

Reducing the risk of injury in commercial trucking

Straps

Working in commercial trucking involves some actions or movements that can put you at risk of sprains, strains, or other injuries.

Examples of such actions or movements include:

- Working in awkward postures (such as bending forward, twisting, or reaching over shoulder height or to the side)
- Using force (for example, throwing a strap or cinching it down), especially after sitting for an extended period
- Holding the same position for an extended period
- Repeating the same movements frequently

What you can do to help reduce the risk of injury

Consider the following tips to reduce the risk of injuring yourself when strapping a load.

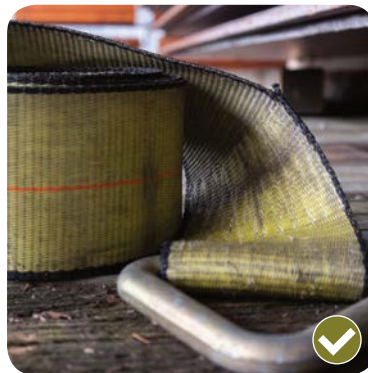
Use straps that are in good condition

Things to look for:

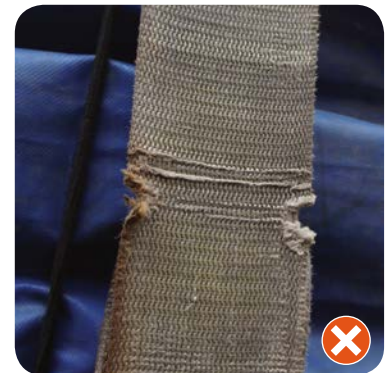
- Frayed material
- Cuts
- Overstretched material
- Splits in the material

Replace straps that show signs of wear and tear. Don't alter or attempt to repair straps that have been damaged.

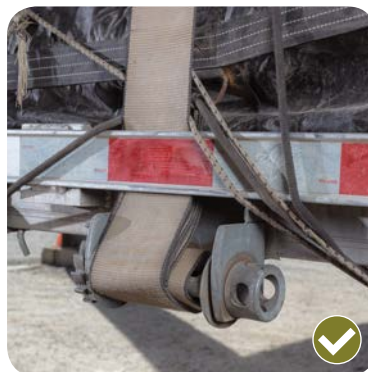
Check that straps are properly secured.



A strap in good condition



A damaged strap



A properly secured strap

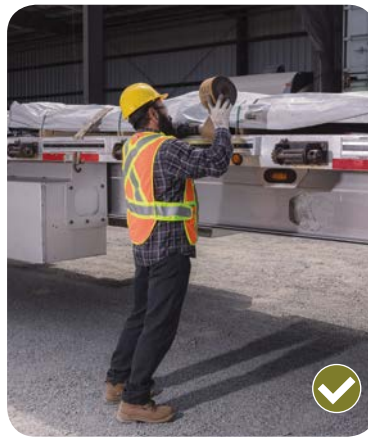


An improperly secured strap

Work smarter, not harder

Whenever possible, use a tool (such as a hook) or equipment (such as a forklift) to help you place straps.

Don't overexert yourself. If the load is low and flat, roll the straps across.



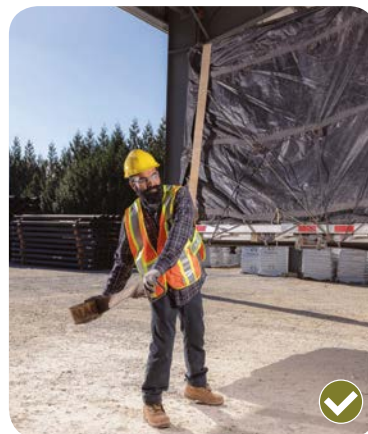
Rolling a strap across

Work from a balanced position

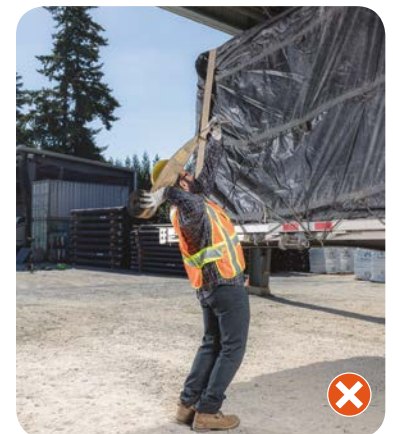
Throw with sufficient force to get the strap across the load, but don't overexert yourself.

Using unnecessary force can injure you or cause unnecessary wear and tear on your body.

Never throw the metal hook end of a strap, as it can strike and injure those working around you. Throw the canvas end of the strap, which is less likely to cause injury if it accidentally hits someone.



Standing back from the truck with the feet in a stable stance, shoulder-width apart; swinging the arm and using leverage to send a strap over the load



Standing close to the truck with the feet close together in an unstable stance; snapping the back and shoulder forward to throw a strap over the load

Be aware of your environment

Identify what is happening in and around your work area. Then, assess if these factors create a risk of injury to you, those around you, or both.

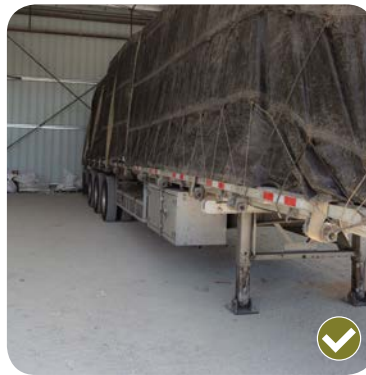
Consider factors such as:

- People and mobile equipment working near or around you
- Blind spots (obstructions that could prevent you from seeing others or others from seeing you)
- Physical hazards in your work area, including:
 - Slipping and tripping hazards
 - Cutting hazards (e.g., nails, metal shards, and other sharp debris)
 - Cramped spaces, catch points, and overhead hazards
 - Weather conditions and air quality

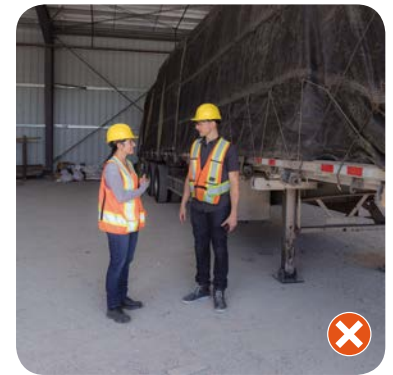
Avoid standing in the “spill zone” of any loaded mobile equipment or a deck being loaded or unloaded.

Give advance warning to those around you by calling out that you’ll be throwing a strap.

Before releasing the straps, walk around the load and check that it is secure, hasn’t shifted, and won’t move when the straps are released.



An example of a low-risk work area



People in the work area could be at risk of injury when you strap a load

Personal protective equipment

Wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) can help reduce the risk of injury or protect you from injury if an incident occurs. A hazard assessment of the task and the worksite should be conducted to determine the PPE you need to wear. Examples of PPE that drivers are commonly required to wear include:

- Steel-toe boots with ankle support and good tread
- Well-fitting gloves with material on the palms to improve your grip
- Safety glasses to protect your eyes from debris or objects that may strike you
- Hard hat to protect your head from debris or objects that may strike you
- High-visibility vest so you are more readily seen

For more information

Learn more about reducing the risk of injury by visiting WorkSafeBC’s [Commercial trucking](#) page.