

LOAD SECURITY BY LOAD TYPE.

The DVSA rules for securing different loads, in one place. What every load must resist, when an XL body counts, when it doesn't (liquids), and how to secure each load type – with a pre-departure check to sign off.

Vehicle Reg.:		Date:	
Load Type:		Trailer / Body:	
Checked By:		XL Certificate? Y / N:	

THE THREE FORCES – WHAT EVERY LOAD MUST RESIST

- 100% of the load's weight forwards (heavy braking throws it at the cab).
- 50% to each side.
- 50% to the rear.

Friction helps but never counts on its own. Unless you have a certified high-friction surface, the grip figure used is 0.2. A proper anti-slip mat gives 0.6.

THE RULES THAT ALWAYS APPLY

- The load must be stable and stand up on its own **without lashings**. Lashings can't make an unstable load safe.
- Load against the headboard, or within 30 cm of it. Fill gaps with dunnage, packing or empty pallets.
- Anchor only to rated points – floor rings, cross-bearers, chassis or sub-frame. **Never** rope or sheeting hooks.
- One lashing per attachment point. Don't hook a lashing back onto itself, and don't mix straps and chains in one lashing.
- Sheets and nets *contain* a load – they don't secure it. Use them with lashings, not instead of them.
- Protect straps from sharp edges, and re-check tension after the first few miles.

XL CURTAINSIDERS – WHEN THE BODY COUNTS

A curtainsider built to **EN 12642 Code XL** can hold part of the load through its structure – but only with a **positive fit**. Positive fit means the load is:

- against, or within 30 cm of, the headboard;
- tight along the length with no cumulative gap over 30 cm;
- within 30 cm of the rear doors;
- within 8 cm of each side curtain, with no gaps between items.

The trailer needs a valid XL certificate and sound curtains, straps and buckles. Without positive fit, the XL body is only **secondary containment** – a safety extra, not the securing system – and you must lash the load. Some XL certificates are tighter than the figures above (often 8 cm sides / 15 cm rear); the certificate wins.

WHERE XL DOES NOT COUNT – LIQUIDS, IBCS & UNSTABLE LOADS

Liquids and the XL rating

A liquid isn't a solid, form-fit block – it surges and shifts, so it can never give a positive fit. That means the XL body does **not** do the securing for liquids, and you lash them regardless. The same goes for any load you can't pack tight.

IBCs (bulk liquid containers): secure with **2 straps** over the strongest points of the frame – never one strap over the middle, which bends the frame and fails. IBCs slide, so load them against the headboard or a barrier. A central upright lets you use one strap over it. Empty IBCs: one strap if it won't damage the frame.

Drums, kegs and barrels: shrink-wrap and band to a pallet as one unit (or use locators), then ratchet-strap to the vehicle.

Tanks: twist-lock or secure the tank/frame to the vehicle; close and secure all hatches, valves and hoses; check relief devices before the journey.

Vehicles & other loose loads: you're unlikely to get positive fit, so the XL body is only a safety extra – secure as if on a flatbed.

