

1 What is an unsecured load?

An unsecured load has not been fastened in or attached to the vehicle with tarps, rope, straps, netting, or chains, so as to prevent any part of the load or the covering from becoming loose, detached, or leaving the vehicle while the vehicle is moving.

A load is secure when nothing can slide, shift, fall, or sift onto the roadway, or become airborne.

2 Network impacts

Every year debris on our road network fallen from unsecured loads such as household goods, building materials and green waste, cause millions of dollars in damage, contribute to serious crashes, road closures and congestion as well as significantly impacting our natural environment.

2,800 callouts to collect debris from our roads were recorded by us in 2015. Our [Incident Response Service \(IRS\)](#) has been used over 2,300 times for incidents ranging from major and minor traffic accidents, car, truck and bus breakdowns and daily debris removal from our road network.


For the IRS team to safely remove fallen debris from our roads, one or two vehicles must set up message boards displaying "debris on road" signs to warn drivers of the upcoming hazard and close lanes to remove debris.

This takes time to complete safely and slows the flow of traffic across the road network as the restrictions on our freeway during morning and afternoon peak adversely affects the reliability and performance of travel times.

3 Driver responsibilities

Both light vehicle drivers and heavy vehicle operators are responsible for proper and safe load restraint. Safe load restraint is everyone's responsibility under the [Chain of Responsibility](#) and is essential to [Keeping WA Moving](#).

A load that hasn't been secured properly can result in \$150 on the spot fine under the Road Traffic (Vehicles) Act 2012 or an immediate \$200 fine under the Litter Act 1979 if items (including sand, soil and small debris) come off a vehicle because of improper load restraint. Fines of up to \$5,000 for individuals and \$25,000 for corporations can apply in the case of a severe breach or if legal action is taken.

A handy  [Load Restraint Information Sheet](#) has been produced, aimed at educating light vehicle drivers of their responsibilities.

4 Effects of unsecured loads

- Increased congestion, especially on our freeways, caused from collection of debris;
- Injury or damage caused by objects from vehicles falling onto other vehicles, pedestrians or cyclists;
- Damage to vehicles caused by drivers swerving to avoid falling or fallen items;
- Loss of vehicle control and skidding when encountering loads that have spilled onto the road; and
- Serious injury or death caused by unrestrained loads acting as deadly projectiles, crashing into driver and passenger cabins during emergency braking.