

Load security

A Logistics UK brewing and drinks industry best practice guide

Edition 02 – September 2026



A guide for operators, drivers and vehicle loaders

Supported by: Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency and Health and Safety Executive



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Load security

A Logistics UK brewing and drinks industry best practice guide

Edition 2 – September 2026

Logistics UK Best practice guide to load security for the brewing and drinks industry

Editor: Martin Candish

Design and production: Cecilia Giorda

Acknowledgements

This guide focuses on load securing practices for vehicles used in the brewing and drinks industry. It contains basic guidance and methods of securing loads transported in this specific sector of road transport and has been produced in conjunction with the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA), the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and sector specific Logistics UK members.

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Foreword

Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA)

Securing loads is not just a legal obligation, it's a matter of life and death. Insecure loads cause deaths and serious injuries on UK roads every year, and the consequences for drivers, operators and the public can be devastating.

The brewing and drinks industry faces particular challenges that make load security more complex than in many other sectors. Cylindrical kegs, casks and barrels can move unexpectedly during transit if not restrained correctly. Multi drop operations create additional risks as loads diminish throughout the day, changing the distribution of weight and the effectiveness of securing systems such as positive fit requirements. These are not risks that can be managed through general guidance alone – they require industry specific knowledge and practical systems.

This guide has been developed with DVSA's full support to help drivers, operators and consignors in the drinks industry understand their responsibilities and meet them in practice. It sits alongside the [GOV.UK – Securing loads on HGVs and goods vehicles](#) guidance and should be read in that context. Whether you are planning to deliver a load, driving a vehicle, or responsible for an operator licence, this guide sets out what good practice looks like and what is expected of you. Following it will help protect your staff, other road users, and your business.

British Beer and Pubs Association (BBPA)

Safe and effective load security is essential to the efficient movement of beer and other drinks within the drinks industry and to retail customers in the on and off trades.

The British Beer and Pub Association is pleased to support this updated Logistics UK Brewing and Drinks Industry Best Practice Guide to Load Security. Developed with the support of the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency, the Health and Safety Executive as well as businesses across the brewing, drinks and logistics sectors, it provides practical industry-specific guidance to help operators, drivers, loaders and others across the supply chain understand and manage their responsibilities.

BBPA is grateful to Logistics UK, DVSA, HSE and all those who have contributed their expertise across the brewing and drinks supply chain to develop the guide to support brewers and logistics operators to maintain high standards of load security and safety.

Introduction

Notes on the use of the information and guidance contained in this guide

The aim of the information contained in this document is to provide some basic guidance on methods of securing loads transported on goods vehicles used in the brewing and drinks industry. It has been produced in conjunction with Logistics UK members from this sub-sector of road transport, and in liaison with the DVSA and HSE.

The variety of loads, vehicles and operating conditions make it impossible to provide specific guidance on how all loads should be secured for transport. Therefore the information in this document should only be used as a guide and not be regarded as definitive, exhaustive or be taken as legal advice.

Loading circumstances likely to be encountered by drivers and operators will vary considerably, and the principal requirement for load securing is adhering to the legislation which governs the safety of loads on vehicles.

Both loading and unloading of a vehicle should be subject to a [risk assessment](#) which will be specific to the vehicle used, load carried and circumstances in which the vehicle will be operated. The information contained within this guide can help identify risks and direct operators towards recognised [load securing systems](#). The overriding fact with regard to adequate load securing is to not to rely on the physical weight of the load to keep it secure, some form of load securing solution will be required.

Background

Load security enforcement has been the subject of development for some time following campaigns in 2009/10 by the HSE and DVSA, when enforcement examiners inspected the loads of vehicles to ensure that they were being transported securely. The campaigns highlighted concerns that significant numbers of vehicles were found to have loads which were not sufficiently restrained.

In 2013, as well as the first version of this guide, DVSA introduced training for enforcement examiners with a focused approach on load securing. Aimed at promoting clarity and consistency, and in conjunction with a new load security matrix, this enabled examiners to identify high-risk loads.

In 2022 the load security matrix was removed from DVSA's [Categorisation of defects](#) in favour of specific load security defects and notes, allowing examiners to draw a clear distinction between enforcement policy and best practice.

In 2023 a new [GOV.UK – Securing loads on HGVs and goods vehicles](#) code of practice was published by DVSA and HSE, providing an all industry encompassing guidance document on how to load, transport and unload goods safely.

The campaigns led by HSE and DVSA on load securing checks, and the focused approach by DVSA on this area of enforcement, have led to many goods vehicle operators and drivers reviewing how loads are secured on their vehicles. Inadequate load securing methods can result in regulatory proceedings such as fixed penalty notices, vehicle prohibition, immobilisation, driver/operator prosecution and action taken against the operator licence by the Traffic Commissioner.

Operators within the brewing and drinks sector have been reviewing how loads are secured on vehicles and the developments in load security guidance. Logistics UK members who operate within this sector have been involved in a working group and have reviewed this existing brewing and drinks industry guidance, evaluating against existing loading practices, sharing good practice on how to comply with the current requirements of legislation and complimenting the [GOV.UK – Securing loads on HGVs and goods vehicles](#) code of practice.

The vehicles used to transport goods within this sector are typically curtainside [vehicles and trailers](#) of the type which are checked for load securing by DVSA, and the nature of the products carried creates a high risk of securing issues. It is therefore vital that operators, loaders and drivers in this transport sector ensure that loads are correctly secured for transport.

The importance of securing loads for transport

Vehicles carrying unrestrained loads are a safety risk to their drivers and other staff involved in loading and unloading them. On the road, they also pose a danger to other road users and the wider public. An unrestrained load can significantly increase the risk of the vehicle rolling over or spilling the load onto the highway.

The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) and HSE processes require near misses and incidents to be reported through the health and safety at work procedures. Several people sustain injuries, which can sometimes be serious and fatal, as a result of load security. This can be whilst loading, unloading or during the vehicle's journey.

To protect drivers and other road users, the Road Vehicles (Construction & Use) Regulations 1986 indicate that loads must be secured, if necessary by physical restraint other than their own weight, so they do not present a danger or nuisance.

The UK Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 state:

'The load carried by a motor vehicle or trailer shall at all times be so secured, if necessary by physical restraint other than its own weight, and be in such a position, that neither danger nor nuisance is likely to be caused to any person or property by reason of the load or any part thereof falling or being blown from the vehicle or by reason of any other movement of the load or any part thereof in relation to the vehicle.'

The Road Traffic Act 1988 (as amended) contains the corresponding offence for this legal requirement, stating:

'A person is also guilty of using a vehicle in a dangerous condition if he uses, or causes or permits another to use, a motor vehicle or trailer on a road when the purpose for which it is used or the weight position or distribution of its loads, or the manner in which it is secured is such that the use of the motor vehicle or trailer involves a danger of injury to any person.'

The principle of these rules is simple, loads must be positioned in a safe location on the vehicle and stay put. The rules mean that everyone involved in the transport operation could be deemed liable in the event of an insecure load. The penalties will depend on the seriousness of the incident but could include driving licence penalty points and endorsements, heavy fines and the possibility of prison sentences.

Who is responsible?

There are predominantly four participants in a transport system chain who each have their part to play in an effective load security system:

- The consignor: the entity that sends the load.
- The operator: the entity that transports the load.
- The driver: the person who drives the operator's vehicle, usually employed by the operator.
- The consignee: the entity that receives the load.

All have a responsibility, although the exact responsibilities will vary depending on the operation. For example, if the driver loads and unloads the vehicle as well as driving it, they have additional responsibilities in these areas. If the consignor loads the vehicle, the driver will have less responsibility in these areas and more responsibility will be assigned to the consignor.

The consignor

The consignor often provides the products and loads the vehicle. Responsibilities in this area usually revolve around the supply and construction of the individual elements of the [load pack](#) (such as securing consignments (loads) to a pallet) and providing information on the load such as weight and hazards. If the consignor loads the vehicle, they have a responsibility to ensure it is loaded correctly and secured.

Accidents in this area usually consist of workplace incidents such as falls from vehicles, goods falling off or from vehicles, and slips or trips.

The operator

Responsibilities for the operator usually relate to the vehicle and driver. The operator should provide a suitable type of [vehicle](#) and [load securing system](#) to ensure the load stays put during carriage and does not create or increase a risk. For example, a [diminishing load](#) has the potential to allow axles to be overloaded as the load diminishes.

Loading and unloading operations may also be included in the transport operation and bring additional responsibilities.

Robust systems should be developed specifically for the type of vehicle, for example, whether the vehicle will require [lashing straps](#), what type, how and where they should be anchored. Operators also need to ensure that their [driver is trained](#) and competent to carry out the safe operations and procedures required. This includes any temporary drivers (for example, agency drivers) who must be trained and competent to carry out the tasks expected of them.

Drivers should be empowered to raise and report any load security or loading issues. Concerns, incidents or near misses should be investigated and the outcomes reviewed to support continuous improvement.

The driver

The person that drives the [vehicle](#) has a responsibility to ensure they work safely, following procedures and training provided. This would normally involve the transportation element of the product's journey, however, may frequently include unloading and sometimes loading responsibilities.

Drivers have the ultimate responsibility for safety of the [vehicle](#) while on road and are often best placed to identify any issues early. The effectiveness of this can be significantly affected by the company's approach to safety and their response. Drivers should feel empowered to report any unsafe issues they encounter in pursuit of continuous improvement and without the risk of retaliation.

The consignee

The consignee needs to have robust systems in place to mitigate the known risks when receiving a vehicle and unloading. Some products may require the consignee to have specialist material handling equipment (MHE) to allow safe offloading, for example a forklift truck fitted with a [container](#) clamp. Other hazards could include an insecure load at the point of delivery, or a load that has moved during transit, both requiring robust methods for managing safely.

Shared responsibilities

All the above, to a greater or lesser degree, have a shared responsibility to ensure good load management is maintained throughout a product's journey. Communication and coordination between the four transport chain participants above are key to a safe and successful transport system. Defining and agreeing who does what is an important factor.

Where elements are all owned inhouse (eg an entity manufactures the product, loads the product, transports the product with an employed driver and receives the product), then communication and alignment of systems and procedures is significantly easier than if all elements are carried out by separate entities.

