Road Transport (Mass Loading and Access) Regulation 2005

Transportation of wool bales

INDUSTRY UPDATE – SEPTEMBER 2010

Transporters of wool bales must comply with both the Road Transport (Mass Loading and Access) Regulation 2005 and be guided by the performance standards for the safe carriage of loads on road vehicles as stipulated in the 'Load Restraint Guide', which came into effect in 2004 and includes the restraints for the loading of wool bales. The RTA has also issued a Permit Notice for 4.6 Metre High Vehicles (vehicle and load) that also offers guidance on the correct loading methods for wool bales.

Understanding the rules of restraint for loads will help drivers and parties in the "chain of responsibility" to comply with their duties to manage loads to ensure safety on the NSW road network.

Load Restraint Guide

The nationally accepted load restraint method for loads of all descriptions is set out in the Load Restraint Guide 2004, published by the National Transport Commission. The Guide advises operators of the loading pattern required when loading wool bales and that loads must be placed so that the overall width and height does not exceed maximum allowable dimensions during the journey.

For example, bales can be carried by a combination of tie-down and containment by front and rear loading racks.

- Tie down lashings are used to restrain the load sideways.
- Front and rear loading racks supply the rearward and additional forward restraint required.
- Specifically designed cap tarpaulins can assist in restraining the top layers of bales only.

NSW Legislation

The transport of commodities, including wool bales, by heavy vehicles on NSW roads is governed by the Road Transport (Mass Loading and Access) Regulation 2005. The Regulation states the maximum width of a vehicle, including its load, CANNOT exceed 2.5 metres.

Wool bales are a divisible load. Therefore, there is NO exemption to the regulatory width for the transport of wool bales on NSW roads.

Transportation of wool bales on 4.6m high vehicles, including its load, is governed by the 4.6 Metre High Vehicle Route Notice 2008 under Part 2 of the Road Transport (Mass, Loading and Access) Regulation 2005. Section 5.5 of this Notice sets out the required loading pattern for wool bales when loading vehicles up to 4.6m high, which is shown hereunder:

(a) Loading Pattern

(i) The first tier comprises two rows of bales placed on their flat with heads together and butts facing outwards. Bales shall be loaded so that no seam of any bale projects beyond the outermost limit of the tray of the vehicle (See Fig 1).

(ii) The second tier is placed on top of the first tier in the same pattern.

(iii) The third tier comprises three rows of bales placed on their flat with their ends facing to the front and back of the vehicle.

(iv) The fourth tier comprises no more than two rows of binding bales places on their flat, with at least one row facing to the front and back of the vehicle.

(v) If the fourth tier comprises only one row of bales, it should be placed along the centre of the vehicle, with the ends of all bales facing the same direction, either outwards or to the front and back of the vehicle.

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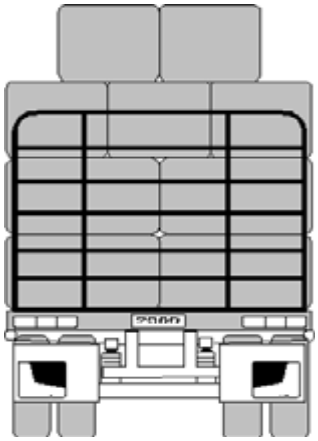

Fig 1

(b) Restraining the load laterally.

(i) The outward spread of the lower bales along the sides of the vehicle must be minimised by using separate lashings to restrain the centre of the lower two rows of bales (See Fig 2).

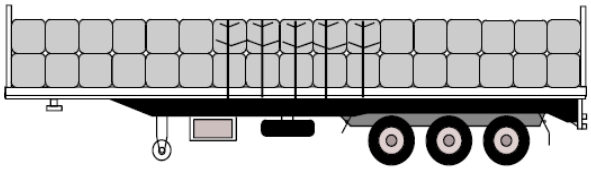

Fig 2

(ii) Lashings (minimum standard 12mm synthetic ropes) must be tied over the five centre bales.

(iii) After the third row of bales is added, webbing lashings each of a minimum rated capacity of 2 tonnes must be applied at each bale along the length of the vehicle (See Fig 3). Ropes alone are not strong enough for this application. Two webbing lashings must be replaced by rope where there are no suitable winch positions, except for the end two lashings, provided that the two lashings are not side by side.

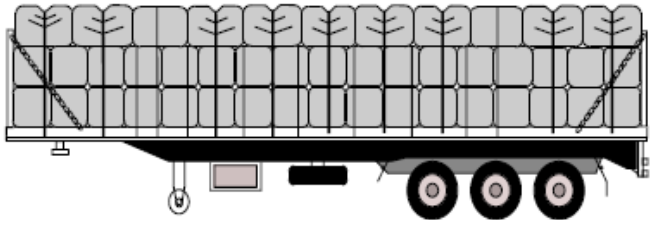

Fig 3

(iv) Where a fourth row of two bales is added to the already restrained bottom three rows, it must be restrained by a suitable cap tarpaulin but still having ropes on the front and rear end bales (See Fig 4). If a cap tarpaulin is not utilised, ropes or webbing lashings should be applied at each bale along the length of the load.

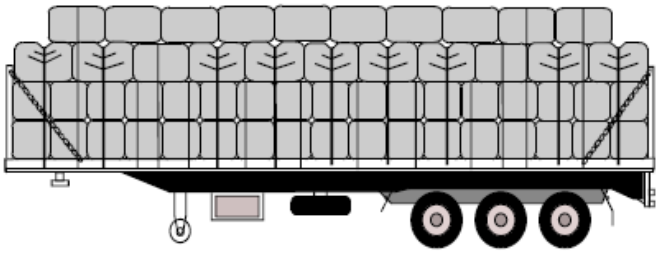

Fig 4

(c) Restraining the load forwards and rearwards.

(i) Forward and rearward movement of the load must be restrained by tie-down lashings, with additional restraint from strong head and tail gates.

(ii) Diagonal chains of 2 tonnes minimum rated capacity must be attached to the top of these gates and onto the vehicle tie rail supports to provide additional restraint (See Fig 4).

Where to find more information

Both the 'Load Restraint Guide 2004' and the 4.6 Metre High Vehicle Route Notice 2008, can provide further guidance for vehicles up to the regulatory height of 4.3m (including its load).

Further information on the transportation of loaded wool bales is available from the RTA at:

www.rta.nsw.gov.au (see heavy vehicles link).

The 'Load Restraint Guide' can be obtained from RTA Motor Registries.

The Road Transport (Mass Loading and Access) Regulation 2005, is available at: www.legislation.nsw.gov.au.

Disclaimer:

This document describes the rules pertaining to the load dimensions for the transportation and loading of wool bales.

Different dimensions may be applied in other States.

This document does not constitute legal advice. Check the legislation or contact the RTA for more information.

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