

Secure Loads Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What Is An Unsecured Load?

A. An unsecured load is one that has not been fastened or attached to the vehicle with tarps, ropes, straps, netting, chains, or by other means to prevent any part of the load or the covering from becoming loose or detached, or coming out of vehicle while the vehicle is moving.

Q. How Do You Know If Your Load Is Secure?

A. Is there any chance of debris or cargo falling or blowing out of your vehicle?

- What would happen to your load if you had to brake suddenly, hit a bump, or if another vehicle hit yours?
- Would you want your loaded vehicle driving through your neighborhood?
- Would you feel safe if you were driving behind your vehicle?

Q. How Do I Secure A Load?

A. A load is secure when nothing can slide, shift, or fall onto the roadway, or become airborne. There are many options for securing or covering your load.

- Cover your load with a tarp and then securely fasten the tarp to the vehicle.
- Tie items directly to your vehicle using rope, netting, straps or chains.
- Be sure any covering is securely tied down.
- Put lighter items at the bottom and put heavier items on top, then secure the heavier items to your vehicle.
- Do not overload your vehicle.
- Double-check and be certain that your load is secure.

Q. Why Should I Secure My Load?

A. It prevents injuries and saves lives.

- It is estimated that road litter causes 25,000 accidents in North America each year, nearly 100 of which are fatal.
- On average, road debris causes around 400 accidents each year on Washington State highways.

A. It prevents litter.

- More than 12 million pounds of litter comes from vehicles each year in Washington State.
- Around 40% of the litter-related violations issued by Washington State Patrol in 2007 were for failure to secure a load; 21% were issued for debris escaping from those loads.

A. It will cost you money if you don't.

- If you are caught driving with an unsecured load you may face a fine.
- If any items spill or leak from an unsecured or uncovered load you may be subject to additional littering penalties.
- **Washington State law allows these fines:**
 - Failure to secure load – first degree (causing bodily harm to another) – Up to \$5,000 and/or up to 1 year in jail (gross misdemeanor)
 - Failure to secure load – second degree (causing damage to property of another) – Up to \$1,000 and/or up to 90 days in jail (misdemeanor)
 - Driving with an unsecured load – traffic infraction - \$216

Don't Risk It... Secure Your Load: