

Documents and information you can refer to in the toolbox talk – look at these before you begin!

- Health and Safety Executive Load Safety: www.hse.gov.uk/workplacetransport/loadsafty/ www.hse.gov.uk/movinggoods/index.htm
- DfT load securing guide for vehicle operators: www.gov.uk/government/news/dvsa-publishes-new-load-securing-guide-for-vehicle-operators
- Load Safe, Road Safe - A Professional Driver's Guide to Safe Loading and Transport: www.hsl.gov.uk/hsl-shop/transport-publications/load-safe-road-safe---a-professional-driver's-guide-to-safe-loading-and-transport.aspx
- FORS parking and loading legally: www.fors-online.org.uk/cms/training/online-driver-training/pcns/
- FORS PCN Tracker to record, monitor and reduce PCN's: www.fors-online.org.uk/cms/what-is-fors/why-should-i-join/efficiency/fines-and-charges/fors-pcn-tracker/

1. Aim of toolbox talk

The aim of this toolbox talk is to communicate this company's safe loading/unloading policy to all drivers (including sub-contracted and agency), and loading staff of ensuring that vehicles are safely loaded, loads in normal and emergency situations do not cause a hazard and that appropriate load restraints are used.

2. How this toolbox talk will help you

This toolbox talk covers how to load a vehicle safely, who's responsibility this is and when load safety checks should be carried out. It also highlights what a risk assessment is what it should include.

Our company goal is to minimise the risk of incidents or injury to our own staff and the public.

The talk will end with some questions, so listen up!

3. Reason why

- During 2013/14, DVSA issued over 2,000 prohibitions to vehicles which presented a road safety risk because of how their load was secured
- In the same period, Highways England reported over 22,000 road impact incidents caused by objects falling from vehicles. This is dangerous to all road users
- You are bound by law to pay attention to the weight, size and security of any load carried on your vehicle. The law requires a load to be arranged and secured so that there is no likelihood of danger, injury or nuisance to any person

4. Who needs to make sure vehicles are loaded safely?

- Both you (including sub-contracted and agency) and all loading staff are required to know how to load a vehicle safely
- You and anyone responsible for loading a vehicle must make sure that the right type of vehicle is used for the load and that the load is distributed evenly and secured correctly
- If you're responsible for loading vehicles, you should make sure that they're loaded so the load remains in a safe condition during loading, transit and unloading
- If you are the driver but did not witness the vehicle being loaded / unloaded then you should check that the load is in a safe condition before you commence / continue your journey

5. Risk assessments and their role

A risk assessment is a systematic process of evaluating the potential risks that may be involved in a projected activity or undertaking.

A risk assessment shall be able to answer yes (where applicable) to the following questions:

- Are loading/unloading operations carried out in an area away from passing traffic, pedestrians and others not involved in the loading/unloading operation?
- Are the load(s), the delivery vehicle(s) and the handling vehicle(s) compatible with each other?
- Are loading/unloading activities carried out on ground that is flat, firm and free from potholes?
- Are parking brakes always used on trailers and tractive units to prevent unwanted movement, e.g. when coupling vehicles?
- Are the vehicles braked as appropriate, to prevent unsafe movements during loading and unloading operations?
- Are systems in place to prevent trucks driving away while they are still being (un)loaded?
- Are lorry drivers and others kept in a safe place away from the vehicle while (un)loading is carried out (if necessary)?
- Is there a safe area marked where drivers can observe loading (if necessary)?
- Has the need for people to go on to the load area of the vehicle been eliminated where possible and if not is safe access provided and used?
- Is appropriate lifting equipment available for (un)loading vehicles?
- Is loading/unloading carried out so that, as far as possible, the load is spread evenly to avoid the vehicle or trailer becoming unstable?
- Are checks made to ensure the load is adequately secured in line with the Department for Transport Code of Practice and not loaded beyond their capacity before the vehicle leaves the site?

FORS Toolbox Talk – V6 Safe loading

6. When should the load safety checks be carried out?

You shall check the load before you commence your journey and after any part of it is unloaded during transit.

7. Why does this talk need to be given? (Points to emphasise)

- During an average year there are around 2,000 prohibitions issued for unsafe loads. The maximum fine is £5,000. So, as well as the obvious safety implications, it pays to make sure you've got it right
- An unsafe loading/unloading offence carries 3 penalty points and a licence endorsement for you. The court may also give you an unlimited fine
- You should be fully trained on the correct methods of loading and unloading a vehicle safely including correct use of restraints and aids (as stated in the Highway Code Rule 98 – Vehicle towing and loading)
- The Driver & Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) and the police have powers to issue fines (graduated fixed penalty scheme) to any driver in charge of a vehicle that is overloaded or if the load is insecure

8. How you can load/unload your vehicle safely

- Use adequate load restraints
- Use dedicated loading bays
- Load/unload from roads marked with single and double yellow lines unless there are loading restrictions
- Load/unload on Red Routes and other specialist thoroughfares (specially marked bays and signs indicate when and where loading/unloading is permitted. This will be indicated through the local signage network)
- Make sure you're clear of other traffic, pedestrians and people not involved in loading or unloading
- Spread the load as evenly as possible, during both loading and unloading. Uneven loads can make the vehicle or trailer unstable
- Loads should be secured, or arranged so that they do not slide around. Racking may help stability
- Make sure safety equipment is considered. Mechanical equipment and heavy moving loads are dangerous
- Ensure the vehicle or trailer has its brakes applied and all stabilisers are used. The vehicle should be as stable as possible
- Never overload the vehicle. Overloaded vehicles can become unstable, difficult to steer or be less able to brake
- Always check the floor or deck of the loading area before loading to make sure it is safe. Look out for debris, broken boarding, etc
- Loading should allow for safe unloading
- Loads must be suitably packaged. When pallets are used, you

need to check that:

- They are in good condition
- Loads are properly secured to them
- Loads are safe on the vehicle. They may need to be securely attached to make sure they cannot fall off
- Use weighbridges to ensure your vehicle is not overloaded. (If this is being delivered in a company the locations of nearest weighbridges should be identified and given)

9. Incentive

If you load your vehicles safely it can:

- Prevent goods from falling onto roads while on the journey
- Prevent goods getting damaged before they reach their destinations thus saving time and money
- Reduce likelihood of accidents occurring
- Reduce the likelihood of fines

10. Questions to ask to ensure that the talk has been understood

1. What is our company goal with regards to safe loading?
2. Who needs to make sure vehicles are loaded safely?
3. When should the load safety checks be carried out?
4. Give examples of things you can do to make sure your vehicle is loaded/unloaded safely?
5. What should you do if the load shifts during the journey?

11. Final summary

To sum up, we need to make sure vehicles are loaded safely, do not cause a hazard and that appropriate load restraints are used. This is done to prevent goods from falling onto roads while on the journey, prevent goods getting damaged in transit and reduce the likelihood of accidents and fines.

The law requires a load to be arranged and secured so that there is no likelihood of danger, injury or nuisance to any person. Penalties for overloading can result in prosecution. It is your responsibility as a driver to ensure your vehicle is loaded safely whether you loaded it or not.

Risk assessments are required by law and are an essential part of identifying sensible measures to control the risks in your workplace. They help you decide whether you have covered all you need to.

Thank you for your time – and now I would like your feedback.