For example, it becomes more complicated where an entity manufactures the product and carries out loading activities, and an operator transports the product. In this scenario, frequently the manufacturer will dictate the loading site health and safety practices and operators/drivers attending the site must comply.

Those responsible for load management and security should collaborate and agree, preferably in writing, safe load security systems. See [HSG136 – A guide to workplace transport safety](#) for more information.

Risk assessing the securing of loads for transport

There is a legal requirement to assess, control and document health and safety hazards caused by all work activities that are likely to affect people and property. This includes activities such as loading, unloading and the security of loads.

The risk assessment process should follow a number of steps:

1. Identify hazards: think about and identify the likely hazards and incidents that could occur when carrying out each activity.
2. Risk assessment: assess the risks presented by each hazard, deciding how likely harm could be caused, how serious the harm could be and to whom.
3. Control measures: control the risks by identifying ways to eliminate or reduce the likelihood of the hazards causing an incident and applying appropriate control measures to manage that hazard.
4. Record the findings: risk assessments should document the hazards, the likely effects and control measures.
5. Working procedures and processes: the outcome of risk assessments can be implemented into safe working procedures. Combined with effective training and coaching should provide robust systems to ensure safe working practices.
6. Review: risk assessments, work processes and compliance should be regularly reviewed to identify any changes or trends.

Many hazards can only be eliminated by employing expensive or impractical solutions. For this reason, control measures must be 'reasonably practicable', meaning a balance is made between the level of risk and the measures needed to control that risk in terms of money, time or trouble. The burden of proof is on the employer to show there was nothing else they could reasonably do.

For example, unloading multiple drop loads in an urban environment would require constant removal and reapplication of load security systems between drops. This, however, creates other hazards when consistently removing and reapplying [load securing systems](#). It is therefore considered reasonably practicable, within specific boundaries, to move short distances with relaxed load security requirements. See [Delivering goods within a small geographical area](#) section for further information.

Risk assessments are important. They should be completed by someone competent to do so and inform working procedures and processes. When it comes to the transport chain, participants with [shared responsibilities](#) for load security all need to complete robust risk assessments for their tasks. The risk assessments then support the development of systems and procedures to control or eliminate the known hazards that are identified.

For example, an operator's risk assessment may highlight that frictional [lashing straps](#) provide the best load security option, a consignee's risk assessment may identify [side nets](#) to reduce the risk of loads falling when opening curtains. Sharing information and introducing a process using frictional [lashing straps](#) with [side nets](#) could then present robust measures to reduce both risks. Basic risk assessment and procedures should include the following considerations:

Consignor

- Load information: include the weight, size, shape and handling methods.
- Safe loading plan: include thought to the order of unloading, see [Load management](#).
- Overloading: particularly relevant when [managing a diminishing load](#).
- Load stability: see [Load pack stability](#).
- Working at height: see [HSE - Work at height](#).
- Manual handling: see [HSE - Manual handling at work](#).
- Proper instruction and training to loading staff: covering the safe loading plan and procedures to be followed.
- Proper and competent supervision of loading operations: include ongoing monitoring.

Operator

- Load information: include the weight, size, shape and handling methods.
- [Load securing systems](#).
- Use of safe loading/delivery/unloading plans.
- Overloading: particularly relevant when [managing a diminishing load](#).
- Load stability: see [load pack stability](#).
- Working at height: see [HSE - Work at height](#).
- Manual handling: see [HSE - Manual handling at work](#).
- Driver competence and experience: proper instruction and training of all drivers, see [Driver training](#).
- Adverse weather: include all likely scenarios.
- Proper and competent supervision of loading/unloading operations: include ongoing monitoring.
- Regular checks: including [load restraint systems](#) and/or [load containment systems](#) used.

Driver

- Load information: include the weight, size, shape and handling methods.
- Proper instruction and training: include the safe loading/unloading plan and the procedures to be followed.
- Competence and understanding of [load restraint systems](#) and/or [load containment systems](#) used.

Consignee

- Load information: include the weight, size, shape and handling methods.
- Use of safe delivery/unloading plans.
- Working at height: see [HSE - Work at height](#).
- Manual handling: see [HSE - Manual handling at work](#).
- Proper instruction and training to unloading staff: covering the safe unloading plan and the procedures to be followed.
- Proper and competent supervision of unloading operations: include ongoing monitoring.

Risk assessment is a formal process and the findings must be recorded in writing. Procedures incorporating the risks identified can be formulated to provide drivers and loaders with the information, training, and equipment they need to do their jobs safely.

For further information on risk assessment, visit [HSE - Managing risks and risk assessment at work](#) and [DVSA – Securing loads on HGVs and goods vehicles](#).

Enforcement

Roadside enforcement (DVSA)

DVSA shares responsibility with the police for ensuring vehicles using the GB road network are safe and compliant while in transit. Verifying that loads are secured correctly is a routine part of roadside checks carried out by DVSA examiners, alongside other roadworthiness and traffic checks. Vehicles and operators are targeted based on risk, including previous encounter history — if you have a record of non-compliance, you are more likely to be stopped in the future.

Both drivers and operators have a legal responsibility to ensure loads are secure before and during transit. Drivers must not move a vehicle if they have reason to believe the load is unsafe. Operators must ensure that effective systems are in place — including driver training, risk assessments, and regular checks on load security equipment — so that every load leaves compliant.

When assessing whether a load is secure, examiners will consider whether:

- Any part of the load could slide, topple or bounce in any direction.
- The load could make the vehicle unstable.
- The load could affect the handling of the vehicle.
- Any part of the load could fall off during transit or during the unloading process.
- The load security equipment is in poor condition or not appropriate for the load.
- Any part of the load or the way in which it is secured could present an immediate danger to road users during transit.

If an examiner decides that a load is insecure, action will be taken in line with the [Categorisation of Defects](#).

A prohibition will be issued and will only be cleared once the load has been secured correctly. Where it is considered that the insecure load would have been obvious to the driver, further action may be taken. This could include a fixed penalty notice or, in more serious cases, prosecution for using a vehicle in a dangerous condition, which could result in a higher fine and licence endorsement. Fixed penalty amounts are set by government and may change — check GOV.UK for the current figure.

There may be instances where a load has been secured effectively using a method not described in available guidance. Where this can be demonstrated as safe — through a suitable risk assessment and, where appropriate, approved testing — no action beyond advice will be taken. If you are unsure whether your approach meets the required standard, contact DVSA or an appropriate trade association before a roadside encounter occurs, rather than after one.

Following a roadside incident, DVSA will also follow up with the operator. Depending on the circumstances, this may include a remote or in-person review of load security and other maintenance procedures. Examiners will expect operators to provide evidence of the systems used to ensure loads are secured. This includes training records for drivers and others involved in loading, relevant risk assessments, and arrangements for checking the condition and suitability of load security equipment.

If examiners are not satisfied that effective systems are in place, or that the operator bears responsibility for the roadside offence, further action may follow — either through the courts or via the Traffic Commissioner, who has the power to suspend, curtail or revoke an operator's licence.

Having effective systems in place to ensure loads are secured is a basic legal requirement, not optional good practice. This guide, alongside the [GOV.UK guidance](#), will help you understand what is expected and how to meet it.

Workplace enforcement (HSE and local authorities)

Managing health and safety in the transport operation keeps workers and members of the public safe as well as reducing the risks of product loss and damage to vehicles and infrastructure. Employers and the self-employed whose work affect others must control risks in the workplace that could lead to injury. [The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999](#) set out the legal requirements for what employers need to do.

Risk assessment is the first and crucial stage of managing health and safety in a business. Risk assessment is about identifying and taking sensible and proportionate measures to control risks. Generally, employers need to do everything reasonably practicable to protect people from harm. An explanation of what 'reasonably practicable' means is provided [here](#).

Employers must:

- Ensure that the health and safety of employees, contractors and members of the public are not put at risk as a result of the employer's work activities.
- Have a written health and safety policy if they employ five or more people.
- Assess the risks to the health and safety of anyone affected by what they do (including employees and members of the public) and record the significant findings (in writing if they employ five or more people).

- Have arrangements in place for effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of preventive and protective measures identified by the risk assessment.
- Provide personal protective equipment where there are risks to health and safety that cannot be adequately controlled in other ways.
- Provide information, instruction, training and supervision to ensure employees' health and safety at work.
- Maintain any workplace and work equipment under their control in a 'safe condition' (without risks to health or safety).
- Consult with employees and their representatives on health and safety matters.
- Cooperate and coordinate where employers share a workplace. A vehicle that is being loaded or unloaded by more than one employer is a shared workplace for the duration of the loading or unloading activity.

Responsibility for the enforcement of workplace health and safety is split between HSE and local authorities depending on the main activity at the site, but they take the same approach to enforcement.

When following up concerns or investigating an incident, HSE and local authority inspectors will look at the health and safety system as a whole and consider whether employers are managing their activities in line with the 'Plan, Do, Check, Act' approach.

- Plan: describe how health and safety is managed in the business (the legally required policy) and plan to make it happen in practice.
- Do: prioritise and control risks – consult employees and provide training and information.
- Check: measure how the business is doing and investigate the causes of any accidents, incidents or near misses.
- Act: learn from experience and take action on lessons learned.

It is important to have strong lines of communication to ensure any changes can be quickly put into practice. A clear and simple incident-reporting procedure can help to identify problems early, prevent serious accidents and show how effective the control measures are.

Further guidance can be found in [HSG136 – A guide to workplace transport safety](#).

Following industry-standard practices can help to demonstrate that the employer has taken reasonably practicable steps to manage health and safety in the business.

Definitions and terminology

Primary distribution

Primary distribution normally refers to the transport of products from a hub to hub, collecting from a source such as a manufacturing facility or national distribution centre (NDC), and moving to a large capacity site such as a regional distribution centre (RDC).

Primary loads tend to be large bulk palletised products, manoeuvred with MHE and have good loading and unloading facilities available at each end of the journey.

Loads are usually moved wholly from one point to another, rather than being distributed incrementally, meaning that once load security systems are engaged following loading, they generally stay in place until the whole load reaches its destination.

