

Heavy vehicle loading requirements

Compliance and Enforcement bulletin 9

The National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) seeks to:

- ensure public safety
- manage the impact of heavy vehicles on the environment, road infrastructure and public amenity
- encourage innovation, productivity and safety.

To assist in achieving the above goals, this bulletin provides practical advice to help heavy vehicle drivers, operators and other parties comply with the heavy vehicle loading requirements of the Heavy Vehicle National Law (HVNL).

Under the HVNL, it is an offence to drive a heavy vehicle on a road when the vehicle or its load does not comply with the loading requirements applying to that vehicle. If your vehicle's load is unsafe because it's poorly placed or inadequately restrained, you're not only putting your own safety at risk but also that of other road users, the general public and the environment.

What are loading requirements?

Under the HVNL, a load on a heavy vehicle must:

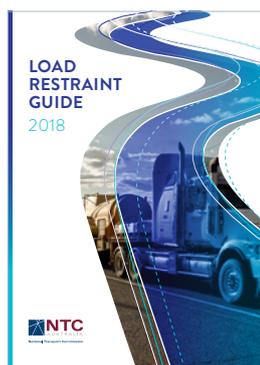
- not be placed in a way that makes the vehicle unstable or unsafe
- be secured so it's unlikely to fall or be dislodged from the vehicle
- be restrained:
 - using an appropriate method of restraint
 - in a way that meets the loading performance standards contained in the Heavy Vehicle (Mass, Dimension and Loading) National Regulation (Regulation).

The Load Restraint Guide

The *Load Restraint Guide* provides drivers, owners, operators, freight consigners, vehicle manufacturers, equipment manufacturers and suppliers with the basic safety principles that should be followed when designing a load restraint system to ensure the safe and efficient transportation of loads.

The *Load Restraint Guide*:

- provides guidelines based on engineering principles on how to design a load restraint system that will comply with the loading performance standards



- is available from the National Transport Commission (NTC) www.ntc.gov.au

Why are loading requirements important?

Poorly loaded or inadequately restrained loads may cause injuries and fatalities when:

- heavy objects fall from vehicles onto other vehicles or pedestrians
- drivers swerve to avoid falling or fallen items from vehicles
- spillage on roads from vehicles causes other vehicles to skid and lose control
- unrestrained loads crash into vehicle cabins during emergency braking
- vehicles overturn when loads shift during cornering.

How to load safely

To load a vehicle safely the responsible person(s) should:

- choose a suitable vehicle for your load type and size
- position the load correctly on the vehicle to maintain adequate stability, steering and braking
- use a suitable load restraint system with equipment of adequate strength and in serviceable condition.

Assessing loading requirements

The following questions should be asked when assessing whether a heavy vehicle loading and load restraint system meets the HVNL loading requirements:

- Does the load positioning make the vehicle unsafe or unstable?



- Has the load been restrained so it's unlikely to fall or be dislodged from the vehicle?
- Has an appropriate method been used to restrain the load?
- Does the load restraint system meet the loading performance standards contained in the Regulation?

Seeking load restraint advice

If you're not sure whether you're loading a heavy vehicle correctly, you should seek professional advice from a qualified person with appropriate skills and experience, such as an individual:

- who has been awarded Chartered status by Engineers Australia
or
- who is registered as a professional engineer by the Association of Professional Engineers Australia.

They will assist you to develop a load restraint system that complies with the HVNL loading requirements and should provide you with a report on the certification of your load restraint system.

Driver responsibilities

Before starting and throughout a journey, drivers should ensure that they:

- do not drive on a road when the heavy vehicle or its load does not comply with the loading requirements for that vehicle
- carry out periodic checks to ensure the load hasn't shifted and is still secure.



Operator responsibilities

Operators should ensure that:

- an appropriate vehicle is used to transport the load and the load is positioned on the vehicle in a way to maintain stability
- they do not permit a vehicle to be driven on a road if it or its load does not comply with the loading requirements for that vehicle
- any load restraint system used meets the performance standards contained in the Regulation
- load restraint equipment used to restrain any load is appropriate, fit for purpose and in good condition.

For more information

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