

**POUPARTS RECOMMENDATION:****Generic guidance on safe loading, unloading and transport (Road & Rail) of railway infrastructure materials**

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**Introduction.**

The Formal Investigation into the accident at Poupart that occurred on 27/12/10 had a recommendation within it that required NR to raise awareness amongst its supply chain of issues around the safe transportation of loads. In particular

- The hazards and risks arising from the loading, transporting and unloading of materials.
- The need to consider the safe unloading of materials during the loading process
- The need for training in safe loading and safe lifting to include safe unloading
- The need for consignors to promptly identify to consignees the risk arising from any load, any issues identified during loading, and details of any control measure applied to ensure the safety of the load

At Poupart an operative lost a leg, when the load he was in the process of preparing to be lifted off the back of a rail wagon, become unstable and fell on him.

One of the many causal factors in this accident was that hazard information relating to the characteristics of the load were not communicated adequately throughout the distribution process, i.e. from the load being transported from factory to site.

In this instance the distribution chain consisted of several stages. The load was taken from the manufacturer by a road haulier who delivered it to the PC at the access point for Poupart. The PC then lifted it from the road lorry onto a rail wagon. Having done so the PC for the works under the guidance of the NDS loads examiner were responsible for making sure it was secure and would not foul the line when on the rail wagon, whereupon the load was taken to site. Another lift company was employed to remove the load and provide it to the contractors..

**General Guidance on Transportation**

Prior to transporting a load employing organisations should satisfy themselves that the contractor(s) that they have selected to move the load have the necessary competence to undertake the work.

The company initially transporting the load will need to assess it in order to understand its characteristics during transportation: For example

- Does it have a Centre of Gravity symbol stamped on it (or is it known to have a potentially eccentric centre of gravity)
- How will it be secured during transportation, including details of temporary supporting devices required to maintain its stability. (Note the most stable orientation



should always be the first option.)

- Consideration should be given to the positioning of securing points so that they can be accessed and operated in a position of safety.
- Identify contingency arrangements for loads that have shifted or where there is uncertainty as to how the load will react when securing devices are removed
- Are lifting points clearly identified. (If not what information is required on how the load is to be lifted)

Road Haulage Contractors have a duty to make sure that the load is safe during transit on the Public Highway and to provide the recipient of the load with the necessary information to enable them to unload and secure it safely as it moves through the delivery process. However where reasonably practicable the PC should carry out their own checks to make sure that these arrangements are suitable.

Information relating to the characteristics, risks posed and control measures adopted to stabilise and secure the load should be formally conveyed by the deliverer to the receiver. The load receiver should then inspect the load for potential shift, damage to securing devices or supports and only proceed if safe to do so.

They should then review the deliverers information against their own arrangements to make sure that it is safe to remove the securing devices and proceed with the unloading operation.

**Additional learning for those involved in the Lifting of Loads**

- Removing securing devices from loads is not formally covered by standard lifting operations training. Therefore it is important that this potential competency gap is addressed by individual companies.

For further information on the safe transportation of loads, the HSE and the Department of Transport have a wide selection of publications and associated materials.

**Chris Thomas**  
Head of HSE (Acting) Investment Projects