



## SAFE LOADING

### Manager's Fact Sheet

#### Why is this important?

- The safe loading of a vehicle includes load security, load distribution, and avoiding any overloading, gross or axle overloading.
- How a vehicle is loaded can significantly affect its handling on the road and the likelihood of the load moving or becoming unstable during the journey.
- Overloaded vehicles and trailers are dangerous.
- Both drivers and managers have an obligation to keep within the law and to keep other road users safe.
- Loss of a load, or even part load, is a serious offence, and has many consequences, including injury and damage, environmental impact, delays, and inconvenience for other road users.
- Overloading and lost load incidents can result in brand image damage and impact company reputation.
- Where incidents have been caused by overloading, or loss of a load which results in a serious injury or fatality, the driver could face an offence of Causing death by dangerous driving.
- Overloading offences can impact a company's operator's licence if they have one. The Traffic Commissioner may take regulatory action for failure to comply with the undertaking of an operator's licence. Disciplinary action could include suspension, curtailment, or revocation of the licence.
- The Traffic Commissioner also has the power to act against a driver's vocational licence, such as a suspension. Not only will this have an adverse impact on the driver, but it might also create additional problems for the company.
- Drivers, Managers, and Company Directors can be prosecuted for offences involving lost loads and overloading.



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#### What are the legal requirements?

- All vehicles and trailers are marked with their Gross Vehicle Weight or Maximum Authorised Mass which must not be exceeded.
- Vehicles and trailers also have specific axle weight limits which must not be exceeded, this information is usually found on the vehicle/trailer data plate.
- If a DVSA examiner finds an insecure load they will use the Categorisation of Defects to decide what action to take, choosing the defect that best describes why the load is insecure.
- Where a vehicle is deemed to be in a dangerous condition due to the condition or suitable purpose, or weight, distribution, packing and adjustment of the load, penalty points may be issued. This offence carries 3 penalty points and a licence endorsement for the driver. The court may also give the driver an unlimited fine.
- Typical overloading penalties for a driver vary depending on the percentage of overloading above the vehicle's maximum permissible weight. Over 30% will result in prosecution within the courts and fines up to £1,500.
- Drivers are required to know the overall height of their vehicle including any load, to prevent any "bridge bashing" events. A driver can be fined (up to £500) and receive penalty points, following any load related incident. The company may also be prosecuted.
- Drivers and managers should be aware of the overhang limits for loads, and any markings needed.

#### What is best practice?

- Training should be provided to drivers and loading staff regarding load distribution and security.
- Employees should know where to find the payload of their vehicle.
- Staff should be aware of permissible pay loads for the fleet to prevent overloading when planning work schedules and delivery plans.
- Drivers should have access to weighbridge facilities, whether at their base location or at a nearby public facility.
- Adequate load security equipment should be made available, and drivers should know how to reorder/replace equipment.
- Load straps are load rated, and managers should ensure the straps are of the correct specification for the load being carried and maintained in a serviceable condition.



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#### What is best practice? (continued)

- Vehicles should be fitted with suitable bulkhead/segregation to protect the driver and crew from the load on/in the vehicle.
- When procuring new fleet, Managers should engage with the drivers and crew to understand the requirements to ensure all needs are met.
- The load which includes goods, tools, and equipment, must be adequately secured using suitable load restraint equipment, preventing movement in any direction, including under braking and acceleration.
- Drivers should not carry any items classed as load in the vehicle cab area.
- Drivers of vehicles equipped with roof racks or external racking on the sides should always remember these areas are susceptible to any load/equipment being caught by winds and effects of speed. Additional load security will be required.

#### Where can I find further information?

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/load-securing-vehicle-operator-guidance/](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/load-securing-vehicle-operator-guidance/)

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/overhanging-loads-on-vehicles/overhanging-loads](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/overhanging-loads-on-vehicles/overhanging-loads)

[www.hse.gov.uk/logistics/load-security](http://www.hse.gov.uk/logistics/load-security)

[Categorisation of vehicle defects](#)

[www.drivingforbetterbusiness.com/resources/search-results/?search=load+security](http://www.drivingforbetterbusiness.com/resources/search-results/?search=load+security)