Loading requirements

A load on a heavy vehicle must:

- not be placed in a way that makes the vehicle unstable or unsafe
- be secured so it is unlikely to fall or be dislodged
- be restrained using an appropriate restraint method
- be placed, secured or restrained in a way that meets the loading performance standards listed in Schedule 7 of the Heavy Vehicle (Mass, Dimension and Loading) National Regulation.

Compliance bulletin 9 – Heavy vehicle loading requirements (PDF, 91KB) - Provides heavy vehicle drivers, operators and other parties with further information about Heavy Vehicle National Law (HVNL) loading requirements.

Load Restraint Guide

The Load Restraint Guide 2018 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 NTC completed a major review of the Load Restraint Guide Second Edition 2004 in January 2018 to ensure it was clear, user friendly and based on the best available evidence on how to safely restrain and transport the majority of loads carried by heavy vehicles in Australia. The Load Restraint Guide 2018 was formally approved by the Transport and Infrastructure Council on 10 November 2017.

Please note: Load Restraint Guide 2018 was reissued on 8 October 2018 and the wording on page 4 was updated. For more information see https://www.ntc.gov.au/codes-and-guidelines/load-restraint-guide

Changes to regulations

The Heavy Vehicle (Mass, Dimension and Loading) National Regulation (MDL regulation) prescribes heavy vehicle dimensions, mass and loading requirements. The MDL regulation was amended on 1 October 2018 to incorporate, among other things, the load restraint performance standards.

These standards were previously listed in the Load Restraint Guide Second Edition 2004.

The MDL regulations also provide alternative compliance requirements for vehicles where a mass or dimension exemption applies, for example very large loads.

These alternative compliance requirements apply if:

1. a mass or dimension exemption is in force for the vehicle for the journey; and
2. the vehicle complies with the mass or dimension exemption; and
3. an engineer has given a certificate.

The engineer’s certificate must describe the load restraint system and certify that the load restraint system is suitable to safely restrain the load, taking into consideration the nature of the load and the conditions reasonably expected to be experienced during the journey. The driver of the vehicle must keep a copy of the engineer’s certificate in their possession during the journey.

FAQs

What has changed in the Load Restraint Guide 2018?
The guidance material contained in the Load Restraint Guide 2018 has been updated to ensure it:

- is easy to access and understand
- meets the needs of the target audience
- is accurate, up to date and reflects current load restraint practices and heavy vehicle technology
- provides information based on the key steps involved in transporting loads to assist heavy vehicle drivers, operators and other parties to develop load restraint systems to suit their individual requirements
- includes computer-generated diagrams and graphics to provide greater detail.
- provides detailed worked examples demonstrating how to apply the load restraint principles provided in the Guide to the common freight commodities.

Is the Load Restraint Guide a legal document?

No. The Load Restraint Guide is guidance material only on how you may meet the performance standards.

Where should I obtain advice on how to restrain my load?

If you’ve read the guidance material contained in the Load Restraint Guide and you’re still unsure how to meet your legislative loading requirements, you should consult with a suitably qualified person (e.g. a chartered professional engineer who is a full member of Engineers Australia or Registered Professional Engineers Queensland and has an understanding of heavy vehicle design and a detailed knowledge of load restraint requirements).

Do Chain of Responsibility requirements apply to load restraint?

Yes, Chain of Responsibility (CoR) requirements do apply to heavy vehicle loading and load restraint.

Under CoR, all parties who have control or influence over the transport task are deemed responsible for complying with, and for breaches of HVNL loading requirements. All parties must take reasonable steps to prevent breaches of loading requirements. An example of a reasonable step would be seeking advice about your load restraint systems from a suitably qualified person.


What loading requirements apply in the Northern Territory and Western Australia?

Information on loading requirements in the Northern Territory and Western Australia can be found at:


Is there a load restraint guide for light vehicles?

Yes, the NTC has published a *Load Restraint Guide 2018 for Light Vehicles* that provides load restraint guidance specifically for loads carried by light vehicles, 4.5t GVM or less. This is available from the NTC at [www.ntc.gov.au/heavy-vehicles/rules-compliance/load-restraint-guide/](https://www.ntc.gov.au/heavy-vehicles/rules-compliance/load-restraint-guide/)

Source URL: https://www.nhvr.gov.au/road-access/mass-dimension-and-loading/loading