

SECURE THAT CARGO! HOW TO MANAGE YOUR LOAD

No one wants a piece of cargo to become loose or unsafe during transport, and the best way to do that is to be thorough with driver training, have the right tools, and stay on top of trends and rules. **BY AMANDA HUGGETT**



Cargo securement shouldn't be an afterthought! Remember that light-duty or medium-duty trucks or vans are subject to the same regulations as heavy-duty vehicles. You'll want to provide the best solution for each specific vehicle to make sure everything on board stays in place.

PHOTO: KINEDYNE

→ You're probably always looking for ways to save time, reduce damaged cargo, increase productivity, and enhance ROI, right?! Good news, because these cargo management basics can do just that.

Work Truck asked top cargo experts for their insight and advice to get you on the road to cargo securement success so your drivers can take off with peace of mind that precious cargo is safe and sound for top-notch transport.

TRAIN FOR SUCCESS

First and foremost, fleets should equip new drivers with a formula for success. Bob Dissinger, director of US sales at Kinedyne LLC, noted that cargo securement can often be an afterthought for training new drivers.

Common mistakes made include not using the proper number of securement devices, trusting that someone else who loaded your cargo secured it right, not checking your securement every 50 miles, and not realizing that everything being carried in the truck is considered cargo



Weather Guard's CabMax Composite Bulkhead protects your driver while also creating a solution for even more storage.



Make sure to use the right system for your vehicle and the job, frequently checking that your equipment is in working order. US Tarp recommends remote or powered systems to keep your driver focused.

and needs to be secured.

All drivers, regardless of time spent on the road, should be able to distinguish between the need for chains or straps, cargo nets or covers, and when to use corner protectors, for example. Make sure drivers have a pre-trip inspection checklist, so nothing is missed.

"It is important to understand both the requirements and best practices when it comes to securement," Dissinger said. "Drivers and anyone securing a load should understand the forces that act upon a load in transit and how that impacts the required cargo securement. It is key that drivers be confident in the required WLL for their load."

Kinedyne's cargo securement 101 training videos are a great place to send your drivers to start.

To make sure good habits stick, Erik Nelson, director of sales for Sortimo of North America, advised building safety into your culture. Consider a simple catchphrase like "unsecured stuff always rides rough" to convey the importance of driver responsibility and ownership.

USE THE RIGHT TOOL FOR THE JOB

Products such as straps, ties, tarps, winches, shelving, drawers, bins, and doors can help keep things in place and organized.

Adam Molberger, senior product manager – van for Weather Guard, said that

one of their most sought-after products is the CabMax Composite Bulkhead, which serves as a barrier between the driver and cargo area. This not only protects the cab and driver but creates customizable storage and acts as a sound barrier — ultimately keeping the driver more alert.

Choosing your securement devices should be easy, but don't fall prey to saving money with the cheapest solution.

"While simple devices are easy to use and maintain, in most cases, a powered system and even a remote-controlled system will pay for itself in a very short period," said Tom Bronz, president & CEO of US Tarp. This also ensures that drivers can pay attention to other aspects of the job.

Don't forget to always keep a well-stocked supply and check to make sure your equipment is in good, working order. Hauling damaged or incorrect devices ensures a waste of time and money. Each expert recommended regular inspections of resources so that worn or damaged devices can be taken out of service.

DO IT SAFE, DO IT RIGHT

Another common mistake is assuming that a piece of equipment will not move in the vehicle, shared Chad Friedli, Western sales manager for Ankra Cargo.

"This is common especially considering most service vehicles are under pressure to get the next job. In haste, cargo securement might not be given the proper attention," he added.

For commercial van users, Molberger of Weather Guard said payload and driver safety are some of the most misunderstood aspects of cargo management.

"Not only can an overweight cargo van result in hefty fines, but it also can put the driver in harm's way. Vans come with challenges from keeping everything in place while driving to unforeseen incidents like short stops, bumps, sharp turns, and accidents. These events can cause materials to shift and become uprooted from their place in the cargo van."

Nelson of Sortimo echoed this sentiment, adding that it is especially common for heavy items. But in an accident, the forces at work are many times the force a person can exert on an object. Even the smallest

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of evasive driving maneuvers may avoid an accident with another vehicle, but still allows unsecured cargo to shift in a way that is unpredictable and unsafe.

In some cases, underusing securement devices can result in cargo becoming missiles, resulting in damage to other goods or injury to the driver.

Because safety is so important, Sortimo crash-tests the supplies they provide.

“Keeping all of the equipment on the shelves or secured to the floor is just part of our DNA,” Nelson commented. “Our equipment locks, clicks, or snaps to each other, the shelving, the floor, or even our drawer and pull-out slide systems. It keeps everything cohesively joined as one unit, allowing it to react and provide strength as a whole system.”

When it comes to tarping, Bronz mentioned that one misstep drivers often make is holding the “open” switch too long when retracting.



Safety is paramount when it comes to keeping cargo secure. Sortimo's products lock in place with each other for even greater peace of mind.



PHOTO: SORTIMO

“Over tightening may fail or burn out the motor, it can stretch or tear the tarp, or it could bend the cross tube or tarp axle,” he warned. “Adding an easy switch or proper driver training will save you significantly when considering system damage and repair.”

Sometimes, you’ll need new solutions to secure cargo. Kinedyne offers a curtain side vehicle in their new Kaptive Strap system that suspends cargo securement inside the trailer to easily place and secure your cargo.

Molberger of Weather Guard also reminded not to forget about organization.



The Tie Down Calculator app from Ancra helps keep track of current requirements and standards and make it easy for drivers to reference numbers.

“Not only can overloading the cargo area cause major safety issues, but it also affects productivity,” he said. “A well-organized work van improves efficiency, mitigates safety concerns, and maximizes space.”

And when upfitting, make time to plan out your custom interior. Time and intent upfront always saves in the long run.

FOLLOW THE RULES

Whether light- or medium-duty trucks or vans, remember that these vehicles are subject to the same securement regulations as heavy duty.

Dissinger of Kinedyne said: “In light-duty trucks, consider airline track, logistic straps, or cargo nets to keep your cargo and drivers safe. Medium-duty trucks can run the risk of having loose equipment, so make sure that everything on your vehicle is properly secured.”

Because it’s always better to be safe than sorry, brush up on the required number and types of tiedowns to meet FMCSA standards. Ancra makes it easy with their free mobile app. You can set standard or metric measurements, enter custom article lengths and weights, and store working load limits for easy reference.

STAY ON TREND

Be ready for whatever is next by following trends and technology and adapting to meet new cargo rules down the road.

Friedli of Ancra Cargo mentioned that automation is a hot topic now, and Ancra’s new AutoDeck automates your decking system at the push of a button. This can improve freight loading efficiency, reduce damaged freight claims and maintenance costs, and improve driver and forklift operator safety and satisfaction.

With automation also in mind, Kinedyne is looking at e-winch, on-board cargo securement monitor systems, and curtain side vehicles — the latter of which is already popular in Europe for its speed and easy access to cargo.

Whatever your cargo management approach, attention to regulations, safety, organization, and training are all key to delivering wins for your trucks, drivers, organizations, and customers. **wr**