Secondary distribution

Secondary distribution normally refers to the transport of products from a hub to pub, collecting from a brewery or RDC, and delivering to the end user such as a pub, restaurant or retail outlet.

Secondary loads tend to be smaller individualised [mixed loads](#), picked and packed to fulfil a customer's individual stock order requirements. Although loading may include good facilities and MHE at the RDC, unloading rarely has any specific facilities, with many products requiring manual handling skills to unload safely.

Loads are usually multidrop, distributed incrementally requiring frequent removal and readjustment of [load securing systems](#). Known as a [diminishing load](#), this operating cycle also presents other challenges such as maintaining good weight distribution throughout the gradual unloading process.

Despite the differences between primary and secondary distribution, the load security principles remain the same. Loads must be positioned in a safe location on the vehicle and stay put.

Vehicles

Curtainside vehicles and trailers are predominantly used within the sector. Primary distribution tends to be mostly larger articulated vehicles and trailers. Secondary distribution tends to be more rigid vehicles or urban articulated vehicles, often with specialist bodies fitted to better accommodate the multidrop profile of work.

Within this guide, the term 'vehicle' is used to represent both vehicles and trailers.

Load securing systems

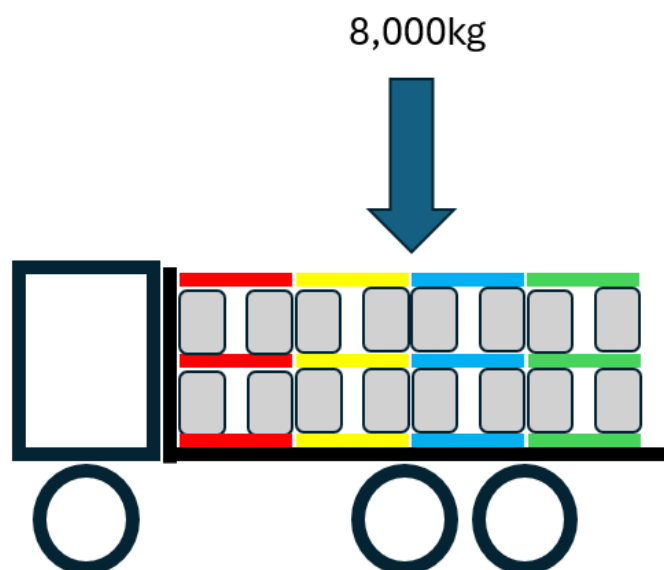
A load securing system is equipment, methods and procedures to help ensure that loads are positioned in a safe location on the vehicle and stay put during transport. In the brewing and drinks sector there are generally two types of load securing systems in use; [load restraint systems](#) and [load containment systems](#).

Load restraint systems

A load restraint system is any method utilising [load restraint equipment](#) to secure a load so it does not move during transport. Load restraint is normally achieved by the system applying a force to the load to stop it moving, for example a [lashing strap](#) tensioned to prevent movement.

At all times, the whole load restraint system must be able to withstand forces equivalent to:

- The entire weight of the load in the forward direction.
- Half the weight of the load to the sides.
- Half the weight of the load to the rear.

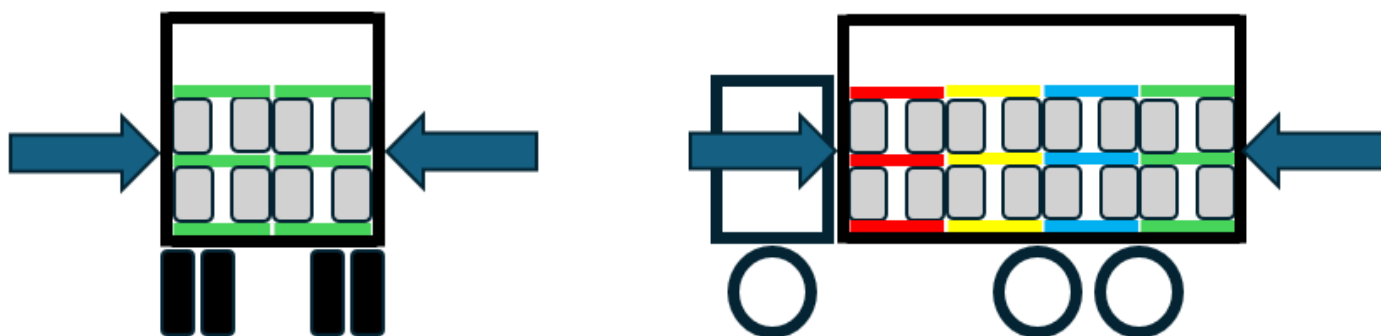


In the above example, the load of [containers](#) weigh 8,000kg. Therefore, the load restraint system must be capable of withstanding 8,000kg forwards and 4,000kg to each side and the rear.

Load containment systems

A load containment system is a method or equipment used to keep a load confined within the boundaries of a vehicle or container. Load containment is normally achieved by the system providing a robust barrier to contain the load, should there be any movement.

The only accepted method of load containment within this sector requires specific [load containment equipment](#) and [load containment methods](#). To contain the whole load, the vehicle body must be constructed to the [EN 12642-XL standard](#) and the load must be positioned such that it achieves a [positive fit](#).



The above examples show a load of [containers](#) positioned closely together within the load area. The arrows indicate the body headboard, rear doors and sides restricting horizontal load movement and keeping the load contained within the body.

At all times, the whole [EN12642-XL](#) load containment system is deemed to comply with [load restraint system](#) force requirements when the load is positioned to achieve [positive fit](#). However, the key difference is a [load restraint system](#) restrains the load to prevent it from moving, a load containment system restricts any load movement and keeps it contained.

Containers

Bulk drink products are mostly transported and stored in two types of containers; kegs and casks. They come in varying sizes, designs and weights, presenting specific challenges when transported. The following table is from the BBPA – *Large Pack Code of Practice on the Contents of Kegs and Casks (for containers in excess of 25 litres)* which outlines the typical range of container sizes used for kegs and casks in the UK.

Description of container	Declared contents (litres)
Hogshead or 54	245.5
Barrel or 36	163.7
Euro 150 or 33	150.0
Euro 100 or 22	100.0
Kilderkin or 18	81.8
Euro 50 or 11	50.0
10	45.5
Firkin or 9	40.9
Euro 30	30.0

A [risk assessment](#) must be completed for each type likely to be encountered to identify hazards. For example, a larger size means less journeys into a location but a smaller size reduces the manual handling risk. See [Transporting containers](#) for further information.

Kegs

These are reusable containers capable of maintaining a pressure and used for the storage, transportation and dispensing, primarily of beer and cider via a dispense system, through pubs and other on-trade venues. Kegs are commonly manufactured from stainless steel, although other materials such as aluminium or plastic may be used. They are fitted with a coupling head that allows product filling, transportation and controlled dispensing, under pressure, while maintaining product quality and carbonation.

Casks

These are reusable containers used for the storage, transportation, maturation and dispensing of traditional cask-conditioned beer in pubs and other on-trade venues. Typically manufactured from stainless steel, casks are non-pressurised vessels that allow the natural conditioning process to continue during storage and prior to tapping for dispense. Unlike kegs, casks are vented prior to dispensing and rely either on gravity or external dispensing methods, rather than internal pressure to deliver the product.

Load packs

A pack is normally used to describe a collection of individual products that are loaded and packaged together on pallets. Informal descriptions describe:

- Large pack: [containers](#) only.
- Small pack: products other than [containers](#).
- Mixed pack: [containers](#) and other products mixed.

Large pack

Large packs are often found in primary distribution. Their size presents an increased manual handling risk and means MHE is frequently required for loading and unloading. However, large packs are usually more uniform in shape providing both better stability and reducing the number of voids in the load area.



Large packs positioned in warehouse racking, consisting of varying numbers of containers, shrink wrapped to pallets with locator boards positioned between levels.



A large pack of containers, stacked to three levels on a pallet, locator boards positioned in-between and secured with banding.

Small pack

Small packs are often found in secondary distribution and better support multidrop operations. They can consist of one type of product, making them more symmetrical, or differing types of products which presents challenges around varying heights and widths. Although MHE may be needed for loading, the smaller individual products and quantities present a lower risk when opening packs and manually unloading the contents.



A small pack made up of boxes and drink cases, shrink wrapped to a pallet, and positioned behind large packs. A brown locator board is used as dunnage to support a positive fit within an EN12642-XL certified body.



Two small packs, each pack consists of one product type. The load is shrink wrapped to the pallet with a roof mounted (bungee) restraint system positioned ready to be pulled down and secure the load.

Mixed pack

Mixed packs are also usually found in secondary distribution usually made up of containers and other products of varying sizes and quantities. Again, the irregular shapes present different load security challenges such as varying heights and increased number of voids.



A mixed pack consisting of an individual container and other retail products, shrink wrapped to a pallet and secured to the vehicle using lashing straps. Note that only shrink wrap is securing the boxed retail products to the pallet, the shrink wrap needs to be of adequate strength/thickness to fulfil this function.



A mixed pack in between two large packs. The lower level consists of containers, the upper level consists of assorted drink cases, all shrink wrapped to a pallet and secured using a roof mounted (bungee) restraint system.

Load pack stability

Individual load components such as containers and load packs must be stable and stay put when positioned on the stationary vehicle prior to any load security interventions. This is particularly important where loads are stacked, unstable loads are more likely to move during the journey or fall from the vehicle once load security equipment is removed for unloading.

Load placement should ensure heavy items are positioned at the bottom of packs. For double deck trailers, heavy loads must always be placed on the bottom deck and no single pack placed on the top deck should exceed 400kg.

A number of solutions are in use to improve stability and enable products to be packed, loaded and transported safely. These include pallets, locator boards, shrink wrapping, lock and pop and banding.



Empty containers on site, stacked with locator boards, demonstrating good static stability.



A small pack consisting of individual product packages stacked on a pallet, the whole pack is secured with shrink wrap to provide a stable pack prior to load restraint systems being applied.



A large pack consisting of containers stacked on a pallet. Locator boards are positioned between the levels and on top, the whole pack is then secured with banding to provide a stable pack.



