Procedure for Safe Loading and Unloading of Vehicles

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1 Foreword

1.1 The purpose of this guide is to provide consistent control for the safe loading and unloading of commercial vehicles across tRIIO and ensure that we maintain our duty of care in relation to business driving activities. This will be achieved through Operating Units demonstrating documented compliance with the requirements of this guide.

2 Who This Guide Applies To:

2.1 This policy applies to all commercial vehicle drivers, occasional drivers, driver supervisors and the person nominated as the “Responsible person” for transport related activities within the project or operating unit.

3.0 Introduction

3.1 Unrestrained loads can increase the risk of vehicle rollover and load spillage, and risk the life of the driver and other road users

3.2 Load Falls

3.2.1 An unsecured load shifts inside the vehicle and is more difficult to unload. The load may have to be unloaded manually or can fall on to people.

3.2.2 Even if the load was packed carefully, if it is not secured and shifts in transit, it presents a risk on the road and when it arrives at its destination. Loading and unloading can be extremely time-pressured – with no time to stop and carefully consider the risks of unloading an unstable load.
3.3 **People fall**

3.3.1 Sending someone up onto the trailer bed puts them at risk of falling off.

3.3.2 Many falls from vehicles occur during loading and unloading.

3.3.3 People don’t need to fall far to seriously injure themselves

3.3.4 Spilled loads can lead to road closures and cause significant delay and congestion.

3.4 **Vehicle Roll**

3.4.1 Even heavy loads shift. Vehicles can roll over, in serious cases of load shift the vehicle can become unstable and overturn.

3.4.2 HGVs are vulnerable to rollover because they have a higher centre of gravity than a car.

3.4.3 Loads often shift under braking or turning, because the forces exerted can be surprisingly high even at low speed.

3.4.4 Curtains and box sided vehicles may stop the load falling out during transport but without the proper restraint the load can move inside the trailer.

3.5 **Product damage**

3.5.1 All or part of the load may be damaged if it falls from the trailer. Product damage can be a significant cost to the business.

3.6 **Loads shift forward in the cab**

3.6.1 If there is a gap between the load and the headboard, the load can shift forward under braking, risking the life of the driver and other road users.
3.6.2 Without the use of dunnage or intermediate bulkheads the load is not contained.

3.6.3 Loads which are higher than the headboard are a risk to the driver as they can also shift forward under braking.

4. **How to secure loads safely**

4.1 Securing loads safely is good for business - product is delivered intact and on time.

4.2 To secure a load safely you need to make sure it is:

4.2.1 Restrained – tied firmly down to the load bed; and

4.2.2 Contained – it can’t move around (shift) inside the vehicle.

4.3 The only way to do this is with strong chains or webbing straps (lashings) attached directly to the vehicle.

4.4 If the load shifts in transit, contact the depot and agree a safe way to sort it out.

4.5 **Headboards**

4.5.1 If there is a gap between the load and the headboard, the load can shift forward under braking, risking the life of the driver, other road users and people involved in unloading.

4.5.2 The headboard should be sufficiently robust to resist movement of the load.

4.5.3 Wherever possible, trailers should be filled tight to the front headboard or bulkhead. Never the less it is important to consider the distribution of weight of the load on the vehicles axles.

4.5.4 If it is not possible to fill the load to the front bulkhead, intermediate bulkheads or other methods of restraint should be used, again considering the distribution of weight on the vehicles axles.
4.6  **Webbing straps and attachment points**

4.6.1 Lashings can be webbing straps or chain – but not both in the same lashing.

4.6.2 Check webbing straps regularly for damage – even a small cut or tear can reduce the strength of the strap significantly.

4.6.3 Report damaged or broken straps.

4.6.4 Don’t tie knots in straps.

4.6.5 Use edge protectors or sleeves to protect straps that pass over a sharp or rough edge such as steel or concrete.

4.6.6 Consignors need to ensure that loads are secured to meet at least the minimum requirements of the DfT Code of Practice: the combined strength of the load restraint system must be sufficient to withstand a force not less than the total weight of the load forward and half the weight of the load backwards and sideways. This can be achieved through a combination of bulking arrangements (headboards, bulkheads etc.) and lashings. Lashings should be strong enough to secure the load carried and will usually consist of rated webbing straps or chains. The DfT CoP states that certain types of rope may be used, but if ropes are used consignors should ensure the load securing system meets the minimum requirements for safe load transport. For further information refer to Sections 5 and 6 of the DfT CoP.

4.6.7 Webbing straps suspended from the roof of a curtain-sided vehicle are not suitable for load restraint. There are load restraint systems that, when not in use, are held into the roof of the trailer by cords or bungees; however these systems do not rely on the strength of the trailer superstructure for their load securing capability

5.  **Planning your load**

5.1 Planning how you secure the load is an important step to keeping workers safe.

5.2 Loading plans can help to flag up issues before they become problems.
5.3. Things to be considered will vary but could include:

5.3.1. Whether the driver will witness loading.

5.3.2. Who will apply the load restraints and what they should be.

5.3.3. How the load will be placed on the trailer bed.

5.3.4. Who will unload the vehicle and what equipment will be required.

5.3.5. Who the driver should report to on arrival.

5.3.6. What the driver should do if the load shifts during the journey.

5.3.7. Time spent thinking about safe loading can help prevent all the problems of an unsafe load so make sure you:

5.3.8. Have the correct equipment on your premises to load vehicles safely.

5.3.9. Prepare a loading plan for each journey, to include information about:

5.3.9.1. How the load is to be secured; and

5.3.9.2. The location and layout of each delivery site, including unloading equipment and facilities.

5.4 If you are a driver, you should keep a copy of the loading plan with you at all stages of the delivery. If there is anything you don’t understand in the loading plan, ask someone before you drive away.