SECURING BY LOAD TYPE

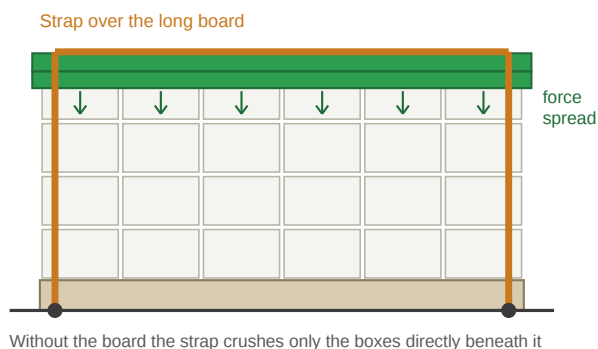
Load type	Make it one unit / stabilise	Secure it to the vehicle
Boxes & cartons (e.g. oil)	Shrink-wrap or band to the pallet as one solid unit. Don't stack loose boxes more than 3 high.	Positive fit in an XL body, or lashings over long edge boards. Extra straps front & rear if stacked. Corner boards under every strap.
Bales (hay / straw / paper)	Build a stable stack; keep bales tight so they can't work loose.	One top lashing per stack plus straps front & rear, or rated nets/sheets. Baled paper up to 400 kg: buckle straps.
Bulk bags / FIBC	Sit on a pallet; cover with a sheet/net or a rigid empty pallet on top.	At least one strap per row, through the lifting eyes or over the top pallet. Cover open bags to stop spillage.
Construction (bricks / blocks)	Stable without lashings; load to the headboard.	One frictional lashing per row; last row 2 lashings. Cross-strap a rear bulkhead round the load to the chassis – never under the pallet.
IBCs (liquid)	Rigid framed container – inspect for leaks first.	2 straps over the strongest frame points; load to headboard/barrier. XL / positive fit does not apply. See callout above.
Paper reels	Load tight, side by side, no gaps.	Positive fit (8 cm curtains, 30 cm ends) plus a high-friction mat of 0.6 or more. On side: well, cradle or chocks.
Loose bulk (tipper)	Body contains it front, back and sides.	Sheet or net cover; a sheet if the load sits above the sides. Never rely on it settling below the sides.
Metal / steel	Stable on the bed; use cradles or barriers for shape.	Chains preferred, plus physical barriers. Protect straps from sharp edges. Follow British Steel guidance.
Timber	Stable stack; goal posts for uncut timber.	Lashings or chains – 3 straps for long lengths so it can't rotate. Never rope as the primary method.

Load type	Make it one unit / stabilise	Secure it to the vehicle
Roll cages	Load to a bulkhead; apply the cage brakes.	A strap or tension bar across the width every 3 rows and at the very rear. Don't overload.
Scaffolding	Low friction – expect it to shift.	2 loop (choke) lashings over the headboard; sheet the bed and frictional-lash if flat; a 'sail' barrier at the rear.
Plant (light)	Load to the step; support wheels/tracks on timbers if needed.	Positive fit plus 3 frictional lashings, one over any hydraulic boom. Lash loose buckets separately.
Vehicles	Weight fully on the bed; parking brake on, in gear.	Wheel lashings + chocks; front & rear vehicles have all 4 wheels lashed. Curtains/XL are not restraint.
Gas cylinders	Upright in purpose-made racks, cribs or frames.	Lash individually if carried loose; protect valves. Never in the cab or footwell.

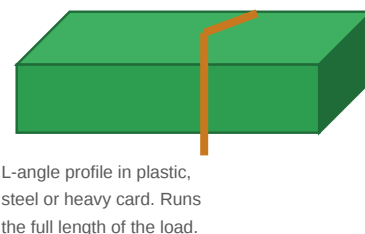
EDGE & CORNER PROTECTION – LONG BOARDS FOR SMALL PACKAGES

For small packages – cartons, tins, small boxes – a bare strap digs into the few packages directly under it, crushes them and loses tension. A **long edge board** runs the length of the load under the strap and spreads the force along the whole top edge, so many packages share the load and none are crushed. Use them wherever a strap crosses the top edge of a light or crushable load.

FRONT VIEW – one long board, many small packages



The long edge board



PRE-DEPARTURE LOAD CHECK

☐ Load stable without lashings	☐ Tight to headboard (within 30cm)	☐ Gaps filled with dunnage
☐ Anchor points rated (no rope hooks)	☐ One lashing per point	☐ Edge / corner boards fitted
☐ Rear bulkhead where needed	☐ Sheet / net for containment	☐ Straps undamaged, LC checked
☐ Anti-slip mats where grip is low	☐ Axle & gross weights OK	☐ XL certificate valid (if relied on)
☐ IBCs: 2 straps, to headboard	☐ Liquids lashed (XL not relied on)	☐ Tension re-checked after a few miles

Checker Signature:

Driver Signature:

FROM CHECKLIST TO SYSTEM

A checklist is only as good as the load it's stood next to.

Load security is where roadside prohibitions and public inquiries start. An S-marked (dangerous) load stops the vehicle, endorses the driver and counts against the operator's licence. AJTC keeps you the right side of it.

- External Transport Manager cover, so someone owns compliance with you
- Monthly audits that check load security, not just paperwork
- DVSA and Traffic Commissioner correspondence handled directly

Start simple

Most operators start with a free 30-minute consultation, get their drivers and vehicles onto the AJTC Compliance platform in the first week, and stop tracking any of this on paper.

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