Containers stacked on a pallet. Locator boards are positioned between and on top, the whole pack is secured with shrink wrap to provide a stable pack.



A small pack consisting of product packages stacked on a pallet, lock and pop is applied between the packages and the whole pack is secured with shrink wrap to provide a stable pack.

Uniformly distributed load

A uniformly distributed load describes spreading the individual elements of a load evenly over a length or surface, rather than concentrating them in one single point. This ensures the weight is distributed evenly through the vehicle body and structure to protect the vehicle's handling characteristics.

Starting up against the headboard, load elements of similar heights should be positioned close together, with little to no gap present, to provide support when subjected to normal cornering and braking forces. Where this is not possible, dunnage should be used to level out the load and fill any gaps.



A load consisting of small packs at the front and large packs at the rear, uniformly distributed across the load area. Load security is achieved using a roof mounted (bungee) restraint system.



A load consisting of large packs, uniformly distributed across the load bed, with locator boards used as dunnage to support a positive fit within an EN12642-XL certified body.



Multiple consignments uniformly distributed for multidrop operations.



Multiple large packs uniformly distributed across the load area.

Mixed loads

Particularly in secondary distribution, loads consisting of multiple packaging and product types are frequently combined together to support efficient and effective multidrop unloading. This can present varying heights and weights of product across the load area and make maintaining the principles of load security (which must be maintained) particularly challenging.

If load containment systems are used for load security, locator boards are frequently used to form compartmentalised sections to support a positive fit being maintained and provide clear marking between individual customer consignments.

Where load restraint systems are used for load security, use of a load securing net may need to be supplemented with additional lashings to ensure security, depending on the variance in height and weight of the products. Palletising individual loads may also provide a clear distinction between customer consignments.



Individual small packs and mixed packs are loaded together. Load security is achieved over the differing consignment heights using a roof mounted (bungee) restraint system.



The load area is compartmentalised; load security is achieved using load containment systems.



Small packs and individual containers assembled along with locator boards to provide a positive fit.

Reverse logistics

Usually in secondary distribution, reverse logistics refers to the sorting and transport of empty containers and locator boards being returned by customers back to the hub. Empty containers often contain sediment and can significantly complicate load stability, presenting additional load security challenges such as the differences in height and weight of products distributed across the load area.

The principles of load security must be maintained throughout the journey. Drivers must be trained and empowered to decide what they can safely take, how to secure loads safely and avoid taking 'just one more' empty when it compromises load security.

Where load containment systems are employed, dunnage can be used to provide support, pack out voids and maintain a positive fit.

Where load restraint systems are employed, roof mounted (bungee) restraint systems or net restraint systems can be employed, with additional lashing straps applied where necessary when the height/weight differences are significant.



Containers and pallets being returned to the hub. Load security is achieved utilising a roof mounted (bungee) restraint system and lashing straps to provide an effective load restraint system.



A full undelivered large pack is positioned up against the headboard, with empty containers stacked behind. Load security is achieved utilising locator boards and dunnage to support an effective positive fit.



Returns are loaded from the headboard. Locator boards are used not only on top of containers to help manage horizontal movement, but also vertically and stacked horizontally as dunnage. Note a minimum of five locator boards are needed to provide sufficient support when used horizontally as dunnage, more maybe required to support larger/heavier containers.



Return alternatively positioned horizontally within the locator boards. Dunnage is added either side to support a positive fit.

Diminishing load

A diminishing load usually refers to multidrop operations most frequently found in [secondary distribution](#) where the load reduces incrementally during the journey as consignments are unloaded at different locations. The changes can affect:

- Axle weights and overall weight distribution: for example, overloading of the front axle of a rigid vehicle can occur as heavy products are removed from the rear of the load.
- Load security: for example, each time a consignment is removed, [load securing systems](#) need to be able to accommodate the reconfigured load and ensure it stays put.
- Vehicle handling characteristics: for example, weight distribution changes as the load configuration alters can affect the vehicle's braking and steering behaviour.

Loads should be designed and configured for best optimal unloading throughout the journey to ensure load security, weight distribution and vehicle handling characteristics are maintained. Effective [load planning](#) and [risk assessment](#) is essential.



Load planned in drop order, single packs utilised at the front to manage weight distribution as load diminishes from the rear.



Load planned in drop order from the rear. Full containers will be swapped out for returns to maintain a positive fit throughout the journey.

Drop pad

Also known as a 'drop mat' or a 'pig', the drop pad allows single kegs to be manually unloaded from the vehicle to the ground without damaging the [container](#). The drop pad is to be treated as any other item being transported and load security may be achieved through [load containment](#) or [load restraint](#) systems, for example secured with a [lashing strap](#).



A drop pad in use during the manual unloading process.



A drop pad (and sack trolley) secured to the load carrying area.

Dangerous goods

The carriage of dangerous goods has specific rules and regulations to ensure products are transported safely. Within the brewing and drinks sector there are two products that fall within scope of ADR (the European agreement concerning the international carriage of dangerous goods by road):

- [Gas cylinders](#).
- [Beer line cleaner](#).

The small amounts carried mean the quantities normally fall within the ADR small load exemption (SLE). Operators should be careful to not exceed the SLE threshold quantities, any doubt and operators should contact a Dangerous Goods Safety Advisor (DGSA) for further advice.

For small loads, ADR requires:

- Vehicles to have a minimum of 2kg dry powder fire extinguisher and a torch suitable for the load available, usually in the cab.
- Drivers, crew and warehouse staff handling the products to have undergone general dangerous goods awareness training.
- Dangerous goods documentation must be produced. There are no requirements for the driver to carry dangerous goods documentation, however, sufficient information must be available to enable safe handling of the product and inform an emergency response.

A [risk assessment](#) must be undertaken and inform the working procedures and processes to ensure compliance with ADR requirements. Further information is available at [HSE – Carriage of Dangerous Goods](#) and [GOV.UK – Transporting Dangerous Goods](#).

Gas cylinders

Gas cylinders are normally transported in specialised [gas cylinder racks](#), usually fitted on the outside of the vehicle or carried within the load carrying area in specialised [gas cylinder pallets](#). Both methods are designed to contain the cylinders and provide protection to the vulnerable valve area. For further information see the [British Compressed Gases Association](#).

Beer line cleaner

Beer line cleaner (BLC) must be contained in UN approved packaging and is usually transported on a [pallet](#). BLC can be combined with other products but must be placed upright, not have anything stacked on top of it, or be positioned/restrained in any way likely to increase the risk of spillage.

The UN product label must be positioned such that it is outwardly visible (with body curtains open) when the load is positioned on the vehicle. If [shrink wrap](#) is used, a label with the word 'OVERPACK' must also be displayed on the outside of the pack in 12mm high lettering. If the shrink wrap means the product label is no longer visible, any marks or labels must also be copied onto the outside of the pack.

Load security is normally achieved by [shrink wrapping](#) the product to the pallet, care must be taken not to damage the packaging due to its fragile nature, particularly if applying a load restraint system.



Small pack of BLC shrink wrapped to a pallet, the UN labels and 'OVERPACK' are clearly visible.



Small pack of BLC loaded on vehicle, a roof mounted (bungee) load system will be positioned and secured prior to transport.

Load restraint equipment

Dedicated anchorage points

Most body manufacturers provide dedicated anchorage points for use with [load restraint systems](#). Where fitted these should be utilised as they provide the best method of attachment for lashing straps. If such anchorage points are not available then the chassis or side rails can be used as anchorage points, see [GOV.UK – Securing Loads on HGVs and Goods Vehicles](#) for further information.



A lashing strap attached to a dedicated anchorage point fitted to the vehicle.



Individual lashing straps attached to individual dedicated anchorage points fitted to the vehicle body.

Lashing straps

Lashing straps (also known as webbing ratchet straps) are the most common load restraining device used to secure loads in the sector, coupled with a frictional lashing method. The size and shape of the load will dictate the appropriate number and strength of lashing straps to be used; they should be certified to EN12195-2 and be easily identifiable to those who are using them.

Protective sleeves or load spreading solutions should be used where possible to protect the lashing and the load from damage. The locking mechanism on the ratchet should be in good condition and have the ability to be locked. The spare end of the lashing strap, once it has been through the ratchet, should not be used to further secure the load. Any damaged, frayed, worn or knotted straps should be replaced.

The design, condition and strength of lashing straps are important factors in their effectiveness, solutions should be [risk assessed](#) and inform the working procedures and processes, further information is available at [GOV.UK – Securing Loads on HGVs and Goods Vehicles](#).



Large packs secured with lashing straps, fitted with edge protection to protect the webbing and locator boards.



Large packs with roof mounted (bungee) wide lashing straps positioned and ready to be tensioned.

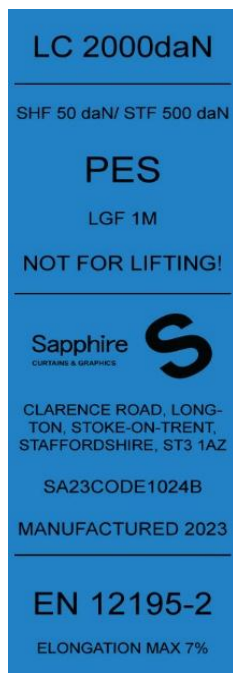


Small packs, secured with a wide lashing strap anchored to the body side rave.



A single small pack secured with a wide lashing strap.

MC 29.09.2026



An example lashing strap label with EN12195-2 clearly displayed.



An example lashing strap label with legend explaining the information meaning. Note that EN12195-2 does not require breaking force (2) to be displayed.

Load nets

Located separately and not attached to the vehicle, load nets are a load restraint system available to be positioned over a load and secured in position. To secure a load the integral lashings must be appropriately rated, positioned over the load, attached to designated anchor points and tensioned the same way as a normal lashing strap, providing an excellent load security solution.

If load nets are utilised as the principal load security solution, they should be manufactured to EN12195-2 and display a label. It must be remembered that it is the lashing strap element of the whole net restraint system that provides the load restraint. The netting element provides load containment only. Integrated lashing straps must be appropriately rated and positioned to provide effective restraint, some scenarios may require additional lashing straps fitting to ensure the load stays put.



A mixed load secured with a load net (roof mounted (bungee) load system shown, see below).



