

Load Restraint “Light Vehicles”

As a driver, you have a legal responsibility to your passengers, other road users and yourself to ensure that all loads carried by your vehicle are secure.

Safe Loads Guide (Light Vehicles) outlines correct load restraint as follows:

- The choice of vehicle must be appropriate for the load that will be carried
- A load on a vehicle must not be placed in such a way that it makes the vehicle unstable or unsafe.
- A load on a vehicle must be secured so that it is unlikely to fall or become dislodged from the vehicle.
- An appropriate method must be used to restrain the load on a vehicle.

This guide explains the correct restraint methods for the most common types of loads carried.

Why is load safety important?

Loose or incorrectly restrained loads cause many serious incidents or accidents.

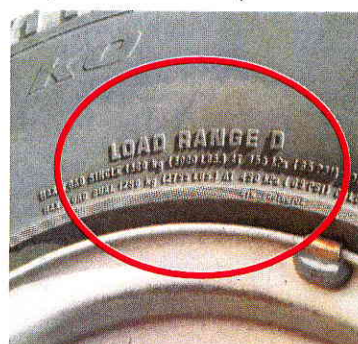
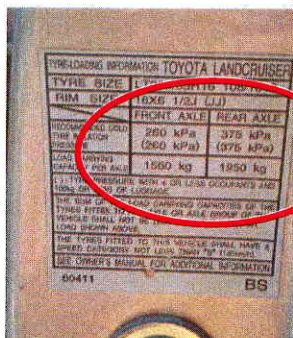
These can occur when:

- Heavy objects fall from vehicles onto other vehicles or pedestrians;
- Drivers swerve to avoid objects which have fallen from other vehicles;
- Spillage from lost loads causes other vehicles to skid and lose control; or
- Vehicles overturn while cornering due to shifting loads.

Lost loads and spillage from these loads often cause major traffic delays. These affect the community as they are expensive to clean up, can cause increased travelling times and property damage.

Five Steps to Load Safety

1. **Choose a suitable vehicle** – The vehicle should be of a suitable design for the load it is carrying. It must have enough space and be able to take the weight of the load without exceeding manufacturer's specifications (see example below).



This note has been produced to provide assistance and guidance only, and compliance with the law and relevant standards is your responsibility. It remains your responsibility to ensure load restraint methods are appropriate for the individual circumstances.

Examples of manufacturer's specifications (most modern vehicles have a plate on the door sill and all tyres will have a load capacity).

2. **Position the load correctly** – The load should be placed in or on the vehicle, in such a way that it does not affect the vehicle's stability, steering and braking performance.
3. **Use suitable restraint equipment** - The load securing equipment and the vehicles restraint structures and attachments, such as a rack should be strong enough to carry the load and be in good condition.
4. **Provide adequate load restraint** - Loads must be restrained to prevent dangerous movement under all expected conditions of operation, e.g. Sudden braking.
5. **Drive carefully** – When carrying heavy, long or bulky loads, be prepared for changes in the vehicles stability, steering and braking capacity. For example, allow for a greater stopping distance. Remember to check the load and restraints during the journey.

Ways of Restraining Loads

Loads can be restrained directly, indirectly or by a combination of both methods.

Indirect Restraint

A certain amount of indirect restraint in the form of friction (grip) prevents a load from moving. However, the amount of friction depends on the surfaces in contact and is usually not sufficient to provide all the restraint required.

To increase the friction tie-down equipment is required to completely secure the load.

Direct Restraint

Direct restraint methods contain, block or physically attach the load to the vehicle.

Any items carried loose on the vehicles floor or even on seats can become projectiles in a crash. They should be properly stowed in the rear of a van, wagon or within the tray sides of a tray or utility body.

As seats are not intended to support the force of a load in a crash, cargo barriers have been developed for loads carried in passenger vehicles to prevent those loads striking you or your passengers.

Remember

- It is unlawful to drive a vehicle with an unsecured load, heavy fines and legal action may result.
- Your safety and that of the general public depends on proper security of your load. Always do the right thing, don't take shortcuts