

Tip Sheet

A series of health and safety tips to prevent work-related injuries in the trucking industry



Tarping — one of the most dangerous (and loathed) tasks of a flatbed trucker — no matter the weather

Tarping is hard work — from the heavy tarps to the uneven loads, not to mention wind, rain, or ice. How does one safely manage this necessary evil?

The best advice is to stay off the load entirely if possible.

If there is a tarping station or a tarping machine, use it. Even if you have to wait for it.

Employers

Make sure your shippers know:

1. Your drivers have the **right** to refuse any “weather protect” load unless the shipper lifts the tarp with a forklift.
2. Your driver is **required** to refuse loads high enough that a ladder must be used to shoulder the tarp onto the load.

Provide ladders and require drivers to use them to climb on loads. Again, they should never carry a tarp up a ladder. Although heavier, wooden ladders are more durable than aluminum ladders.

Tarps should always be set on the load by a forklift.

Drivers

- If you are in freezing weather, ask to put your tarps inside a warm building while you are being loaded. This will allow the tarp to defrost a little and make it easier to handle.
- Never stand on the load or the tarp. Instead crawl on the load or tarp.
- Park on the leeward side of a large building or van trailer to block the wind before trying to tarp.
- On loads requiring two tarps, always unroll and completely secure the rear tarp before unrolling the front tarp.
- Secure all four corners first. If it's windy, attach rolled up straps to the grommets with bungees before dropping the sides to keep them flush with the cargo.
- Test for voids under the tarp before committing your weight, even when crawling.



www.KeepTruckingSafe.org

Publication No. 90-91-2012
April 2012

SHARP Program
Dept. of Labor & Industries
E-mail: TruckingNews@KeepTruckingSafe.org

Produced by the Trucking Injury Reduction Emphasis (TIRES) Project with funding in part from CDC/NIOSH grant U60 OH008487.