A load of large packs secured with a load net (roof mounted (bungee) load system shown, see below).

Kites

Kites (also known as 'sails', 'transverse nets' and 'nappies') are a load restraint system designed to support the rear or front of a load. They are usually mounted transversely across the load space, utilising integrated lashing straps which are secured to dedicated load restraint points and tensioned to secure the load. Kites should be manufactured to EN12195-2, display a label and be appropriately rated for the load.

When mounted at the rear, kites can provide excellent load security properties and are particularly useful when managing a diminishing load, mostly during secondary distribution operations, to help maintain a positive fit.



Empty vehicle showing rear mounted kite, complemented by load hugging side nets as part of a load containment system.



Load of large packs, secured with a load restraint system consisting of wide lashing straps over the top of the load and a rear kite securing the rear.



Vehicle loaded with containers, the rear mounted kite containing the load and complemented by load hugging side nets as part of a load containment



Large packs stacked using locator boards, secured at the rear by a kite anchored to the side rave to support a positive fit and effective load containment system.



Kite mounted at the rear of a load to provide support as part of a load containment system. Dunnage, consisting of a pallet and locator board, also form part of the system with a sack trolley also incorporated into the load.



Large packs stacked using locator boards, secured at the rear by a kite anchored to the side rave supporting the load containment system.

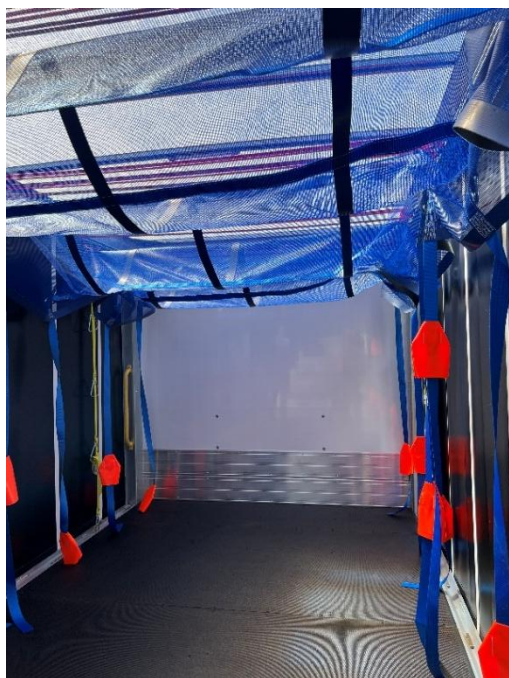
Kites can be mounted in front of loads to provide auxiliary support, for example where a load mounted mid-way down a vehicle body is taller than the load in front of it and the top portion requires restraint. Note that kites are not normally sufficient to support the full weight (100%) of a load forwards, ie they cannot be used as a moveable headboard.



Kite secured within the load, in front of large packs stacked to three levels. Note the kite can support the top level but is not designed to support the whole weight (100%) of the load and cannot be used as a moveable headboard.

Roof mounted (bungee) restraint systems

Load restraint systems, such as load nets and lashing straps, can be mounted internally from the vehicle roof suspended on bungee cords. This means the restraint equipment stays within the body roof space when not in use and leaves the load area clear for loading and unloading. To secure the load, the restraint equipment is moved into position and pulled down, allowing the integral lashing straps to be secured to dedicated anchorage points and tensioned the same way as a normal lashing strap, providing an excellent load security solution. Routine maintenance is essential to ensure the serviceability and effectiveness of these systems is maintained.



A bungee mounted load net system suspended ready to receive a load.



A load of large packs secured by a bungee mounted load net system; lowered, secured and tensioned to provide good load security.



Empty containers being returned through reverse logistics. Secured by a bungee mounted load net system; lowered, secured and tensioned to provide good load security.



A load of large packs secured by a bungee mounted load net system. Lowered, secured and tensioned to provide good load security.



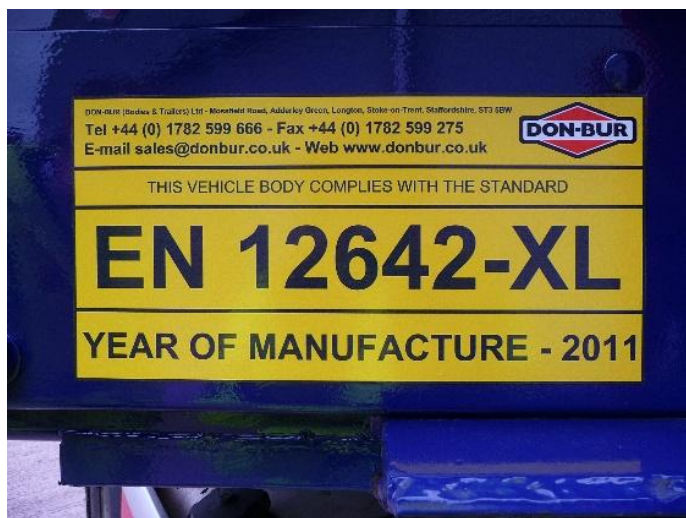
A load of large packs with wide lashing straps, suspended by bungee load system, positioned ready for tensioning.

Load containment equipment

EN12642-XL standard

This is a European standard which relates to the strength of the whole vehicle body structure including the roof, headboard and curtains. Bodies certified to this standard have a higher strength rating than a normal body indicating the ability to offer a load containment solution when used within certain loading parameters, ie [positive fit](#).

EN12642-XL bodies must be clearly identified by a manufacturer's label and supplied with a certificate or other documentation confirming that the body is rated for load containment. The body certification should be easily identifiable; simple and clear identification of the body type is very important for continued compliant load containment operation. Any other type of body or certification is not suitable for [load containment system](#) use and will require the use of [load restraint systems](#) to remain compliant. See also [Hire vehicles](#).



Pre 2016 example label indicating the body construction standard.



Post 2016 example label indicating the body construction certification standard.

EN12642-XL applies to the complete body, not individual components such as curtains. Where the complete body is not EN12642-XL certified, suitable [load restraint systems](#) must be used.

If in doubt, assume that the body is not manufactured to EN12642-XL and load security solutions must be employed as if the vehicle had a flatbed body.

Side nets

Often fitted within curtainside vehicles, side nets are usually mounted on a rail inside the exterior curtain track and secured at the load floor level. Some designs are mounted further inbound at the top to provide a 'load hugging' feature.

Side nets do not form part of the [EN12642-XL](#) body construction standard testing. Whilst providing a degree of containment support, they are an embellishment of a curtainside body [load securing system](#) and cannot be relied upon alone as the principal load security solution.

The design can provide an effective auxiliary layer of protection, helping support the principal load security solution adopted. The principal load security system options available depend on the certification standard the body has been constructed to:

- Bodies certified to [EN12642-XL](#) can utilise [load containment systems](#) or [load restraint systems](#).
- Bodies certified to other standards must utilise [load restraint systems](#).

Appropriately rated side nets can improve [safety when opening curtains](#) in the event of load shift, visibility through the side nets also enables a visual inspection of the load status prior to releasing the tension.



Side nets mounted from a roof rail, positioned inwards of the curtain track, hanging vertically with the bottom secured at the load floor level.



Side nets mounted from a roof rail, positioned further inwards from the curtain track. Hanging at an angle the nets provide a load hugging feature.



The body is constructed to EN12642-XL providing the principal load containment system. The load is uniformly distributed and fills the width of the load area supporting a positive fit. Also fitted are side nets providing auxiliary load containment support.



A similar design, this EN12642-XL certified body has side nets which reduces the potential risk of loads falling from the vehicle when the curtains are opened. Note that if the vehicle body was not constructed to EN12642-XL a load restraint system would need to be employed to provide satisfactory load security.

Load containment methods

Positive fit

Only applicable to bodies certified to loads carried in [EN12642-XL](#) bodies, positive fit refers to the parameters a load must meet to be transported safely using [load containment systems](#).

A load can be considered a positive fit if it completely fills the load bed with no gaps to the headboard, rear closure or sides. In this scenario, loads may be carried relying on [load containment](#) without additional securing.

Where the load shape or quantity is insufficient to fill the whole load area, gaps can be filled using [dunnage](#) and the rear of the load can be secured with a load security solution such as [kites](#).

Load contained by positive fit?

To determine whether [positive fit](#) can be relied upon as a [load containment system](#), the answer must be yes to **all** the following questions.

Question	Yes/no
Is the whole body (including curtains) constructed and certified to EN12642-XL ?	
Are the body and curtains in good condition, serviceable and effective?	
Is the load positioned in a safe location on the body, and will stay put?	
Is the front of the load no more than 30cm from the headboard?	
Is the rear of the load no more than 30cm from the rear closure, or the rear load restraint solution capable of providing effective restraint of the load, including compensating for diminishing loads ?	
Are there no significant gaps along the length of the load that cumulatively exceed 30cm?	
Is the gap between the load and the vehicle or trailer side no more than 8cm?	

Should the answer to any of the above questions be no, a [load restraint system](#) will need to be employed to secure the whole load and provide satisfactory load security.



Secondary distribution vehicle loaded with large packs on pallets, utilising locator boards to provide stability. The EN12642-XL certified body and tightly packaged load (positive fit) support an effective load containment system.



Secondary distribution vehicle loaded with different levels of packs; one large pack is shrink wrapped and all supported by the use of locator boards. The tight packaging of the load eliminating gaps, and use of an EN12642-XL body, supports a positive fit and provides an effective load security solution.



Primary distribution vehicle showing multiple large packs filling the load area with the EN12642-XL certified body providing containment. The rear kite is required to provide effective containment of the load rear, and side nets are also fitted to provide auxiliary load containment support.



Primary distribution vehicle loaded with multiple large packs filling the load area. The body is certified to EN12642-XL and the tight packaging supports a positive fit. The higher upper level is supported by a front mounted kite mid-way down the body, together with the side nets providing auxiliary support, offering an effective load containment system.

Delivering goods within a small geographical area

The brewing and drinks sector, usually in secondary delivery, has a need to make frequent stops in small geographical areas, (eg a village, town or city) to deliver products to pubs and commercial retail premises.

