**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**CONTACT:**

***NHTSA Urges Drivers to ‘Drive Safe: Secure Your Load’***

**[City, State] —** To help keep people safe on America’s roads**,** the U.S. Department of Transportation’s National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reminds drivers to *Drive Safe: Secure Your Load*. It is every driver’s responsibility to ensure all cargo is safely secured. Items not properly secured pose a safety risk on our nation's roadways.

Every U.S. state has a law making it illegal for a driver to operate a non-commercial motor vehicle with an unsecured load. Violating these laws can carry state-specific penalties of up to $5,000. Objects or debris can fall from vehicles and collide with other vehicles or pedestrians, causing serious injuries or fatalities. For this reason, it is essential for drivers to properly secure their load*.*

“Many drivers think that only commercial vehicle drivers are responsible for securing their cargo,” said **[Local Official]**. “We want our community to know that it is every driver’s responsibility to ensure their load is properly secured to their vehicle to protect other vehicles, drivers, and bystanders,” **[he/she]** said.

From 2016 to 2020, an average of 16,878 people were injured per year when a vehicle collided with another object that was not properly secured. During this same time period, an average of 732 people per year lost their lives. Non-commercial passenger vehicles accounted for 81% of these crashes, in which cargo was not properly secured.

In the rush of the day, it can be easy for drivers to overlook the importance of properly securing a vehicle’s cargo. Before transporting a load, drivers should check that the vehicle’s load is secured on the top, sides, and back, and make sure nothing can blow or fall out. Ensure the load is safe if the vehicle was to suddenly brake or hit a bump, or if the vehicle was to be hit by another vehicle. Drivers should ask: Would they feel safe driving behind the loaded vehicle?

Drivers should follow these tips to ensure properly secure cargo:

* Tie cargo down with rope, netting, or straps.
* Tie large objects directly to the vehicle or trailer.
* Consider covering the entire load with a sturdy tarp or netting.
* Don’t overload the vehicle or trailer.
* Always double-check the load to make sure it’s secure.

For more information on this campaign, visit <https://www.nhtsa.gov/drive-safe-secure-your-load>.

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