

2024

Sugarcane Transport Load Restraint Guide



CANEGROWERS

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This booklet has been prepared by CANEGROWERS in consultation with the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator.

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Front cover image: **CANEGROWERS SOURCED.**

1. Purpose

This document is an industry guideline – prepared by CANEGROWERS for those involved in the transport of sugarcane in Queensland. This industry guideline was developed in consultation with the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR).

The objective of this guideline is to assist sugar cane transport operators to understand their obligations in relation to loading and load security when operating on a road or road related area. This guideline provides relevant information and links to resources that will assist operators to understand their obligations when transporting a load on Queensland roads, irrespective of the road type, distance to be travelled and the type of vehicle being used. This guideline must be read in conjunction with the 2018 Load Restraint Guide, The *Heavy Vehicle National Law* (HVNL) and any applicable NHVR issued exemption notices or permits that apply to an individual's operation.

2. Scope

This guideline applies to all heavy vehicles and agricultural machinery used to transport sugarcane in Queensland. This includes loaded haulout units, body-trucks, semi-trailers, b-doubles and other on road vehicles used.

3. Background

The transport of harvested sugarcane from the field to delivery points (sugar mill cane railway sidings and other locations) requires the seasonal, repetitive use of public road infrastructure by field haul-out units and on-road road transport units. This may include the use of a road and the road related area or the road reserve as defined by the HVNL.

This activity is vital for the export of Queensland's largest agricultural crop by volume and value.

Road safety is vitally important for all road users and the loss of the sugarcane load during transport should not occur. The 2018 Load Restraint Guide, available at <https://www.nhvr.gov.au/files/202112-1285-load-restraint-guide-2018.pdf> provides best practice load restraint systems to meet loading requirements and loading performance standards. It includes technical information, detailed diagrams and worked examples to help you determine the restraint required for your heavy vehicle load.

The 2024 Sugarcane Transport Load Restraint Guide aims to establish "best practice" for the load restraint and transport of sugarcane on public roads – to prevent cane spillage from haulage units.

4. Heavy Vehicle National Law (Chain of Responsibility)

Under HVNL s. 26C, parties in the Chain of Responsibility (CoR) have a “primary duty”, to ensure the safety of their heavy vehicle transport activities. This is because CoR parties are the ones that have control and influence over transport activities that include:

- the recruitment and training of workers,
- procuring and maintenance of vehicles and equipment,
- providing a suitable and safe work environment,
- the development of operational procedures,
- conducting assurance activities, and
- reviewing and updating processes to improve safety and compliance.

If your business is a party in the CoR and it fails to eliminate or minimise public risks so far as is reasonably practicable, then it may be in breach of its primary duty.

More information on the Chain of Responsibility can be found here - <https://www.nhvr.gov.au/safety-accreditation-compliance/chain-of-responsibility>

Everyone involved in the harvest, transportation and delivery of sugarcane by road has a responsibility for the safe use of the heavy vehicle and its load throughout the journey. This includes any of the following:

- Contract Harvester and or Grower - Sending the sugarcane (Consignor / Loading manager / Loader / Schedulers / Prime contractor)
- Contract harvester or Grower - Transporting the sugarcane (Operator / Unloader)
- Contract Harvester and or the Mill - Loading and Unloading the sugarcane (Consignee / Loader / Unloader)
- The Mill - Receiving the sugarcane to process (Consignee / Unloader)



A breach of the HVNL loading requirements could also amount to a primary duty breach when a party in the CoR has failed to do everything reasonably practicable to ensure safety.

More information on Load Restraint HVNL obligations can be found here - [Regulatory Advice – Loading and load restraint | NHVR](#)

5. Heavy Vehicle National Law (Loading Requirements)

A range of vehicle types, with substantial differences in design and operation are used to transport sugarcane. Whilst this is the case, the law is the same for all of them regarding the loading and transportation of sugarcane.

CoR parties, other businesses, drivers and workers all have a responsibility under HVNL section 111 (linked below). This section sets out that it is an offense for a person who drives or permits another person to drive a heavy vehicle that does not comply with the "loading requirements" which are set out in Schedule 7 of the *Heavy Vehicle (Mass, Dimension and Loading) National Regulation* and include the following:

- Loads must not be placed on a heavy vehicle in a way that makes it unstable or unsafe
- Loads must be secured so it is unlikely to fall or be dislodged from vehicle
- An appropriate method must be used to restrain the load.