Multi-drop and kerbside deliveries present many hazards including load stability, load security, access to the vehicle load bed, work at height and manual handling which must all be subject to [risk assessment](#) and suitable control measures implemented.

A possible option available for brewery vehicles to reduce the risks presented from unsecuring and resecuring loads in these scenarios is relaxed load security requirements, but only when operating within the following strict conditions:

- The vehicle body is constructed to the [EN12642-XL standard](#).
- The vehicle speed does not exceed 30 mph.
- The vehicle only operates in the locality (eg town or village).
- The vehicle is loaded to minimise, as far as is practicable, the risk of load movement.

This relaxation does not negate the need for considering the risks presented by kerbside and multi drop deliveries such as poor [load planning](#), [diminishing load](#) and [safety when opening curtains](#). The relaxation also does not apply to vehicles travelling from a depot to a locality, to another locality or returning to a depot.



A rear kite un-tensioned during a short journey within an urban environment, not exceeding 30mph. All products are positioned in a safe location on the vehicle and will stay put. Note the outer doors and curtains would be secured closed to provide containment.



An un-tensioned lashing strap and top locator board removed to allow access to the containers. Note the curtains would be closed and secured to provide containment for a short journey in a small geographical area at low speed.

To determine whether the relaxed load security requirements can be utilised for local deliveries in a small geographical area, the answer must be yes to **all** the following questions.

Question	Yes/no
Is the whole body constructed to EN12642 XL ?	
Are the body and curtains in good condition, serviceable and effective?	
Is the load positioned in a safe location on the body, and will stay put?	
Does the next stop stay local within a maximum speed limited area of 30mph or below (eg town or village)?	
Are all curtains (and doors) fully secured?	

Other load security equipment and methods

Pallets

Used to transport individual consignments that make up a load, the standard Euro pallet is usually used to provide a stable base on which products can be located. Loads normally palletised into load packs can utilise a number of solutions to enhance stability:

- Shrink wrap: Securing the load together and to the pallet.
- Lock and pop: Products are temporarily bonded together.
- Banding: Securing the load together and to the pallet.

The condition of pallets is crucial to their effectiveness and any damage affecting the structural integrity must be repaired or replaced. For further information see [HSE – Pallet safety](#)

Pallets can also be used as dunnage.

Shrink wrap

Shrink wrap is normally used to secure products to a pallet, forming a single load pack which can be loaded onto the vehicle. When used, thought must be given to factors such as the application, thickness, number of layers and strength of the finished pack to ensure shrink wrapping is effective.

Operators should complete a risk assessment of shrink-wrap applications and their effectiveness, particularly when utilising load containment systems for load security. For further information on assessing the rigidity of shrink-wrapped packs see [European Safe Logistics Association – 40509:2020 – Test method for load unit rigidity](#).



Individual cases of products, shrink wrapped to the pallet to form a small pack. Containers form a large pack behind, with locator boards utilised as dunnage to fill gaps, manage horizontal movement and help ensure a positive fit.



Containers shrink wrapped to a pallet to provide a secure large pack.



At the front against the headboard is a large pack of containers positioned on a pallet, with locator boards positioned in-between levels and shrink wrap securing the whole pack to the pallet.

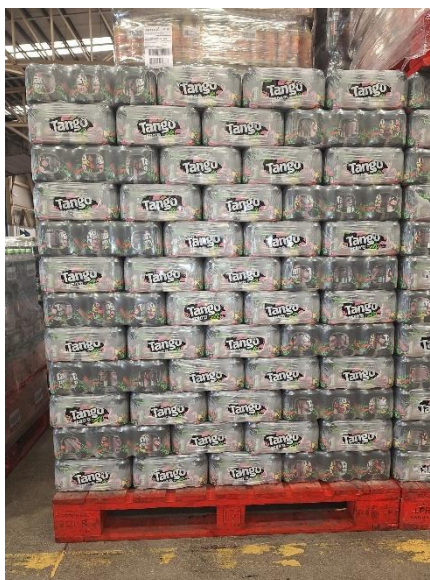
Return containers are positioned behind with locator boards used as dunnage to fill gaps and help maintain a positive fit.

Lock and pop

Pallet block adhesive, applied to product outer packaging to increase friction between the product packs, is known as lock and pop. Specialised bonding agents are used which are designed to create a temporary bond between layers of products, reduce the risk of horizontal movement and improve the stability of palletised loads during storage and transportation. Lock and pop can enhance [load pack](#) stability when used in conjunction with other pack securing methods such as [shrink wrap](#).



Adhesive applied to the top of product outer packaging.



Cases of product (top of each layer coated with adhesive) stacked on a pallet.



Lock and pop products shrink wrapped to the pallet, forming a stable small pack ready for loading.

Banding

Palletised products are frequently secured to the pallet using banding. Manufactured from plastic or steel, the banding tightly secures the load to the pallet providing a secure pack.



A large pack, incorporating a three level stack of containers positioned on a pallet. Locator boards are positioned in-between levels and the whole pack secured with banding to the pallet ready for loading.

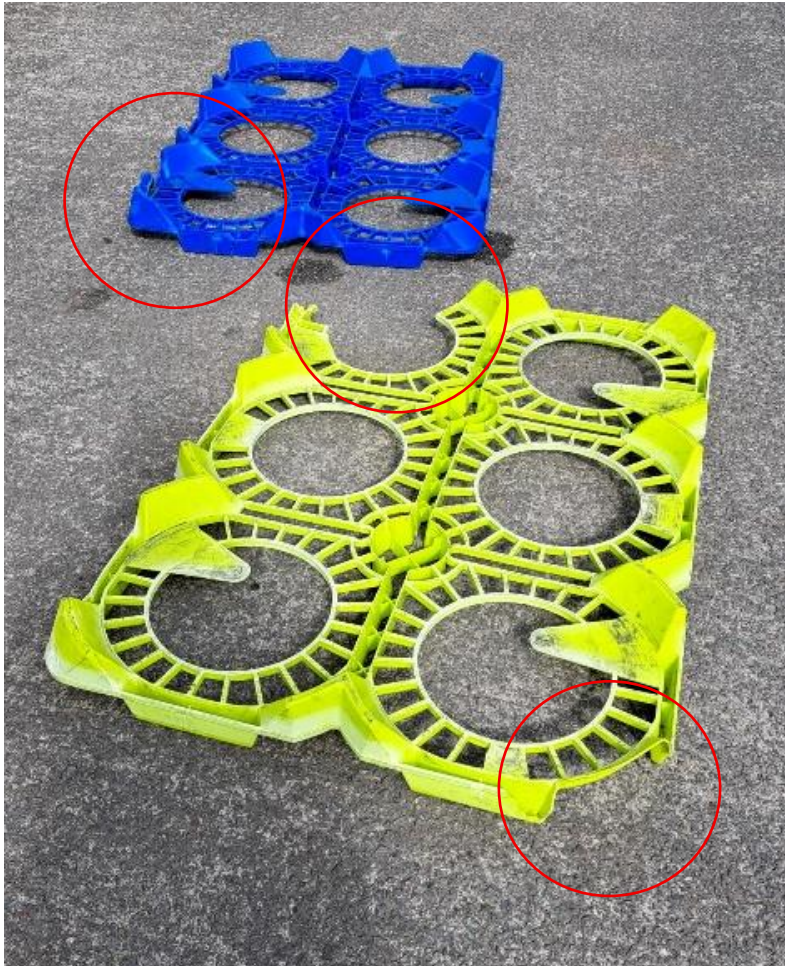


Two large packs incorporating two level stacks of containers positioned on pallets. Locator boards are positioned in-between levels, and each pack is secured with banding to the pallet. The packs are then secured to the vehicle load bed by lashing straps.

Locator boards

The shape of containers makes it difficult to ensure stability, particularly when loaded in multiple numbers. Locator boards provide a frame to control the position and movement of containers and are utilised to provide stability. Four containers positioned together cover around the same floor footprint as one standard Euro pallet.

The locator board size must match that of the container to provide effective load security. Additionally, the condition of the locator boards is crucial to their effectiveness and any damage affecting the structural integrity must be repaired or replaced.



Unserviceable locator boards which require replacement.



A damaged locator board, affecting the structural integrity and requiring replacement.



A three-level large pack of containers, utilising locator boards for stability, used in conjunction with a pallet and shrink wrap to form a stable load pack.



A large pack showing containers secured with locator boards and lashing straps.

Locator boards are regularly used within the sector as dunnage, creating the potential for shortages within the industry. Other forms of dunnage materials should be used wherever possible. It must be remembered that locator boards:

- Are primarily designed to be positioned on top of, or below, containers. Using them as dunnage increases the risk of damage.
- Are a returnable asset. Like containers they must be returned and not stored for longer than is necessary.



Stacks of different locator boards, designed to fit different sizes of container. They should not be held longer than is necessary.



Locator boards left outside a retail location. They are a returnable asset and must not be left at delivery points unless there is a specific reason to do so.

Dunnage

Dunnage refers to materials used to fill voids and gaps between individual load elements to provide support and ensure loads stay put and do not move during transport. It is particularly important when using [load containment systems](#). Minimising gaps helps prevent loads from moving relative to the vehicle bed and the smaller the gap, the less momentum the load can accumulate during movement. It is much easier to prevent a stationary load from moving than one which is in motion. Dunnage also protects products from damage. Common products used for dunnage include:

- [Locator boards](#): a returnable item and use as dunnage can cause damage, use alternative dunnage materials wherever possible.
- [Pallets](#): often a returnable item.
- Void guards: bespoke compressible bags designed specifically for use as dunnage.
- [Drop pad](#): can work in a similar manner to void guards.
- Container inserts: bespoke solution designed specifically to accommodate different container sizes in the same [load pack](#).
- Dummy [containers](#): empty and uniquely identified to make up uniform [load packs](#).



A compressible void guard, designed to be inserted into load gaps and voids to support a positive fit.



A compressible void guard inserted between two large packs to remove the gap and support a positive fit.



Locator boards positioned to remove gaps supporting a positive fit. Note a minimum of five must be used horizontally to provide sufficient structural strength to be effective, more may be required to support larger/heavier containers.



Container inserts fitted to the top of smaller containers, designed to level the support from the lower level. Note that shrink wrap needs to be applied to create a stable pack before transport as per the next image.



