doing?**

HSE is:

- Working with the Freight Transport Association (FTA), Road Haulage Association (RHA) and other employers' associations in the manufacturing and other industries to encourage employers to ensure that loads are secured in accordance with the DfT Code. Some employers associations are providing their own industry codes of practice and guidance to assist their members.
- Helping a number of Police forces by providing expert technical advice to traffic officers to help them enforce the requirements of the Road Traffic Act as it relates to load security.

- Working with the Vehicles Operators Services Agency (VOSA) to plan some joint roadside enforcement checks on load security by VOSA traffic examiners and HSE Inspectors.
- Working in partnership with Local Authorities (LAs) to plan inspections aimed at checking load-securing arrangements at points of despatch and delivery.
- Assisting the Road Transport Industry Training Board by preparing training DVDs to be used in training forklift truck drivers and LGV drivers in the correct methods of loading vehicles and securing loads.

In addition, HSL is:

- Assisting Transport for London to prepare summary sheets for their website setting out the responsibilities of employers, managers, supervisors, loaders, hauliers and drivers in relation to load security.
- Carrying out research into load restraint on rigid-sided lorries.
- Performing a scoping study in relation to restraint of roll cages on lorries.
- Planning research into the transport of roll cages, stability of double deck trailers, stability of skip lorries as well as research into the strength of trailer structures.

### **Codes of Practice and sources of guidance**

- Department for Transport (DfT) Code of Practice: Safety of loads on lorries (3<sup>rd</sup> edition) <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roads/vehicles/vssafety/>
- The European Best Practice Guidelines on Cargo Securing for Road Transport published by the European Commission [http://ec.europa.eu/transport/roadsafety/vehicles/best\\_practice\\_guidelines\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/transport/roadsafety/vehicles/best_practice_guidelines_en.htm). (Please heed the website's warning about the file size).
- The Health and Safety Laboratory runs a one-day training course on load security for transport managers, health and safety advisors and other people who need to understand the principles of load restraint. See: <http://www.hsl.gov.uk/training/brochure.pdf>

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