Section 111: <https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/whole/html/inforce/current/act-2012-hvnlq#sec.111>

This means that vehicles when loaded must not allow the loss of the sugarcane load.

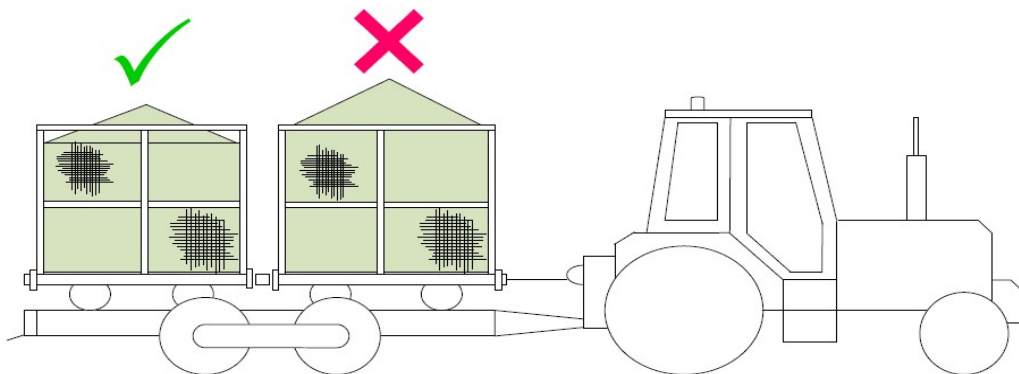
In practice there are many ways that could be used to prevent cane spillage and operators need to ensure that an appropriate method is used.

One method may involve cane bins being loaded in a manner such that the resulting freeboard (vertical distance between the top rail of the bin and the lower edge of a cane peak) is sufficient to contain any settling which, by nature of the trip, is likely to occur and prevent spillage when the vehicle travels.

Other considerations are to ensure the mesh on the bins does not allow billets to fall through and the bins are not damaged in a way that allows sugarcane billets to escape during transport.

Examples of freeboard peak loading

The vertical distance between the top rail of the bin and the lower edge of a cane peak **must** be sufficient to contain any settling and avoid sugarcane spilling from the vehicle. Provided the sugarcane is not likely to spill from the bin during transport, a cover may not be required. The following images may serve as a general guide.



Visual inspection of the vehicle and load prior to departure should be conducted before the start of each day to ensure there are no cane billets or trash accumulating on the vehicle as a result of being loaded.

Examples of billets caught on sides and mud guards

Clearing billets and material is a simple process that can be done quickly using a broom. This process may be required when taking the cane from the paddock to the siding and, when transported by road, from the siding to the mill.



Loose billets and material on vehicle

Cane transport vehicles that travel at higher speeds may be more prone to spillage and operators should assess their specific situation to consider whether freeboard is sufficient to contain the load or if other restraints such as a cover or shielded sides may be required.

When transporting cane in roll-on-roll-off bins, it is important to ensure that bins supplied are equipped with an appropriate mesh size, that prevents loss from the sides. If cane is escaping from the sides during travel, then action must be taken to prevent this as well as contacting the mill owner so that a permanent solution can be found. The cane bin itself is also considered a load and must not be at risk of dislodging during transport.

Example of shielded sides:

The shielded walls of the truck bin prevent spillage of cane from the sides. This method of restraint is effective and is recommended when travelling at higher speeds and longer distances on public roads and other restraints are failing to secure the load.



Shielded sides

6. Removal if Spillage Occurs

Appropriate load restraint must be applied to prevent spillage during transportation. However, if spillage occurs it must be removed from the road as soon as possible by the vehicle operator or contractor to avoid creating a potential hazard.

In addition to this, all (or other) members of the harvesting crew must be notified and appropriate action taken to prevent a recurrence.

If the contractor is engaged by the mill owner to transport the cane to the mill, the driver should ensure the harvesting contractor responsible for loading the bin and their supervisor / manager is notified as soon as possible to minimise the potential for repeat occurrences.

Records should be kept of where this occurs.