



# CLAMP DOWN

Enforcement authorities are working to revise guidance on load security, and are peering inside trailer curtains with increasing frequency. Peter Shakespeare reports on the latest moves to clamp down on load security

Commercial vehicle load security continues to climb up the road freight transport agenda. The Department for Transport first issued a code of practice addressing the safety of loads on vehicles as far back as 1972. Considered to be the bible of load security, it was last updated in 2002. In 2011, DVSA began working with the trade associations to produce new guidance, which addressed practical industry concerns. This was published in 2014 and last updated in November 2018 (see links) to reflect revised risk assessments on certain load types and enforcement policy.

The guidance states that in 2013, DVSA issued more than 2,000

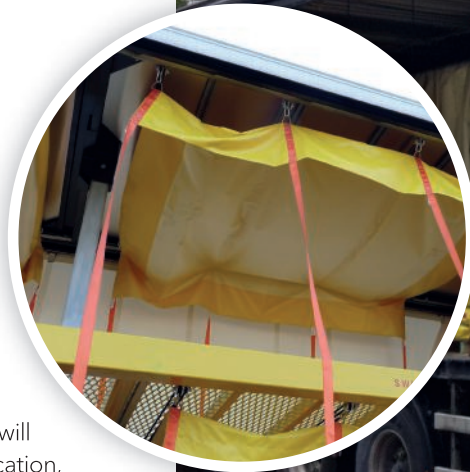
prohibitions to vehicles found to present a road safety risk due to the way their load was secured. That same year, there were 22,000 'road impact incidents' caused by objects falling from vehicles, according to Highways Agency data, it added.

Further inquiries to HSE failed to produce either more up-to-date figures, or identification of the fraction relating to commercial vehicles, because of gaps in the collection and reporting of data. So the very lack of data seems to indicate that incidents resulting from inadequately secured loads are massively under-reported, and a significant concern for the authorities and the industry.

To counter this risk, HSE chairs a steering group, aimed at improving

load security. Members include the Health and Safety Laboratory (HSL), DVSA, operators, vehicle manufacturers and load restraint manufacturers. Representing the latter two is trailer builder Don-Bur, whose marketing manager Richard Owens personally takes part. He says: "The enforcement authorities' main focus is on general haulage and curtainsides. They accept that there is no one-stop solution when it comes to load security.

"In addition, there is the issue that companies' procurement departments often opt for the cheapest possible trailer or body. From experience, the load security box is ticked by specifying basic roof track-mounted restraint straps. Fitting 26 costs around £160-£200 in a semi-trailer. They are an affordable



option, but not a legal one if the load each one restrains weighs more than 400kg. While we always recommend a solution that will be compliant for their application, we can't refuse to sell them this type of restraint, even if it isn't sufficient for the loads they will be carrying. The industry has asked the HSE to put together some procurement best practice guidance to raise awareness and understanding."

Another member of the steering group is Nina Day, senior engineer at HSL's centre for human and organisational performance. She is working with the steering group to write a minimum specification for a curtainside trailer, which meets the current load restraint requirements. She explains: "The idea came out of last year's Logistics Forum, which is co-hosted by HSE and DVSA," she says. One of the key load security issues given by industry was the need to better inform customers. Day adds: "Operators weren't necessarily sure what they were buying, or needed to buy." The guide will be based on the EN12642 XL standard, and is likely to include sample trailer specifications, predicts Day - but she wouldn't be drawn on when it might be published.

**EN12642 XL**

Since 2014, curtainside trailers built to EN12642 XL have been accepted by DfT. In simple terms, they include reinforced,

better-secured curtains that provide up to 50% of the load security to the side.

However, some confusion among hauliers apparently remains about how to comply with the standard. Day reports that, based on her experiences of roadside checks with DVSA and the police, operators face two big issues with XL trailers: using them correctly, and making sure that trailers marketed as compliant with the standard actually are.

She continues: "The problem is, the XL standard is for load containment, and assumes the load inside the trailer is tightly packed and continually self supports so it cannot move: a positive fit. It must be loaded up to the headboard, with no gaps greater than 80mm to the side, and the load must be restrained at the back. The rear doors [alone] are not sufficient. As soon as the positive fit is compromised - which is probable in a multi-drop scenario - the gaps must be filled, or the load must

have additional restraints to control any gaps on the load bed."

Anecdotal evidence that Day has collected indicates that every vehicle stopped by enforcement authorities has a problem with the load.