A completed stable large pack consisting of different height containers. Container inserts are fitted (not shown), the next level of pallet and containers added, and the whole load pack shrink wrapped ready for transport.



Dummy containers painted differing colours for identity, used when constructing loads to round up container odd numbers to support a positive fit.

Transporting containers

Due to their irregular cylindrical shape and weight, containers present a number of load security challenges, particularly managing stability. When considering container transport requirements there are generally two options available:

- Loaded directly on the load bed.
- Loaded on pallets.

Containers need support to stay put during transport. The type of transport solution depends on a number of factors including the vehicle type, the container size, the load size, how the containers are loaded and how they would be unloaded when performing the delivery itself. For example, a three-level stack would be too high to manually unload a top level container from the side of the vehicle safely.

Methods could include load restraint systems or load containment systems and may include other solutions, such as locator boards and shrink wrap, to provide support and resist braking and cornering forces. A risk assessment must be undertaken for each operation type, appropriate control measures implemented and the most suitable method adopted to ensure load security is consistently maintained throughout the whole journey. For example, containers shrink wrapped to a pallet provides good load pack stability and are an excellent option when unloading is carried out by MHE. However, when performing manual offloading, the same pack can introduce additional hazards caused by a dray person having to remove the shrink wrapping at the vehicle side to access the containers.

Single level



Single containers, contained within the load area by other products and dunnage supporting a positive fit.



Single containers showing locator boards positioned on top and restrained using a roof mounted (bungee) restraint system.

Single containers

When a load consists of odd numbers or single containers, additional challenges are presented to ensure the load is positioned safely and stays put. Small consignments are often combined into mixed packs to fill the load area and support a uniformly distributed load. Effective load planning and thoughtful loading techniques help ensure load security, utilising items such as dunnage, kites and other products to level out loads and fill gaps. During secondary distribution operations, it is likely the loads will need frequent adjustment to maintain a satisfactory load securing system as the load diminishes.



A large pack consisting of three different customer products loaded on one pallet. Note packs of similar heights are positioned together at the front to reduce the height differences and improve the effectiveness of the roof mounted (bungee) load system.



Small containers positioned into the load, filling the gap between larger containers and a small pack, supporting a positive fit.



Single containers of differing sizes positioned together with the rear kite secured to support a positive fit.

Multiple levels

When stacking to more than one level, the heaviest items should be positioned at the bottom, particularly any returns which still contain product during reverse logistics. No metal-to-metal contact (chimney stacking) should take place, locator boards can be positioned between each level, and on top of the stack, to support a stable load pack.



A large pack, consisting of three levels, with locator boards positioned between each level and on top, finished with shrink wrap to provide a stable load pack.



A three level stack of empty containers, using locator boards in-between and on top, is loaded against the headboard. The two level stack behind is topped with five locator boards to increase the effective height of the lower load, helping to retain the upper items and achieve a positive fit. Note more locator boards may be required to support larger/heavier containers.



Single and two level stacks of containers on pallets, separated by locator boards and the top secured with a roof mounted (bungee) restraint system.



Two levels of containers, locator boards are positioned between levels, the load is secured with roof mounted (bungee) restraint system and lashing straps anchored to the side rave (dedicated anchorage points not fitted).



A large pack consisting of three levels using kegs specifically designed to be stacked together. Finished with shrink wrap this method forms a stable load pack. An exception to the 'no chimney stacking' rule, this method is only suitable for kegs of the exact same type and size that are specifically designed to be stacked this way.

Multiple sizes

Containers of differing sizes are more challenging to stack and any height difference would need to be compensated for to retain a stable load pack. For example, container inserts (see dunnage) could be used in conjunction with pallets. Note that shrink wrapping or banding would also be required to create a stable load pack as pallets do not offer sufficient horizontal support to multiple container levels on their own.



Different sized return containers stacked horizontally within two locator boards, see reverse logistics for more information.



Different sized return containers stacked, positioned close together and using locator boards as dunnage to support a positive fit.

Gas cylinder racks

Specialised racks should be used when carrying gas cylinders to provide a load containment system. Racks fitted to vehicles usually carry multiple cylinders with a mechanism to allow access and retain the cylinders for transport. The racks must be in good condition with the retaining system functional and used to ensure safe transport.



Gas cylinders mounted in a specialised rack with the valves positioned uppermost. The detachable retaining rail is secured to ensure the cylinders stay put during transport.



A specialised gas cylinder rack fitted to the vehicle with the retaining device in place (un-latched), ready for removal for cylinder access.

Gas cylinder pallets

When gas cylinder racks are not available (eg using a hire vehicle), a gas cylinder pallet load restraint system could be used as an alternative. Cylinders are normally loaded onto the pallet, ensuring valves are protected and secured with a ratchet strap. The whole pallet is then loaded onto the vehicle, preferably against the headboard. If pallets are double stacked, both the first and second pallet must be restrained separately to the dedicated anchorage points.

Pallets must be in good condition with all load restraining devices appropriately rated to ensure the cylinders stay put during transport.



Gas cylinders are secured separately by two blue lashing straps to the gas cylinder pallet.



The gas cylinder pallet is secured separately to the load floor with two yellow lashing straps.

Load handling equipment

Used to transport products from the vehicle during deliveries, load equipment such as sack trolleys and pump trucks must be secure during transport. Specialised [vehicles](#) frequently have a dedicated rack or container. Other common securing methods are incorporating them into a secured load or securing individually with a [lashing strap](#).



A sack trolley secured on dedicated rack system.



A sack trolley stowed in a bespoke chassis mounted container.



A sack trolley integrated into a secured load.



A sack trolley and pump truck integrated into a secured load.



Two sack trollies and a drop mat secured to load floor with lashing strap.

Load management

Load planning

Load planning is an extremely important factor to support robust load security systems, the principle being to maintain load security integrity and good weight distribution throughout the whole transport journey with minimal interventions required.

For [primary distribution](#) where the vehicle is usually loaded and unloaded in one whole operation, the system needs to ensure the load is:

- [Uniformly distributed](#).
- Secured.

As well as above, when it comes to [secondary distribution](#), delivering to more than one site adds complications due to the [diminishing load](#). Loads should be configured for best optimal unloading throughout the [diminishing load](#) and planning needs to take into account:

- Load security: ensure that arrangements are in place for continuous and effective [load securing systems](#) as the load configuration changes throughout the journey.
- Rearranging loads between deliveries: include [reverse logistics](#) and utilising returned containers, locator boards and dunnage to fill gaps to keep load [uniformly distributed](#).
- Removing and resecuring load security solutions: evaluating the risks presented from accessing the load and resecuring.
- Axle weights and overall weight distribution: ensuring the axle weights are not exceeded and the load is [uniformly distributed](#) to maintain good vehicle handling characteristics.
- Managing differing sites and layouts: for example, areas where the public may be present or where site restrictions exist.

Good load planning enables vehicles to be loaded in order of delivery, allowing the different drops to be methodically picked from the rear of the load throughout the multidrop unloading process. Robust [risk assessment](#) and procedures are needed to ensure correct loading for each body type. Factors to be considered include:

- Who will unload the vehicle at each drop.
- What unloading equipment will be available and who will use it, for example tail lifts.
- Will the load need to be rearranged so the vehicle axles are not overloaded, and who will do this.
- How the [diminishing load](#) will be secured, and who will do this.
- How will working at height on the vehicle be managed, for further information see [HSE – A guide to workplace transport safety – Work at height on vehicles](#).

In the brewing and drinks sector, companies usually use different methods of planning and loading depending on the type of picking and systems used. The main differences in picking and loading are:

- Bulk picking and loading (picked and loaded by product, category and container size).
- Drop order picking and loading (picked and loaded by customer's whole order).
- Loading vehicles using bay doors and dock levellers.
- Loading vehicles from ground level via the vehicle sides using MHE.

Load planners can create a vehicle load using load planning software such as DiPS or Paragon depending on the company. The load must not exceed the maximum payload for each vehicle size and take into account individual axle loadings. Stock volume must also be taken into consideration, for example 22 gallon [containers](#) take more space and are usually not double stacked due to weight for safety reasons. The load planner can assign the position of each customer order on the bed of the vehicle (this is not applicable to bulk picking and loading).

Warehouse loaders should load the vehicle as per the plan produced by the load planner or driver. The load must be [stable](#), [uniformly distributed](#) and be secure either using [load restraint](#) or [load containment](#) systems.

Operators should provide suitable vehicles for the load types carried including correct load securing solutions. They should also make sure that warehouse and transport staff are trained and competent in load distribution and load securing methods.

[Competent and trained drivers](#) must maintain the load throughout the whole journey and make sure it is stable and secure at all times between drops. This is especially important during [reverse logistics](#) where empty containers are usually collected from each customer and re-loaded onto the vehicle. The load should be re-secured after each delivery and any gaps, movements or instability managed to ensure the load stays put.

Safety when opening curtains

The possibility of load movement during transport means when opening vehicle side curtains there is a risk of loads falling on operatives. Safety must be a foremost priority to protect those in the vicinity including staff, customers and the general public. This applies to all primary and secondary distribution operations and includes all curtainsided vehicles commonly used in the brewing and drinks industry.

All staff involved in the loading and unloading of vehicles should be trained and competent. Key things to consider before opening curtains are:

- Curtains should be visually inspected for bulges; any abnormal shapes could indicate a shifted load that could pose a risk of items falling out and causing injury or damage.
- CCTV systems designed to observe and monitor the load area should be checked for potential load stability hazards.
- The area around the vehicle should be clear and checked for hazards such as moving vehicles, pedestrians or uneven surfaces.
- All required PPE must be worn including safety gloves, footwear and Hi-Viz clothing.
- Opening curtains in high winds should be avoided as gusts can cause loss of control and serious injury.
- When releasing the curtain tension ratchets, hands and face should be kept clear of the mechanism and pole as sudden movements or failures can result in impact injuries.
- Manual handling techniques should be followed, pulling the curtain in stages helps to prevent excessive musculoskeletal strain.
- Any damaged or malfunctioning equipment or unsafe conditions should be reported and the task paused until resolved.