6. To prevent falls from the cab or load bed

6.1. Before you set off, check that steps or handholds are in good condition.

6.2. Wear the correct PPE

6.3. Find out more about falls from vehicles
7. **To prevent contact with a pedestrian**

7.1. Ask about the layout of the sites you are delivering to. Segregation is an essential element in the loading/unloading process. It is important to have only the people involved in the process present in area where the activity is taking place.

7.2. Observe traffic lights, signs, road markings, speed limits and one-way systems – if you don’t understand a sign or if you think it is hard to see, tell someone. Remember that you become a pedestrian when you step out of your vehicle.

7.3. Don’t let anyone guide your vehicle around the site unless you know they are a trained banksman or signaller.

7.4. [Find out more about workplace transport](#)

8. **To prevent slips and trips**

8.1. Wear well-fitting, slip-resistant safety footwear when working on vehicles.

8.2. Keep the soles of your footwear clean.

8.3. Clean up spills and dirt, such as diesel or mud on the catwalk or load area

8.4. Keep the load area tidy – pick up loose ropes and packaging.

8.5. Follow all Risk Assessments relating to slips, trips and fall

8.6. [Find out more about slips and trips](#)

9. **To prevent injury caused by poor manual handling**

9.1. Follow all risk assessments relating to Manual Handling, including any vehicle /load specific Risk Assessments and remember that manual handling covers lifting, pushing and pulling.
9.2. Follow your employer’s guidance on lifting and moving loads.

9.3. Use the correct equipment to load and unload your vehicles safely.

9.4. Find out more about handling goods safely

10. Unloading Activities

10.1. The unloading area should be:

10.1.1. Clear of other traffic, pedestrians and people not involved in loading or unloading.

10.1.2. Clear of overhead electric cables so there is no chance touching them, or of electricity jumping to 'earth' through machinery, loads or people.

10.1.3. Level. To maintain stability, trailers should be parked on firm level ground,

10.2. Loads should be spread as evenly as possible, during both loading and unloading. Uneven loads can make the vehicle or trailer unstable.

10.3. Ensure the vehicle or trailer has its brakes applied and all stabilisers are used. The vehicle should be as stable as possible

10.4. Loading should allow for safe unloading.

10.5. All parties involved in deliveries should, so far as reasonably practicable, exchange and agree information to ensure goods can be delivered and collected safely. In particular consider:-

10.5.1. Any restrictions on the type or size of vehicle the site can safely handle including any delivery vehicle requirements e.g. CLOCS/FORS.

10.5.2. Any restrictions on when goods should be delivered or collected.

10.5.3. Best approach routes to the site, especially if nearby one-way systems, low bridges, narrow roads, awkward access etc. could cause problems for visiting vehicles

10.5.4. A site plan or sketch showing parking, location of reception,
route to take through the site, location of (un)loading area etc.

10.5.5. Where visiting vehicles should park on arrival, where and whom to report to.

10.5.6. Any procedures the visiting driver needs to follow e.g. wearing PPE, use of mobile phones, prohibitions on reversing or conditions for reversing such as the use of a banksman.

10.5.7. Who will be in overall charge of the (un)loading of visiting vehicles

10.5.8. What visiting drivers or site staff should do if they are not satisfied with safety arrangements for the delivery or collection (who to report concerns to etc.)

10.5.9. Contact details for the other parties in case of problems

10.5.10. What to do if a load appears to have shifted dangerously in transit

10.5.11. The point at which the visiting driver will "give permission" for his vehicle to be (un)loaded, and how this hand-over will be clearly understood by all.

10.5.12. The method of (un)loading - what equipment is available, what is the capacity of the lifting equipment

10.5.13. Where the driver should be during the (un)loading of his vehicle. It is often unrealistic and sometimes unsafe to expect drivers to stay in their cab throughout (un)loading of their vehicle. A designated safe area for visiting drivers with easy, safe access to toilet and refreshment facilities reduces risks considerably. A safe area may be needed for drivers to observe loading.

10.5.14. The delivery vehicle driver should not use a Fork lift truck (FLT) at a delivery site unless this has been agreed in advance and steps taken to ensure that the FLT is well maintained and the site suitable. The driver must also be trained to drive FLTs in accordance with the Approved Code of Practice

10.5.15. If access onto the vehicle is likely, how will falls be prevented or fall risks reduced. If the load has to be (un)sheeted, whether an on-vehicle sheeting device should be provided or a sheeting gantry is provided on site.

10.5.16. To reduce the need for people to go up onto vehicles or the load itself, all parties should consider removing the need for
sheeting whole loads solely for weather protection during transit (e.g. by using curtain sided vehicles rather than flatbeds, or by shrink-wrapping individual pallets or packs of goods). Shrink-wrapping may also result in cost and time savings e.g. reduced turnaround times and reduced product wastage through weather damage at the recipients' premises.

10.5.17. All parties should set up simple, well understood systems for reporting any vehicle accidents, incidents, near-misses and other safety concerns during deliveries and collections, and exchanging information with the other parties. All should be encouraged to report incidents and concerns and appropriate action taken.

10.5.18. Where deliveries or collections will take place regularly and special risks are likely, or at sites where visiting vehicles have had problems before it may be necessary for a manager to visit the site before sending further vehicles, to assess in more detail the risks involved and agree precaution.

10.5.19. Are drivers able to understand English or does the plan need to be available in translation, use pictograms where possible.

11. Further Guidance

For further information on Safe Loading and Unloading, please follow links at:


http://www.hse.gov.uk/workplacetransport/factsheets/loading.htm

