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**GETTING LOADS OFF YOUR MIND:**

**TRADE ORGANISATIONS CAN LEAD THE WAY ON SAFE STOWAGE**

Unsafe loads on vehicles injure more than 1,200 people a year and cost UK businesses millions of pounds in damaged goods. While most HGV fleet operators know the tight regulations and the penalties for cutting corners, it is not widely known that the same rules on load safety apply to *all* vehicles.

This month, Driving for Better Business is calling on trade groups to follow the lead of the British Aggregates Association (BAA) in raising awareness of safe loading – especially of tippers and cement mixers – among its hundreds of members and associate members.

It is an offence to use a vehicle or trailer on a road if it involves a danger of injury to any person. This includes any situations where the weight, position, or distribution of a load, or how it is secured, involves this danger. The offence can be committed not only by the driver but by anyone who causes or permits this – which may be the business. The penalty now is an unlimited fine.

“The most common problems are inadequate – or a total lack of – risk assessment, and worn out or wrong load securing kit,” says the HSE’s Nina Day, a chartered mechanical engineer and a dangerous goods safety advisor specialising in road and workplace transport, talking on DfBB’s latest podcast.

Tippers and open-topped trucks are the vehicles most likely to have insecure loads. Often, the main cargo is stowed securely, then loose equipment such as tools, thrown in afterwards. She points out that loads must be secured from moving not only forward and backwards and side to side, but also upwards, highlighting two fatal incidents caused by loose items bouncing out of vehicles. Potholes, speed humps and uneven road surfaces can also cause loads to shift, affecting the vehicle’s braking and steering and making it more likely to turn over.

Light commercial vehicles are also more likely to be overloaded or insecure – often down to the driver failing to understand the vehicle rating. One driver, pulled over by police, confidently believed that the 3.5-tonne rating meant that the 3-tonne load was legal.

Simon Turner, Campaign Manager for Driving for Better Business, says: “Trade associations and business networks can play a huge role in raising awareness and standards. They often represent large numbers of smaller companies whose primary activity is not transport, and who may not even realise they have legal responsibilities to their drivers and other road users. We are seeing trade associations in the construction sector take these messages on board and we welcome the BAA for taking this initiative. Safe loading is a responsibility that sits with everyone in the transport chain.”

Listen to the podcast*Safe loading - where do fleet operators get it wrong?* <https://dfbb.podbean.com/e/nina-day/>

A key element of Driving for Better Business is sharing good practice, with numerous case studies from the highways and construction sectors available on the website. Metworks is one organisation that has recently shared guidance on overloading and load security among its 200 van drivers.

DfBB has a range of practical, free-to-access resources including loads on safe loading:

Driving a van: weight limits and loading  
<https://www.drivingforbetterbusiness.com/resources/search-results/?res=Driving+a+van%3A+weight+limits+and+loading&id=9896>

Load security: good practice  
<https://www.drivingforbetterbusiness.com/resources/search-results/?res=Load+securing%3A+good+practice&id=9896>

Load security: roles and responsibilities  
<https://www.drivingforbetterbusiness.com/resources/search-results/?res=Load+securing%3A+roles+and+responsibilities&id=9896>

Load securing: vehicle operator guidance  
<https://www.drivingforbetterbusiness.com/resources/search-results/?res=Load+securing%3A+vehicle+operator+guidance&id=9896>

Load security: consequences of poor load security  
<https://www.drivingforbetterbusiness.com/resources/search-results/?res=Load+security%3A+consequences+of+poor+load+security&id=9896>

Load security: how DVSA enforces the rules  
<https://www.drivingforbetterbusiness.com/resources/search-results/?res=Load+security%3A+how+DVSA+enforces+the+rules&id=9896>

Ratchet straps: What you need to know  
<https://www.drivingforbetterbusiness.com/resources/search-results/?res=Ratchet+straps%3A+What+you+need+to+know&id=9896>

Securing loads on flatbed vehicles  
<https://www.drivingforbetterbusiness.com/resources/search-results/?res=Securing+loads+on+flatbed+vehicles&id=9896>

Notes to editors:

British Aggregates Association is also working with partners at National Highways and Driving for Better Business as it looks to adopt, support, and raise awareness of the CALMDriver initiative, developed with the Campaign Against Living Miserably suicide prevention charity. Suicide is the biggest killer of men under 50 – a demographic that aligns closely with that of truck drivers in the UK.

**Media contact:** Hadstrong <https://hadstrong.com/> Becky Hadley on 07733 054839

**About Driving for Better Business**

Driving for work is one of the highest-risk activities that many employees undertake, whether they drive a commercial vehicle, a company car or make occasional work journeys in their own vehicle. As the gig economy continues to grow, this also means those who ride for work as well as those who drive.

Driving for Better Business is a free to access government-backed National Highways programme, delivered in partnership with RoadSafe, to help employers in the private and public sectors reduce work-related road risk, protecting staff who drive or ride for work, and others who they may share the road with.

Our mission is to improve the levels of compliance for all those who drive or ride for work by demonstrating the significant business benefits of managing work-related road risk more effectively.

<https://www.drivingforbetterbusiness.com/>