Cargo Securement Checklist

49 CFR Part 393, Subparts I & J

This checklist is based on FMCSA cargo securement regulations (49 CFR Part 393, Subparts I & J). Use it before every trip to verify that all cargo is properly secured. Proper securement prevents load shifts, spills, and dropped cargo that cause accidents, violations, and insurance claims. Check each item and note any deficiencies requiring correction before departure.

Driver Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Truck/Tractor #: _____ **Trailer #:** _____

Cargo Description: _____ **Total Weight:** _____

1 General Securement Requirements (49 CFR 393.100-393.106)

- ☐ All cargo properly contained, immobilized, or secured to prevent shifting during transport
- ☐ Securement system capable of withstanding: 0.8g deceleration (forward), 0.5g acceleration (rearward), 0.5g laterally
- ☐ Articles that could roll are restrained by chocks, wedges, cradle, or other equivalent means
- ☐ Cargo not obscuring driver's view ahead or to the sides
- ☐ Cargo does not interfere with driver's ability to operate vehicle freely and safely
- ☐ Cargo does not prevent free exit from cab or vehicle
- ☐ Tailgate, doors, tarpaulins, and other cargo protection devices secured properly
- ☐ Cargo does not extend more than 3 feet beyond front, 4 inches beyond sides, or 6 inches beyond rear of vehicle without markings

2 Securement Devices & Tie-Down Inspection

- ☐ All tie-downs free of knots, visible damage, cuts, or excessive wear
- ☐ Chains: no kinks, broken links, excessive rust, or distorted hooks
- ☐ Straps/webbing: no fraying, tears, UV damage, or cuts exceeding manufacturer limits
- ☐ Binders: load binders in good condition, handles secured, no cracks
- ☐ Ratchets and winches: function properly with no slipping or stripped gears
- ☐ Anchor points: all attachment points on vehicle rated and undamaged
- ☐ Edge protectors in place where tie-downs contact sharp edges of cargo
- ☐ Working Load Limit (WLL) of all devices matches or exceeds cargo weight per regulations

WORKING LOAD LIMIT REQUIREMENT

The aggregate WLL of all tie-downs must be at least 50% of the total cargo weight for most commodities. For example, a 40,000 lb load requires tie-downs with a combined WLL of at least 20,000 lbs. Additionally, there must be a minimum of one tie-down for every 10 feet of cargo length, with at least two tie-downs regardless of cargo size.

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3 Minimum Number of Tie-Downs Required (393.106)

Cargo Length / Weight	Minimum Tie-Downs Required
5 feet or less, under 1,100 lbs	1 tie-down
5 feet or less, over 1,100 lbs	2 tie-downs
Greater than 5 ft but ≤ 10 ft	2 tie-downs
Greater than 10 ft	2 + 1 for each additional 10 ft or fraction thereof

4 Vehicle & Trailer Condition for Cargo

- [ ] Floor/deck in good condition — no holes, cracks, or weakened areas
- [ ] Sidewalls/panels intact and securely fastened
- [ ] Header board/bulkhead adequate for forward restraint
- [ ] Stake pockets and rub rails in good condition
- [ ] Sliding tandem pins locked and secured
- [ ] Doors close, latch, and lock properly
- [ ] Tarpaulins secured without flapping or tearing
- [ ] Trailer/container free of debris from previous load
- [ ] Load-bearing surfaces clean and dry (no ice/oil)
- [ ] Dunnage and blocking materials available as needed

5 Load Distribution & Weight Compliance

- [ ] Cargo distributed to maintain vehicle stability and proper steering control
- [ ] Weight does not exceed any single axle rating, tire rating, or GVWR/GCWR
- [ ] Heaviest items placed on bottom and centered over axles where practical
- [ ] No more than 80,000 lbs gross vehicle weight (or state legal maximum, whichever is less)
- [ ] Steer axle weight within 10,000-12,000 lb range for proper handling
- [ ] Load balanced side-to-side — no visible lean or uneven suspension compression
- [ ] Bridge formula compliance verified for axle spacing vs. weight

OVERWEIGHT TIP

Weigh your load at a certified scale after loading whenever possible. Axle weights shift during transit as fuel burns, cargo settles, and suspension compresses. Scale tickets provide legal documentation of compliance and protect against overweight citations that average $1,000 to $16,000 depending on severity and state.

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6 Commodity-Specific Securement (49 CFR 393.116-393.136)

Logs & Lumber (393.116/118)

- [ ] Logs: at minimum 2 tiedowns for each stack; bunks and bolsters present
- [ ] Lumber: stacked bundles unitized; at least 2 tiedowns per bundle or stack

Metal Coils (393.120)

- [ ] Coils with eye vertical: secured front-to-back and side-to-side against tipping
- [ ] Coils with eye crosswise or lengthwise: blocked and braced per FMCSA requirements

Heavy Equipment / Machinery (393.128/130)

- [ ] Equipment lowered, attachments secured; outriggers/booms retracted and locked
- [ ] Minimum 4 tiedowns for items over 10,000 lbs; rated anchor points used

Intermodal Containers (393.134)

- [ ] All 4 corners locked with twist-lock or equivalent; chassis in good condition

Flattened / Crushed Vehicles (393.132)

- [ ] Vehicles stacked no more than 2 high; adequate tie-downs prevent shifting or toppling

7 En-Route Inspection Requirements (393.104)

FEDERAL REQUIREMENT

Drivers must inspect cargo and securement devices within the first 50 miles of a trip and every 150 miles or every 3 hours (whichever comes first) thereafter. Drivers must also re-inspect after any break in driving. This is a federal requirement under 49 CFR 392.9 and violations can result in fines and CSA points.

En-Route Inspection Checklist:

- [ ] First stop: within 50 miles of origin — verify nothing has shifted, loosened, or fallen
- [ ] Re-tension all straps and chains as needed — new cargo often settles in the first miles
- [ ] Subsequent stops: every 150 miles or 3 hours, whichever comes first
- [ ] After each stop or break in driving: re-inspect before resuming
- [ ] Check tarpaulins for loosening, flapping, or tearing
- [ ] Verify blocking and bracing has not moved or become dislodged
- [ ] Confirm doors, latches, and tailgates remain secured
- [ ] Look for signs of cargo damage or fluid leaks from cargo
- [ ] Document each en-route inspection with time and location

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8 Pre-Departure Verification & Sign-Off

- [ ] All sections of this checklist have been completed and deficiencies corrected
- [ ] Total number of tie-downs meets or exceeds minimum requirements for this load
- [ ] Aggregate Working Load Limit of all tie-downs ≥ 50% of cargo weight
- [ ] Load distribution verified — vehicle handles and steers properly
- [ ] All securement devices properly tensioned with no slack
- [ ] Commodity-specific requirements met for all special cargo types on this load
- [ ] En-route inspection schedule noted — first stop within 50 miles

I have personally inspected this cargo and securement and verify it complies with all applicable regulations.

Driver Signature _____ Date / Time _____

Need Help Managing Fleet Cargo Compliance?

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