

III. Truck Carrier Operations

All truck carrier personnel must adhere to the procedures in **Section I, General Vehicle Handling Requirements**. Additionally, they must follow the specific truck carrier requirements described in this section.

A. Equipment

All equipment must be clean, be in good working condition, and meet all applicable Federal and State regulations.

All tractor-trailer combinations must be properly equipped to allow various Toyota and Lexus vehicles to be carried in a secure manner. Tractor-trailers may use either strap or chain tie-downs to secure vehicles, but straps and chains must not be mixed on the same load.

The REQUIRED TLS vehicle securement method is the use of strap tie-downs. Carriers with mixed strap and chain fleets must prioritize the use of strap trucks before resorting to chain trucks.

Trailers must allow opening of the driver's door for vehicle entry/exit without contacting metal surfaces.

Trailers must be equipped with adequate drip protection between vehicles loaded in upper and lower positions.

B. Vehicle Inspection

Inspect each vehicle in the assigned load before moving it.

- Verify VIN against VIN plate on driver's side of dashboard and Monroney label.
- Verify that there is no damage to the vehicle.
- Verify presence of all accessories and equipment listed on Monroney label.
- Remove any loose Rapgard protective plastic coating to prevent damage in transit. Place removed plastic into local recycling program or leave in trunk for dealer to place into recycling.

If there is damage or missing items, the vehicle should not be moved and should be dropped from the assigned load. **Once a carrier moves a vehicle, they assume liability for any damage or missing items.**

C. Vehicle Loading

1. Vehicle Handling

Gloves must be worn outside the vehicles and must be removed before touching vehicle interiors (place gloves in lap or on floor).

Loading ramps and deck sections must be properly positioned to prevent vehicles from bottoming out during loading. For distances between deck sections greater than 4", deck extensions must be used.

Ensure all decks are pinned at all times, except when decks are actively being adjusted up/down, or when decks are self-locking.

Vehicle drive-path must be clear of obstructions, such as hydraulic lines or loose straps/chains on the deck or hanging from upper decks. Driving over straps/chains can damage vehicle tires.

For vehicles with folding side mirrors, mirrors must be in the folded position. If mirrors fold automatically, activate interior electronic controls to fold mirrors -- folding such mirrors manually will cause damage.

For vehicles with adjustable-height suspensions:

- Passenger car suspensions must be set in the High position.
- SUV suspensions must be set in the Low position.

Vehicles must be centered on drive-paths to prevent side-wall chafing and to permit proper strap/chain engagement.

Do not allow any part of the vehicle (except the tires and the point of strap/chain attachment) to contact the transport equipment or the ground during loading, transit, or unloading.

Vehicles must be loaded facing forward when so noted in the vehicle's loading procedures. **Refer to Truck Loading Procedures for specific model information.** In some cases, use of a TLS-approved bedliner retainer may allow for loading Tundras and Tacomas with bedliners or bed mats facing backwards.

Vehicles must be in Park (for automatic transmissions) or 1st Gear (for manual transmissions), with the parking brake fully engaged, before exiting the vehicle.

Keys must never be left in the ignition (even in the Off position), as this can drain the vehicle's battery.

Do not deflate vehicle tires to meet height restrictions.

Do not apply any additional protective material to vehicles without prior approval by TLS Headquarters, Highway Transportation Department.

2. Straps

When strap tie-downs are used, vehicles must be secured to transport equipment with 4 straps -- 1 over each tire. Using less than 4 straps per vehicle for any reason requires prior approval by TLS Headquarters, Highway Transportation Department.

Use only equipment manufacturer-approved strap assemblies.

Always refer to instructions provided by the equipment manufacturer for the proper placement and use of strap tie-downs.

Before loading, refer to Truck Loading Procedures for specific model information. Loading information is based on test-loading and is provided to assist in preventing damage to vehicles. These guidelines contain information relevant to both strap and chain operations.

Before each use, inspect strap assemblies for wear or damage. Do not use any strap that is showing signs of damage or excessive wear, i.e. splitting or fraying.

Do not drive over straps.

When placing the strap over the tire, ensure that it is centered on the tread, lying flat, not twisted or knotted, and in a straight line from the ratchet shaft to the tire.

Secure straps according to the equipment manufacturer's instructions. Ensure straps are not over-tightened and rubber cleats are properly placed, which may lead to unexpected failure of the straps and/or damage to the tires or other parts of the vehicle.

3. Chains

When chain tie-downs are used, vehicles must be secured to transport equipment with 4 chains -- 2 in the front and 2 in the rear.

Approved chain tie-down hooks for Toyota and Lexus vehicles are J, S, and T types. R hooks are not authorized.

Vehicles must be secured using only approved tie-down points, and chains must be positioned so that they do not contact underbody components.

Before loading, refer to Truck Loading Procedures for specific model information. Loading information is based on test-loading and is provided to assist in preventing damage to vehicles. These guidelines contain information relevant to both strap and chain operations.

Before each use, inspect chain assemblies for wear or damage. Do not use any chain that is showing signs of damage or excessive wear.

Do not drive over chains.

Front and rear chains must exert opposing forces. They must all have an outboard angle (A-pull), or they must all have an inboard angle (V-pull).

- Outboard (A-pull): away from center of vehicle (forward in front, rearward in rear)
- Inboard (V-pull): toward center of vehicle (rearward in front, forward in rear)

Chain angles should be 45 degrees. When 45 degrees is not attainable, chain angles may deviate by no more than +/- 15 degrees.

Secure chains according to the equipment manufacturer's instructions.

Ensure chains are not over-tightened, which may lead to unexpected failure of the chains and/or damage to the vehicle.

- Do not over-tighten chains such that the vehicle's suspension bottoms out.
- Do not over-tighten chains to meet height restrictions.
- Do not use hydraulics to tighten chains.

4. Minimum Clearances

2" between vehicle underbody and transport equipment/other vehicles.

3" between vehicle bumpers and transport equipment/other vehicles.

4" between vehicle roof/hood/trunk and transport equipment/other vehicles.

These clearances are minimum requirements. It is recommended that maximum attainable clearances be maintained at all times to provide the greatest possible protection.

5. Final Load Inspection

Secure all ramps, extensions, straps, and chains.

Inspect all vehicles for proper securement and clearance.

Check headrack and trailer for sufficient turning clearance.

Check load height to ensure it meets State height regulations and to ensure vehicles will not be exposed to damage from overhead obstacles along the route.

Inspect tie-downs periodically while in transit, making any necessary adjustments.

Drivers who must park loaded tractor-trailers at private residences, public lots, or other unprotected areas are responsible for the security of the vehicles on the trailer. All vehicles must be locked.

Delays in transit must be reported immediately by the driver to the dispatcher. Such reports must include the location, cause, and expected length of the delay.

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