Following these steps should help keep everyone safe when opening vehicle curtains, a risk assessment must be undertaken for each vehicle type to ensure robust systems are in place, further information is available at [HSE – Workplace transport](#)

Driver training

Loads in the brewing and drinks industry usually include mixed product formats, all of which present sector-specific load security risks requiring [assessment](#) and practical control measures rather than general awareness alone.

Driver load security training should form part of a structured competence process for all drivers working within the sector and include permanent, temporary, new and agency drivers. Training should be tailored to the sector specific [vehicle](#) type, load profile and delivery method covering practical principles of safe loading including:

- Understanding and checking pack and product [stability](#).
- Ensuring weight is [uniformly distributed](#).
- Making sure that [load restraint equipment](#) and [load containment equipment](#) is correctly recognised, selected, checked and applied.
- Securing methods for loose items such as empty [pallets](#), empty [containers](#), stacks of [locator boards](#) and [load handling equipment](#) before departure.

Drivers should also be trained to maintain load security throughout the journey, by understanding how the load profile can be affected as elements are unloaded, and ensuring load security is re-established and rechecked prior to departure. This is particularly important during multi-drop operations where [diminishing loads](#) can challenge the load [positive fit](#) and increase the risk of moving or falling items.

Training should reinforce assessment of the load in the same way for a driver as an enforcement examiner would. This should include whether any part of the load could slide, topple, bounce, affect vehicle handling, make the vehicle unstable or fall from the vehicle during transit or unloading. Additionally, an unsafe vehicle must not be moved until the issue has been rectified.

To support consistent compliance, training should be delivered through documented procedures, practical demonstration, competence assessment and refresher briefings. Records should be retained to provide documented evidence of driver instruction and assessment on operational procedures reflecting the principles and expectations within this guide, [GOV.UK – Securing loads on HGVs and goods vehicles](#) and [HSE – Load security](#).

Light commercial vehicles

Light commercial vehicles (LCV) are those not exceeding 3.5t maximum authorised mass (4.25t for zero emission vehicle). LCVs are sometimes used to carry out [secondary distribution](#) within urban areas utilising either a van or curtainside body design. Load movements carried out by LCVs must meet the same load securing principles of heavy goods vehicles, however the weight and design differences do present some restrictions.

LCV curtainsided bodies are not normally certified to [EN12642-XL standard](#) meaning [positive fit](#) cannot be used as a load securing solution. [Load restraint systems](#) are the only viable option to secure loads in these rigid vehicles, such as [lashing straps](#), [load nets](#) or [roof mounted \(bungee\) restraint systems](#).

[Gas cylinders](#) present a risk of asphyxiation in a van body and are not normally transported in LCVs. They require specialist [racks](#) to be transported safely which are not normally fitted to LCVs.

The risk of exceeding axle weights and overloading is a greater risk with LCVs. [Containers](#) full of product should preferably be transported in single layers, ie no stacking. Where another layer is required (two level stack), [locator boards](#) should be used and the load [risk assessed](#) to ensure load security and weight requirements are met. No more than two layers of full containers should be stacked on LCVs.



An LCV fitted with a roof mounted (bungee) restraint system ready to load.



A mixed pack loaded in an LCV, secured by a roof mounted (bungee) restraint system.



A curtainsided LCV loaded with a single layer of containers and sack trolley. Locator boards are fitted and the whole load secured with lashing straps.

Hire vehicles

Hire vehicles are rarely fitted with [load restraint](#) and/or [load containment](#) systems suitable for loads transported in the drinks and brewing sector. Examples include [roof mounted \(bungee\) nets](#), [EN12642-XL standard](#) bodies or [side nets](#). However, loads carried on hire vehicles are required to be secured for transport and other methods of restraint will need to be employed.

Vehicles should be treated as a standard flatbed body and a different [risk assessment](#) completed to identify what will be required to secure loads safely considering hazards such as vehicle weight capacities, load deck height and potential working at height risks.

Standard [lashing strap](#) restraints are one option, as could the use of [load nets](#). Restricting loads to a certain type could be another option, for example only transporting identical and symmetrical large packs of products, easily secured with appropriately rated [lashing straps](#).

If carrying [dangerous goods](#), in addition to ensuring [gas cylinders](#) are transported safely, other specialist equipment may also need to be considered such as a fire extinguisher.

It is vital to ensure that discussions and planning with the hire company take place in good time in order that appropriate load securing equipment can be sourced.



Load nets positioned over a mixed load of products, anchored to the body side rave.



Large packs secured with locator boards and a wide lashing strap, anchored to the body side rave.

Third party logistics

Third party logistics (3PL) refers to transport operations where goods are moved by an organisation separate from the consignor or consignee. This includes contracted logistics providers, subcontractors, agency drivers and customer collections. The company employing the services of the 3PL is known as the contracting party (CP).

The use of 3PL providers within the brewing and drinks sector is widespread and continues to increase. While this supports operational flexibility, it is recognised that this increased complexity adds a significant and growing risk area due to variation in:

- Vehicle type and specification.
- Load securing equipment and capability.
- Driver competence and experience.
- Familiarity with sector-specific risks such as [containers](#), [mixed loads](#) and [diminishing loads](#).

Where these differences are not adequately controlled, there is an increased likelihood of unsafe loads being presented for transport.

Key principles for safe 3PL operations

The following principles must be applied to all 3PL activities:

- Responsibilities: must be clearly defined and agreed.
- Communication: across all parties must be clear and effective. 3PLs must apply load securing systems correctly and consistently.
- [Vehicles](#) and equipment: must be suitable for the load and in good condition.
- Returnable items: must be controlled and secured.
- Quality control: all involved in the transport operations must be trained, competent and empowered to refuse unsafe loads.

While [responsibilities](#) may be shared across multiple parties, the fundamental requirement remains; loads must be positioned in a safe location on the vehicle and stay put throughout the journey.

Responsibilities within a 3PL environment

The legal requirements remain unchanged regardless of who undertakes the transport activity, loads must be positioned in a safe location on the vehicle and stay put during transport. However, where 3PLs are involved, [responsibilities](#) must be clearly defined, communicated and understood prior to loading and vehicle movement.

Consignor

The consignor (eg brewery or drinks manufacturer) is usually responsible for:

- Constructing a stable [load pack](#) prior to transport.
- Providing accurate load information including:
 - Weight.
 - Load type (eg [containers](#), [mixed loads](#), [returns](#)).
 - Handling requirements or hazards.
- Ensuring [load securing systems](#) are applied where loading activities are undertaken.
- Communicating site rules and load securing expectations to the driver or operator.

The consignor must not load vehicles that are clearly unsuitable or where the load cannot be secured safely.

3PL operator/subcontractor

The 3PL operator is usually responsible for:

- Providing a suitable [vehicle](#) and [load securing system](#) for the load being transported.
- Ensuring drivers are:
 - Competent and appropriately [trained](#).
 - Familiar with load securing requirements in this sector.
- Maintaining equipment in a serviceable condition

CPs must ensure robust systems are in place for safe transport activities.

Driver

The driver retains the final responsibility for the safety of the vehicle while on the road. The driver must:

- Check that the load is safe and secure before departure.
- Be empowered to refuse movement of the vehicle if the load is unsafe.
- Be able to raise concerns when the vehicle, load or securing methods are not adequate.
- Reassess load security throughout the journey where necessary (eg multi-drop operations).

Communications and shared responsibility

In a 3PL environment, lack of clarity is a common root cause of unsafe transport. All parties involved in the transport chain share [responsibility](#) for load security and must collaborate to ensure safe outcomes. Clear effective communication and agreement of responsibilities is essential.

CPs should provide clear, accessible load securing guidance to 3PLs including:

- Written instructions.
- Digital guidance (eg QR codes, mobile device access).
- Visual examples of acceptable load configurations.

This is particularly important for subcontractors unfamiliar with the sector, agency drivers and customer collections. 3PLs must apply the load securing systems correctly and consistently.

Vehicle and equipment suitability

Vehicles used by 3PL operators may not be specifically constructed for the brewing and drinks sector. Common issues include:

- [Vehicle](#) bodies not constructed to [EN12642-XL](#) standard.
- Absence of [load containment equipment](#) such as [side nets](#) and [kites](#).
- Insufficient or inappropriate load securing equipment.

Where non-specialised, [hire vehicles](#) or [LCVs](#) are used, they must be treated as a standard flatbed body requiring full [load restraint systems](#), [load containment solutions](#) are not appropriate.

3PL operators must ensure that:

- Vehicles are suitable for the intended load and serviceable.
- Adequate securing equipment is available and used correctly.
- Equipment is in good condition and appropriately rated.

Returnable items (3PL)

Items returned through [reverse logistics](#) introduces additional risk within 3PL operations and must be actively managed. Returnable items include:

- [Locator boards](#).
- Empty or full [containers](#).
- Other returnable [containers](#).

Particular care is required where returns are combined with outbound goods as this creates mixed and potentially unstable load profiles. Drivers must be supported and empowered to prioritise safe load configuration over collection volume ensuring returnable items:

- Are secured to the same standard as outbound loads.
- Are planned and controlled, not collected on an ad hoc basis.
- Do not compromise load stability or security.

Quality control

CPs must take reasonable steps to ensure that loads leaving their control are safe. This includes:

- Verifying that the load has been secured correctly.
- Challenging unsafe practices.
- Recording and escalating non-compliance.
- Communicating concerns to relevant parties.

Failure to act where an unsafe load is identified may result in the 3PL operator becoming complacent in unsafe onward transport, with the CP also complicit increasing the risk of potential regulatory consequences.

CPs and loading teams must have clear authority and procedures to:

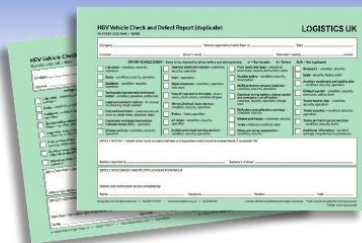
- Refuse vehicles that are unsuitable for the load.
- Refuse loads that cannot be secured safely.
- Delay loading until appropriate controls are in place.

Refusal must be recognised as safety-critical quality control, not a commercial decision, and reflect a strong safety culture willing to act when good load security cannot be assured.

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