

## PREVENT LITTER AND KEEP WASHINGTON ROADS CLEAN AND SAFE

**"No person shall throw, drop, deposit, discard, or otherwise dispose of litter upon any public property in the state...whether from a vehicle or otherwise." (Source: RCW 70.93.060 (1)).**

Around 37 percent of all litter-related citations issued by Washington State Patrol are for a failure to secure a load. An additional 22 percent of citations are issued for debris escaping from loads. (Source: Washington State Patrol Records).

Covering or securing your load will keep money in your pocket. You'll keep our roads safer. And you'll be doing your part to keep Washington clean and beautiful.

**Litter and  
it will hurt.**

**REPORT VIOLATORS  
866-LITTER-1**  
866-548-8371



For a "Tips For Secured Loads" video or more information, visit [www.litter.wa.gov](http://www.litter.wa.gov).

*Solid Waste & Financial Assistance Program  
Publication Number 08-07-030*

*If you need this publication in an alternate format, please contact the Solid Waste & Financial Assistance Program at 360-407-6900. Persons with hearing loss can call 711 for Washington Relay Service. Persons with a speech disability can call 877-833-6341.*

*NOTICE: This document is intended for information purposes only. Nothing in this document constitutes professional advice, nor does any information in this document constitute a comprehensive or complete statement of the issues discussed or the laws relating thereto. The Department of Ecology will not be liable for any loss or damages, including loss or damages resulting from implementation of methods or procedures described herein.*

# Tips For Secured Loads



**Litter and  
it will hurt.**

**REPORT VIOLATORS  
866-LITTER-1**  
866-548-8371



**Ask yourself...  
"Would I feel safe  
driving behind my  
vehicle?"**

If the answer is "No," you need to do a better job securing your cargo.

Each year in North America, road litter, either dumped on purpose by motorists, or fallen accidentally from unsecured loads, causes 25,000 accidents, nearly 100 of them fatal. Here in Washington, road litter also hurts. On average, over 400 accidents involving road debris happen on state highways each year. (Source: Washington State Department of Transportation).

Many accidents and injuries could be prevented simply by securing vehicle loads more effectively.

The tips included in this brochure provide common sense guidelines for securing loads. Each load is different, and the driver of every vehicle must make sure that nothing in the vehicle can fly out or shift during transit.

## Littering in Washington brings stiff fines.

When material escapes your vehicle because your load isn't secure, you're littering. State law (RCW 46.61.655) specifically requires that "No vehicle shall be driven or moved on any public highway unless such vehicle is so constructed or loaded as to prevent any of its load from dropping, sifting, leaking or otherwise escaping..."

Simply traveling with an unsecured load is against the law. If any part of your load can escape your vehicle — even if it doesn't — you can get a ticket. In the event something you're hauling flies off or leaks out and harms a person or property, the penalty hurts. Tickets from Washington State Patrol and local police can cost up to several thousand dollars. You might even spend time in jail.

If you arrive at a landfill or transfer station with an unsecured load of garbage, prepare to pay extra.

**Please be aware that your community may have a load ordinance that goes beyond the state law and requires loads to be covered. Check with local authorities to be sure you are in compliance.**

## What is a "secured load"?

A load is secure when no cargo can slide, shift, fall, sift onto the roadway, or become airborne.

- Secure all cargo to prevent movement forward and backward, side to side, and up and down.
- Secure all cargo against wind and other forces that can cause it to become airborne.
- Secure all cargo against sifting through the bed of a truck or trailer and onto the roadway.



# USE THE RIGHT TIE-DOWNS TO SECURE YOUR LOADS.

The first step in securing a load begins with tie-downs such as straps, ropes, or chains. Weight and gravity alone will not hold items in place.

**Adjustable tie-down hooks** can easily be moved to meet differing needs. (See Figure 1)



Figure 1

**A stake-hole eye bolt** is a more solid but less adjustable option. These are inserted in the stake holes, then screwed and tightened into place. (See Figure 2)



Figure 2

**A cargo bar** buttresses against the sides of the truck bed, helping to prevent items from sliding or tipping. (See Figure 3)

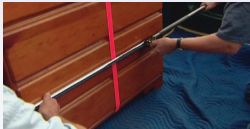


Figure 3

**Blocking devices** such as sand bags or chocks, along with **rubber mats**, can reduce movement of cargo and help hold slippery items in place. (See Figure 4)



Figure 4

**Webbed straps with tightening ratchets** are some of the most secure, easiest-to-use tie-downs. As a general rule, the straps should be rated with a holding strength twice the weight of the load. (See Figure 5)



Figure 5

**Bungee cords should not be used as primary tie-downs.** Bungee cords, along with twine, string, small gauge cord, or rope, may be used to secure items together inside a load. (See Figure 6)



Figure 6

**Cargo netting** holds smaller, lighter items in place, but isn't designed to keep heavy items from sliding and shifting. (See Figure 7)

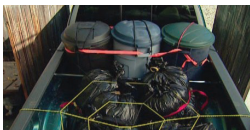


Figure 7

# TIPS FOR SECURED LOADS

There are several forces that can move or shift your loads: hitting a bump, turning a corner, sudden braking or going up a hill. These forces can tip items or send them flying onto the roadway. Wind can also turn any load into an airborne hazard.

**Lighter goes lower.** Place lighter items in the bottom of the load so that heavier items can help hold items down. (See Figure 8)

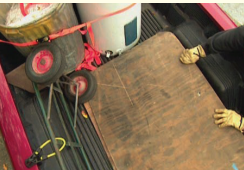


Figure 8

**Keep the load below the top edge** of the truck bed or trailer, if possible. (See Figure 9)



Figure 9

**Block items against each other** or bundle them together to minimize shifting and movement.



Figure 10

**Place tall cargo against the back of the cab** and strap upright cargo securely to the truck bed or trailer.



Figure 11

**Lay tall items flat** in the truck bed or trailer, if possible. (See Figure 10)

**Block the wheels of equipment such as lawn mowers** to prevent rolling. Wrap straps around and through wheeled equipment to further secure it. (See Figure 11)

**Securely seal** all boxes, bags, and garbage cans to keep contents from blowing away.



Figure 12

**Wrap straps through and around items** such as hand trucks and ladders. Secure the straps to anchor points in the bed of the truck or trailer. (See Figure 12)



Figure 13

**Buttress and strap small items** such as shovels and rakes, gas cans, and paint cans together, and/or cover them with a secured tarp. Place items such as hand tools in the cab of the truck or in a toolbox secured to the bed of the truck or trailer. (See Figure 13)



Figure 14

**Secure cushions, pillows** and other loose light items against the wind. (See Figure 14)



Figure 15

**Strap and secure mattresses and furniture to the vehicle**, so no amount of wind or other forces can dislodge them. (See Figure 15)

**Uncovered materials such as wallboard or cardboard may disintegrate in the rain.** Cover items with a solid, water-proof tarp to prevent airborne debris. (See Figure 16)



Figure 16

**Fully cover loose material** with a solid tarp and secure the tarp to the truck or trailer.



Figure 17

**All corners of a load should be tagged with red flags** (one foot by one foot), if the load extends four feet beyond the bed of a truck or trailer. (See Figure 17)



Figure 18

**Remove all mud, rocks, or other debris** from a vehicle's body, fenders, frame, undercarriage, wheels, and tires before driving on paved, public roads. (See Figure 18)



Figure 19

**Once underway, stop and check** to see that nothing has loosened or shifted. (See Figure 19)