



## Background

The Vehicle Operator and Services Agency (VOSA) is introducing training for enforcement examiners with a focused approach on load securing, enabling it to identify high-risk loads as part of a gradual roll out from April 2012. The aim is to promote clarity and consistency for operators in enforcement of load securing and the training is expected to be completed by summer 2013. This initiative has been in development for some time following a campaign in early 2010 by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and VOSA when enforcement examiners inspected the loads of vehicles to ensure that they were being transported securely. Similar spot checks took place in early 2009. Both campaigns highlighted concerns identifying that significant numbers of vehicles were found to have loads which were not sufficiently restrained.

## Supplementary guidance

During the previous two years an industry-led working group which includes representation from FTA has been involved in discussions with VOSA and the Health and Safety Laboratory (HSL) to review current load securing practice, making recommendations for VOSA enforcement staff to be adequately trained in assessing load securing and has drafted guidance for operators, consignors and drivers which will be representative of, and coincide with, the training and guidelines given to VOSA examiners. The guidance has been funded and published by HSL, supported and endorsed by the industry working group representatives and was launched at the CV Show in April 2012 and is available to purchase from HSL. Operators should note that the Department for Transport's publicly available guide, *The Safety of Loads on Vehicles*, is still relevant and available to download from [www.dft.gov.uk](http://www.dft.gov.uk)

## Roadside enforcement

VOSA has produced enforcement guidance and a draft matrix to assist examiners in assessing load securing methods. The guidance distinguishes between various types of load and has three categories of severity for assessing load securing.

There are five key elements to the guidance and matrix.

- 1 Vehicle body types
- 2 Load types
- 3 Load security defect categories
- 4 Assessment flow chart
- 5 Enforcement policy table

### 1 Vehicle body types

The following body types should be assessed for load security	The following body types do not need to be assessed unless there is reason for concern
Flatbeds	Box-siders
Curtain-siders	Refrigeration trailers
Lowloaders	Containers with twist locks
Skip lorries	Tilts
Car transporters	Live animal transporters
Bulk tippers	

### 2 Load types

Type A	Type B	Type C
Metal pipes, sheet or bar	Timber	Clothing
Reinforced concrete	FIBCs/bulk powder	Wood chip
Bricks, stone or concrete	Rolls cages	Waste paper
Vehicles (including scrap)	Bagged aggregate	Coal bags
Plant machinery	Empty skips stacked 3 high	Bulk material (in tipper)
Reels (steel, wire or paper)	Heavy palletised goods (pallet weight over 400kg)	Packaging material
Kegs and barrels		Single loaded skips
Stacked loaded skips		Empty skips <3 high
Empty skips staked >3 high		Light palletised goods (pallet weight 400kg or less)
Metal castings		
Glass		
Containers/work cabins		

### 3 Load security defect categories

Category 1	Category 2	Category 3
No load securing	>30cm gap between load and vehicle headboard*	Lashings on ropehooks <sup>§</sup>
> 1m gap between front of load and vehicle headboard*	Unsheeted load in bulk tipper or skip	Minor damage to headboard not affecting structural integrity
Unstable load affecting vehicle stability or likely to topple from vehicle	Inadequate load securing leading to likely risk of harm	Unsuitable load securing
Severe structural damage to headboard or gaps in headboard that allow load penetration	Unsuitable stacking of load items likely to lead to risk of harm	Poor condition of securing equipment
Item loaded over height of headboard <sup>†</sup>	Height of load likely to affect vehicle stability	Unsuitable vehicle for load

\* Unless other means of preventing forward movement have been used.

† This refers to individual items, such as bundles of pipes. A single indivisible item may be loaded over the height of the headboard as long as the headboard supports it to the height of the centre of gravity.

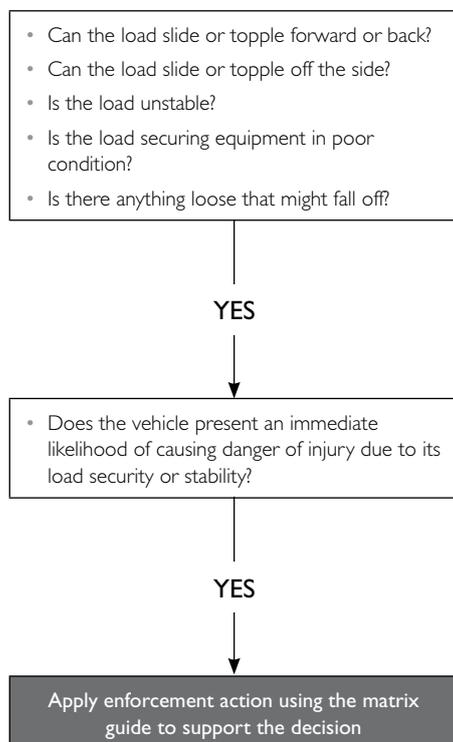
§ This is always poor practice but there may be no other suitable attachment points.

NB: For curtainsided vehicles carrying light palletised and extremely light loads, the curtains could feasibly be considered to constitute a sufficient restraint mechanism in their own right.

# Enforcement of load security

## 4 Assessment flow chart

VOSA examiners will use the flow chart below to carry out an initial assessment of the adequacy of loads secured on vehicles.



## 5 Enforcement policy matrix

Any problems concerning the securing of the load highlighted from the flow chart procedure above will then be assessed against the matrix below and may result in prohibition action (P) for higher risk circumstances or an advisory notice (A) for minor problems.

Load type (see 2 above)	Load security defect category (see 3 above)		
	1	2	3
A	P	P	A
B	P	P/A	A
C	P	A	A

## The importance of load security

HSE research has shown that unsafe loads on vehicles cost UK businesses millions of pounds in damaged goods each year. Vehicles carrying unrestrained loads are also a safety risk to their drivers and other staff involved in loading and unloading them. On the road they also pose a danger to other road users and the public at large. An

unrestrained load can significantly increase the risk of vehicle rolling over or spilling its load onto the highway.

To protect drivers and other road users, the (Road Vehicles) Construction & Use Regulations 1986 indicate that loads must be secured, if necessary by physical restraint other than their own weight, so they don't present a danger or nuisance. VOSA can enforce a range of regulatory powers, including prohibiting the continued use of the vehicle, if it feels there is serious risk to other road users, workers or to the driver and has stated that operators who are currently complying with the Construction & Use Regulations should see no difference in VOSA's enforcement policy with regard to load securing. Minor problems in the way vehicles have been loaded and secured will be dealt with through advice rather than enforcement action wherever possible.

## For more information

For further information or to discuss individual circumstances, FTA members should contact the Member Advice Centre on 0870 60 50 000.