

Proper loading and securement of cargo is a critical step in the safe operation of any vehicle. A shifting load can affect your ability to control the vehicle, and spilled or dropped cargo – even one small item – can cause crashes, injuries, or even death.

The Cargo-Related BASIC carries more high-severity violations than any other BASIC under the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's CSA enforcement program.

Is YOUR Cargo Secure?

The following are the most common cargo-related violations* and the weight (severity) they carry in the CSA scoring system. A severity of 10 is the highest possible severity.

No.	Description	Severity
1.	No or improper load securement	7
2.	Damaged securement system/tiedowns	7
3.	Failing to secure vehicle equipment	7
4.	Failing to secure load	7
5.	Loose/unfastened tiedown	8
6.	Leaking/spilling/blowing/falling cargo	10
7.	Insufficient tiedowns (without headerboard)	8
8.	Driver load securement	7
9.	No/improper heavy vehicle/machine securement	7
10.	Placard damaged, deteriorated, or obscured	5

*Excluding size & weight violations.

Keeping Your Score Low

Keeping your score low in the Cargo-Related BASIC is a matter of proper loading, making sure nothing can move, and regularly inspecting the load. The following reminders should help you prevent roadside violations from harming your BASIC score:

- **Inspect your tiedowns** for damaged or weakened components, or cracks or cuts that could affect their performance. If in doubt, don't use it!
- **Comply with the securement rules!** Your cargo must be secured properly no matter what type of vehicle you're driving: straight truck, flatbed, reefer, dry van, motorcoach, etc. Don't be afraid to go beyond the minimums, and remember that some commodities have specific requirements.
- **Don't feel pressured to move a load** that you think is not adequately loaded or secured. Get it done right before moving the vehicle!
- **Use enough tiedowns!** The "1 per 10 feet" rule does not always apply, especially if forward movement is not blocked.
- **Ask for help if you don't know** how to properly secure a particular load.
- **Perform en-route inspections.** Drivers of unsealed loads are required to inspect the cargo and securement devices within the first 50 miles after beginning a trip and then every 3 hours, every 150 miles, or at every stop, whichever comes first.
- **Remember: sign and it's yours!** If you sign for a poorly loaded or damaged shipment, it becomes your problem. Don't let your CSA scores fall victim to a poor loading or securement job. Make sure it's loaded the right way, *before* you sign.

Cargo and CSA

- About 350 distinct violations are tracked in this BASIC. Carriers are responsible for all of them, while drivers are held accountable for about half.
- Violations will affect your scores for 3 years, and your employer's score for 2 years.
- Scores are updated every 30 days. Your score will go down with time or if you have clean inspections.
- Refer to the *North American Standard Out-of-Service Criteria* for details on the tiedown defects that could sideline your vehicle.
- Keep in mind that shippers have no responsibility for complying with the FMCSA's cargo loading or securement rules!



J. J. Keller
& Associates, Inc.®

Since 1953

