

## Do You Need To Travel With a Load?

It is well known that vehicle accidents result in many occupational fatalities. Vehicle inspection and maintenance are important elements to a comprehensive fleet safety program. Another subject that deserves attention has to do with the cargo you are hauling.

When traveling with loads, part of the pre-trip vehicle inspection process should include a thorough check to determine whether your load is adequately secured. An unsecured load may shift during your trip and could cause or contribute to an accident. Check the condition of tie downs and ropes to assure they are not damaged or excessively worn. If an internal rack system is used, check the anchorage points periodically to ensure they are sound. Check all doors to be sure they are closed.

Check the load to make certain it is packed tightly. Loose loads could shift and cause difficulty with steering and braking. If a load shift occurs while the vehicle is turning a corner, a rollover could occur. It is also important for the load to be well centered on your vehicle. A poorly centered load could also cause problems during normal vehicle operation. If the load is composed of items of unequal weight, a good practice is to keep the heaviest items toward the center of the total load.

Here are a few additional items to consider when traveling with a load:

- What is the weight of the load and are you sure it does not exceed the vehicle's capacity?
- Will the load height be an issue? Are there any low clearance underpasses on your planned route?
- Does your load extend beyond the back of your vehicle? Do you need a warning flag?
- If your load is in an open top truck, have you covered the top with a canvas or tarp to assure that the load will not fly out of the back?
- Do you know your route? Are there any steep hills or sharp corners that could present dangerous situations because of your load?

When traveling with a load, make sure to address all load safety issues in order to assure that **YOU** and your load arrive safely at your destination.

