

Vehicle loads

QFleet driver safety fact sheet

Vehicle loads and loading

An improperly loaded vehicle is a safety hazard. Unsecured loads and cargo can become projectiles in the event of a sudden stop or crash.

To ensure the safety of the vehicle occupants and other road users, it is recommended that all loads and cargo:

- are transported in a cargo area and not transported unrestrained within the cabin of a vehicle
- do not exceed the legal carrying capacity of the vehicle or trailer
- are positioned in a manner that does not affect the vehicle's balance or stability, thereby reducing its steering and braking performance
- are properly restrained so that they do not move under any driving conditions, including emergency braking
- do not become dislodged and fall from the vehicle or trailer.

Carrying capacity

Motor vehicles, including trucks and light commercial vehicles, are designed with a specific maximum carrying capacity known as the vehicle's Gross Vehicle Mass or GVM. A vehicle's GVM can be found on its compliance plate, in the owner's hand book, and may also be found on a sign written on the side of larger vehicles.

Carrying capacity includes the weight of the driver, passengers, accessories, fuel, tools and

equipment, and the vehicle body. It can be checked by weighing the fully loaded vehicle and ensuring that the total weight does not exceed the GVM.

Drivers must ensure that they do not exceed the GVM of the vehicle as this is illegal and may compromise the safety of the vehicle.



Vehicle trays

Slips, trips or falls can happen when accessing the tray of a utility or a heavy vehicle. These risks can be reduced by:

- using access ladders or steps
- not jumping from the tray to the ground
- working from the ground where possible
- wearing appropriate safety footwear with serviceable non-slip soles
- cleaning mud from footwear before climbing onto a tray
- ensuring the tray is clear of objects a person might trip over
- specifying vehicles with non-slip trays and steps.

Passengers must never ride on the tray of a vehicle.

Projecting loads

A projecting load is a load which is longer, wider or higher than the vehicle that is carrying the load. Drivers should familiarise themselves with the legislation for maximum vehicle load dimensions by referring to the Department of Transport and Main Roads' [Projecting Loads information](#).

Key points include:

- A long load cannot extend past:
 - the front of a vehicle by more than 1.2 metres
 - the rear of a vehicle by more than 1.2 metres without a warning flag during the day and a red light at night.
- It is good practice to:
 - use a warning flag on projecting loads less than 1.2 metres in length when the load is difficult to see
 - be aware of the increased dimensions of the vehicle and drive with additional caution, particularly when in confined spaces.

Scrap and demolition materials

Scrap and demolition materials can be challenging to load and transport safely and have the potential to present a hazard to other road users.

Loads incorporating scrap and demolition material may comprise many different objects and substances including paper that is subject to the effects of wind and airflow over the vehicle.

To ensure the safety of all road users, loads comprising scrap and demolition materials must be restrained and covered by a tarpaulin or a cargo net.



More information

Further information about load security, long and projecting loads and the safe use of vehicle trays is available on the Department of Transport and Main Roads [website](#).

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