
Cargo Securement for Open Bed Truck: Straps and Tarps

1.0 Objective & Scope

The objective of this procedure is to ensure that all cargo loaded onto an open bed truck is secured in compliance with Transport Canada's National Safety Code (NSC) standards, preventing load shifts, spills, or accidents during transit. This SOP applies to all fleet drivers and field logistics personnel responsible for loading, securing, and tarping open bed trucks.

The Lead Driver is responsible for verifying that the load is properly restrained before departure and that all required documentation and digital sign-offs are completed in SiteQueue.

2.0 Required Equipment & Tools

- Minimum 2-inch wide ratchet straps with a Working Load Limit (WLL) of 3,333 lbs each (or as required by load weight)
- Heavy-duty canvas or vinyl tarp (sized to fully cover load with minimum 12-inch overhang on all sides)
- Tarp bungee cords or rope (minimum 3/8-inch diameter) for tarp tie-downs
- Edge protectors (rubber or plastic) to prevent strap damage on sharp cargo edges
- Mobile tablet or smartphone with SiteQueue application installed
- Load binder or chain binders (if required for heavy equipment)
- Personal protective equipment: high-visibility vest, steel-toed boots, cut-resistant gloves, safety glasses
- Cargo securement checklist (digital or paper backup)

3.0 Site Safety & Hazard Assessment

- High-visibility vest and steel-toed boots must be worn at all times in the loading zone and around the truck.
- Conduct a 360-degree walk-around of the truck before loading to check for obstructions, uneven ground, or overhead hazards (e.g., power lines).
- Ensure the loading area is level, well-lit, and free of debris or standing water.
- Never stand under a suspended load or between the truck and a loading dock during securement.
- Use cut-resistant gloves when handling straps and tarps to avoid injury from sharp edges or tension points.
- Verify that all ratchet straps are free of cuts, fraying, or corrosion before use. Discard any damaged straps immediately.

4.0 Step-by-Step Execution Procedure

1. Park the truck on a level surface, engage the parking brake, and chock the wheels if on a slope.
2. Inspect the truck bed for sharp edges, debris, or protruding hardware that could damage straps or the tarp.
3. Load the cargo evenly, ensuring the center of gravity is as low and centered as possible. For mixed loads, place heavier items at the bottom and against the headboard.
4. Position edge protectors on any sharp corners or edges of the cargo that will contact the straps.

5. Apply the first set of ratchet straps: place one strap over the front third of the load and one over the rear third. Ensure each strap is anchored to the truck's tiedown points and tightened until the strap is taut and the load is immobile.
6. Add additional straps as needed based on load weight and length. For loads over 10 feet, use a minimum of three straps. For loads over 20 feet, use four or more straps spaced evenly.
7. Verify each strap's tension by attempting to shift the load by hand. No movement should be detectable. Re-tighten any loose straps.
8. Drape the tarp over the load, ensuring it covers the entire cargo and extends at least 12 inches past the sides and ends. Smooth out any wrinkles to prevent wind flapping.
9. Secure the tarp using bungee cords or rope at each tiedown point along the truck bed. Space tie-downs no more than 3 feet apart. Ensure the tarp is taut and will not billow during transit.
10. Perform a final walk-around inspection: check that no straps are loose, no tarp edges are flapping, and all tiedown points are secure. Verify that the load does not exceed the truck's GVWR or overhang limits (max 4 feet beyond the rear axle in most provinces).

5.0 Verification, Sign-off & Reporting

1. Open the SiteQueue application and select the active load or trip ticket.
2. Photograph the secured load from at least three angles: front-left, rear-right, and a close-up of the strap/tarp tie-downs. Ensure the photos are clear and show the entire load.
3. Complete the digital cargo securement checklist in SiteQueue, confirming that all straps are tensioned, edge protectors are in place, and the tarp is properly secured.
4. Obtain a digital signature from the loading supervisor or site representative (if required) confirming the load is safe for transport.
5. Submit the report in SiteQueue. The system will automatically timestamp and log the inspection for compliance records.
6. If any defects or issues were noted during the inspection, flag the load in SiteQueue and notify the Fleet Manager immediately. Do not depart until the issue is resolved.

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