

Tarping on Flatbed Transport Trailers

Recommended Practices:

For the driver:

1. Use lighter and smaller tarps when possible.
2. Ask for help for the tarping and untarping.
3. Use a forklift to get the tarp on top of the load.
4. If a forklift is not available, get help from other workers and plan the lift. Keep the load close to the body, avoid twisting, and lift together.
5. Get a firm grip on the tarp. Do not just hold the ropes as they can slip or break.
6. Spread legs for balance before pulling tarp.
7. When conditions are windy, park close to buildings if possible so they provide some shelter to reduce the tarps from blowing.
8. Use three-point contact when getting on and off trailers. Climb on/off the flat bed via from the rear of the trailer or the catwalk. Don't jump.
9. Wear proper shoes that are appropriate for the weather conditions.
10. Before pulling the tarp, move air under the tarp by lifting and lowering it to move air underneath.
11. Pull tarp with two hands. Keep hands close torso and about waist height. Pull towards the body.
12. Use arms, legs, and body weight to pull the tarp.
13. Wear gloves to prevent loss of grip.



Tarping of flatbed trailer

For the employer:

1. Provide lighter and smaller tarps. Covering a load with three smaller tarps, compared to two large tarps results in lower physical demands.
2. Consider alternate tarping methods, such as sliders, rack and tarp kits, curtain side systems, roll-ups, and tarping machines.
3. Follow-up with regulations to provide restrictions to load sizes.
4. Instruct new drivers on basic strategies of tarping (e.g. where to place and unfold the tarp, how to tuck in the folds, where to connect bungees).
5. Purchase detachable ladders with handles or fold out steps to aid getting on and off trailers.
6. Provide help to drivers during tarping.
7. Provide fall arrest systems in a dedicated tarping area.

*The information contained in this document was developed in partnership with the Infrastructure Health and Safety Association (https://www.ihsa.ca/topics_hazards/msds.aspx) and CRE-MSD as part of the following project funded by the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (Ontario):
Kramer, D., Bigelow, P., Vi, P., Garritano, E., Wells, R. Encouraging construction companies to adopt innovations to reduce MSDs using different knowledge transfer techniques. 2008-2011*