To help combat the problems surrounding poor load security, enforcement authorities are turning to better intelligence and education. Highways Authority traffic officers now provide intelligence of suspect vehicles to DVSA, which can then arrange to have them stopped and checked.

Another pilot scheme to check load restraints, this time headed by the HSE, is taking place in West Yorkshire. Vehicles are being stopped at random, irrespective of whether or not their curtains are bulging. Day is involved in this initiative, too. She says: "The pilot is a multi-agency collaboration, which was requested by industry at the Logistics Forum. It wants the regulatory bodies to

<b>DON-BUR CURTAINSIDE LOAD RESTRAINT OPTIONS</b>	<b>QUANTITY</b>	<b>COST/TRAILER</b>
Roof-mounted black straps	13 pairs	£160-£200
Rave-to-rave 2t-rated EN 12195-2 ratchet straps	13	£300-£350
As above, suspended by proprietary Loadfix bungee assembly	13	£1,100-£1,200
As Loadfix above, but with a 5t-rated, 150mm-wide PVC strap	13	£1,200-£1,300
As Loadfix above, but with a 5t-rated, 300mm-wide reinforced PVC strap	13	£1,600-£1,700
Full trailer length Loadfix PVC sheet	1	£1,500-£1,600



work better together to ensure industry is getting consistent messages. HSE has trained police officers in load security, and information is being shared between the regulatory bodies. The aim is not to ticket drivers, it's about trying to give the right advice and to send out the right messages, ensuring the responsibility goes back to the people responsible for putting the vehicle into a non-compliant condition.

"While many people think the security of the load is the driver's responsibility, from a legal perspective, the Road Traffic Act Section 40A clearly states the responsibility is shared between the driver, the operator and the consigner of the load. There is also shared responsibility under the Health and Safety at Work Act," adds Day.

DVSA is now considering whether to roll this trial out more widely, or modify its enforcement policy.

### PROBLEMATIC LOADS

While the authorities' main focus is on curtainside vehicles, Richard Owens says that there is a big focus in industry on what are described as problematic loads. These are ones that can move, are of irregular shape, or diminish over time, such as multi-drop pallet deliveries.

An example of a potentially tricky load is FIBCs (flexible intermediate bulk containers, also known as big bags).

They keep aggregate contained, but even at one tonne, their weight, and friction between the bottom of the bag and the loading deck, may not be sufficient to secure them.

Because their contents move during the journey, and because of their soft sides, the ideal carrying vehicle is one with rigid sides. Standard ratchet straps can work loose as the contents move underneath them. If carried on flatbed or curtainside vehicles, each bag should be restrained by wide straps, nets or sheets. To compensate for settling of recently-packed powdered loads in FIBCs, operators should check, and if necessary, retighten, straps soon after beginning their journey, according to recent guidance from the Chemical Business Association (see links).


### SECUREMENT SYSTEMS

Don-Bur's own offering, Loadfix, is a rave-to-rave strap suspended in the roof space by bungees when not in use. To cater for crushable loads, it offers straps up to 300mm wide, or a full sheeting system so there are no real pressure points on the load. It also offers tapered side nets for brewery drays. For XL-rated trailers and bodies, it can supply a rear kite or transverse net.

German trailer manufacturer Krone's restraint systems are called Multi-Lock and Multi-Block. The Krone Profi Liner curtainside comes with the Multi Lock

system as standard, with each side rave having up to 130 lashing holes, at 100mm intervals and a load capacity of 2,000t per loading point. This enables up to 3,000 strapping permutations, and the ability to load securely virtually all types of cargo at any point along the trailer bed.

The optional Multi Block system is a transverse load restraint bar that fits across the trailer floor and clips into the Multi Lock strapping points along each side. Multi Block, at 130 mm deep and with 22 lashing points at 80mm intervals, provides additional security and safety.

Nina Day has the final word: "There are many misconceptions surrounding load security. Operators and drivers do a job for 20 to 30 years and think they are doing it the right way. But things change: load types change, and the way the industry works changes. Often people just aren't aware of what load security systems they need or are available to them. The answer is better awareness and educating the industry to move with the times." 

### FURTHER INFORMATION

DVSA load security guidance (Nov 2018): [www.is.gd/utusus](http://www.is.gd/utusus)

Chemical Business Association load security guidance (Aug. 2018): [www.is.gd/rakowa](http://www.is.gd/rakowa)

Profile of HSE Logistics Forum: [www.is.gd/nisofe](http://www.is.gd/nisofe)

Don-Bur on EN12642 XL: [www.is.gd/egunur](http://www.is.gd/egunur)