



(Photos: AZ Dept. of Transportation)

Secure Your Load: Save Lives

Have you ever been driving along the highway and suddenly litter flies out of the open bed of a pick-up or debris falls off the back of a truck in front of you? Maybe you had to brake hard or swerve suddenly to avoid a collision. Serious problems arise when items such as ladders, mattresses, furniture, landscaping supplies and construction debris fall off of trailers or other vehicles.

Unsecured loads are responsible for about 25,000 accidents each year in North America, resulting in approximately 80-90 DEATHS.

(Source: AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety).

What is a Load?

A load can consist of a number of things in the bed of a pick-up truck, such as large heavy objects or just a loose bag or can. Many pickup truck drivers find they have a "magic" truck bed. Papers, wrappers, cans, leaves, and other litter that gets tossed into the bed has magically "disappeared" when the truck arrives at its destination. That's because all of that stuff gets blown out along the freeway. Litter should not be put in the beds of pickup trucks, to prevent unintentional littering.

Tips for Securing Your Load

Tie It Down.

Large or heavy items should be firmly secured with solid straps, rope, bungee cords, or netting. Tie large items directly to your vehicle. Small string is not adequate – tie down materials must be able to withstand the wind loads of 70 mph on the highway. A lot of people are not aware that at 70 mph, wind is providing about a 20-pound-per-square-foot push on those loads, which can dislodge those loads and push them right off your vehicle. Don't use restraints if they are frayed, cut or damaged in any way.

Cover It Up.

For loose, lighter items such as tree clippings, a sturdy plastic or canvas tarp or netting can be used to keep items in place. Tie the tarp securely, or it might become road debris as well.

Lighter Goes Lower.

Put lighter weight things at the bottom of the load and make sure they are secure. Evenly distribute the load to prevent it from sliding.

Don't Overload.

Keep material level with truck bed or trailer unless tied down, netted or tarped. Materials below the truck bed should also be secured if there's any chance of them blowing out or falling from the vehicle.

Double-Check.

Double check your load to make sure it is secure at the back and on the sides and top. Remember that loads can move and settle during a journey, allowing restraints to loosen. If possible, recheck restraints shortly after beginning your trip.

Make Sure It's Roadworthy.

Ensure both the vehicle and trailer are in good mechanical condition and roadworthy. Make sure your vehicle is rated to tow the load. Drive to the conditions: your load will make your vehicle less maneuverable and it will take longer to stop.

Ask Yourself:

Is there any chance of debris falling or blowing out of my vehicle? Would I feel safe if I were driving behind MY vehicle? What would happen to MY load if I had to brake suddenly or if I hit a bump?



This piece of metal debris was kicked up from a Phoenix, AZ. area overpass onto the freeway below, punching clear into the passenger side seat. Fortunately, the driver was alone in the vehicle at the time.

Fines for Littering

Did you know that littering can cost drivers and their passengers a misdemeanor fine of \$50 up to \$250 in the state of Mississippi. Think about it. The fast food that cost you \$5 could end up costing you \$250 when you toss that bag out the window. Isn't it easier to simply find a trash can or to keep a litter bag in your car?

Fines for Roadway Debris

You can also be fined for an unsecured load. According to the Mississippi Department of Transportation, violators could be charged with a misdemeanor. The fines, plus court costs, can range from \$250 to well over \$1,000.

It's the Law

According to Mississippi law, No vehicle shall be driven or moved on any highway unless such vehicle is so constructed or loaded as to prevent any of its load from dropping, sifting, leaking, or otherwise escaping there from, except that sand may be dropped for the purpose of securing traction, or water or other substance may be sprinkled on a roadway in cleaning or maintaining such roadway. **Sources:** Codes, 1942, § 8268; Laws, 1938, ch. 200.

MISSISSIPPI, IT'S TIME TO SECURE THOSE LOADS!

Think Green, Keep Mississippi Clean