MOVING ON

VOSA Vehicle & Operator Services Agency

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▶▶▶ *The free newspaper for HGV and PSV drivers and operators*

VOSA ADVISES ON LOAD SECURITY

VOSA's close working relationship with the Health and Safety Executive ensures that our training courses embrace current thinking on all things safety related. Recent improvements to training on load security means that we're paying closer attention to this issue at the roadside.

Some of you may remember the article in issue 28 of Moving On, in which we advised readers to use the principles set out in the Department for Transport's *Code of Practice: Safety of Loads on Vehicles*. Well, policy has not changed since then and this guidance still applies.

VOSA's more recent work on load security with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has been to develop improved training for our roadside staff. This means that VOSA staff have the information they need to apply the rules on load security in a fair and consistent way across the country.

Once VOSA staff have undergone this training, they will use a 'load security enforcement matrix' – a systematic method to help them decide whether or not a load is secure. This matrix (more details on page 4) will guide examiners on what action to take, based on how secure the load is and how dangerous it could be if unsecured.

For example, a potentially dangerous load that has not been strapped in, restrained or otherwise secured will result in enforcement action. All loads must show evidence that a reasonable attempt has been made to keep it secure during the journey. If a less hazardous load is insecure, but there is evidence that an attempt has been made to secure it, VOSA examiners will offer advice and guidance.

Operators will need to pay particular attention to curtain-sided trailers. VOSA's advice to industry is that curtain-sides should not be thought of as a restraint system. Loads carried in curtain-sided vehicles should be secured appropriately, without using the curtains as part of the securing system.

Although VOSA will be looking at load security with a fresh eye, there have been no changes to policy. We will only take enforcement action (prohibition and sanction) where there is a clear danger. VOSA examiners will have sufficient knowledge, training and tools to help them apply the rules consistently, but industry must remember that this is still a subjective area. Where a reasonable attempt has been made to secure a load, enforcement action will not be taken and advice will be given.

Examiners will not routinely look in the back of vehicles or inside curtains unless there is cause for concern – for example, excessively bulging curtains or signs of load shifting.

The load security training programme is being introduced throughout the country, so operators and drivers will start to see a gradual change in enforcement during the summer, as well as fewer incidents and delays from spilled loads!

Visit www.hse.gov.uk/logistics/load-security.htm **for useful advice on securing your load, including the Department for Transport's *Code of Practice: Safety of Loads on Vehicles*.**

SAVING LIVES, SAFER LIMOS

The public are being advised to check that limousine operators are safe and legal before booking a limo for their special events.

Hiring limousines or novelty vehicles has become an increasingly popular part of school and college proms and leaving celebrations, as well as weddings and birthday parties. But there are concerns that many limos may be unlicensed and unsafe.

Stretched limousines must hold a licence as a passenger service vehicle – like buses and coaches – or be licensed by a local authority as a private-hire vehicle, as taxis are.

Without a licence, hiring out limousines is illegal.

Other risks when using an unlicensed company include:

- The driver may not be properly licensed to drive the vehicle.
- The vehicle and driver may not be insured.
- The vehicle may not be built to the necessary safety standards.
- The vehicle may not be maintained properly and could be dangerous.
- The vehicle is likely to be stopped during the journey for road safety checks by police or VOSA .
- If safety issues or offences are found, the journey that was paid for may be interrupted and the vehicle seized by police or impounded by VOSA.

VOSA is launching a campaign to make the public smarter at checking whether a company is licensed. Use the Operator Search at **www.dft.gov.uk/vosa** to check if a company holds a passenger service vehicle (PSV) licence or email **enquiries@vosa.gov.uk**.

To check if a company holds a private hire licence, contact your local council.

...From page one

Load security matrix

The key purpose of load security training is to help VOSA examiners respond appropriately to different load and security types. The priority is to deal with loads that are demonstrably not secure and therefore present a real danger to road users. This matrix is only intended as guidance and will not cover every eventuality. Other factors – such as the speed of the vehicle – will be taken into account.

LOAD TYPE	DEFECT CATEGORY 1	DEFECT CATEGORY 2	DEFECT CATEGORY 3
A	PROHIBIT	PROHIBIT	ADVISE
B	PROHIBIT	PROHIBIT	ADVISE
C	PROHIBIT	ADVISE	ADVISE

DEFECT CATEGORY		
Category 1	Category 2	Category 3
No load securing	>30cm gap between load and vehicle headboard	Lashings on ropehooks
>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 would allow load penetration	Unsuitable stacking of load items likely to lead to risk of harm	Poor condition of securing equipment
Items loaded over height of headboard	Height of load likely to affect vehicle stability	Unsuitable vehicle for load

LOAD TYPE		
Type A	Type B	Type C
Metal pipes, sheet or bar	Timber	Clothing
Reinforced concrete	FIBCs/bulk powder	Wood chip
Bricks, stone or concrete	Roll 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	Packaging material
Kegs and barrels		Single loaded skips
Stacked loaded skips		Empty skips < 3 high
Empty skips stacked > 3 high		Light palletised goods
Metal castings		
Glass		
Containers/work cabins		