

## Light vehicle mass and loading made easy: simple safety tips

### Why safe loading matters

Whenever you're carrying anything in your vehicle, it must be loaded safely so it doesn't fall off, affect how your vehicle handles, or put other road users at risk.

This guide applies to **light vehicles** – any vehicle up to **4.5 tonnes**, such as cars, utes, vans, trailers, and caravans.

To find your vehicle's **Gross Vehicle Mass (GVM)**, check the vehicle handbook or contact the manufacturer.

### Is your vehicle suitable for the load?

Before loading your vehicle, make sure it can safely carry the weight.

The law states that your vehicle:

- **Must not carry more than its GVM**, and
- **Must not exceed any weight limits set by the manufacturer.**

### Securing your load

Your load must be restrained so that it:

- **Stays on the vehicle.**
- **Doesn't affect the vehicle's stability.**
- **Doesn't stick out in a way that could injure someone, damage property, or create a hazard.**

Loads will move if they are not properly secured. Always use restraints that:

- Suit the type of load.
- Have enough strength for the weight.
- Are in good condition and not damaged.



Disclaimer: This publication contains only general guidelines and strategies for dealing with safety and security, and no guarantees or representations are made concerning their effectiveness. SA Police accept no responsibility for any injury or loss resulting from the application of these strategies.



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There are two main load restraint methods:

- **Tie down restraint**
  - Using straps or other lashings to hold the load down onto the vehicle.
- **Direct restraint**
  - Preventing movement by:
    - attaching the load directly to the vehicle (e.g. webbing straps)
    - blocking movement using solid structures like side gates or tailgates
    - containing the load within the vehicle body (e.g. in a tipper).

## What to do if something falls off your vehicle

If any item falls from your vehicle onto the road, you must remove it as soon as it's safe to do so.

If it's unsafe for you to remove it, call the police attendance line on **131 444**.

Failing to remove fallen items is an offence.

## Rear overhang

Your maximum rear overhang must not extend beyond:

- **60% of the wheelbase, or**
- **3.7 metres from the rear axle, whichever is less.**

If the load projects more than **1.2 metres** from the back of the vehicle, or isn't easy to see:

- **During the day:** attach a brightly coloured flag or cloth at least **300 mm wide**.
- **At night:** display a **red light** visible from **200 metres**.

The maximum total length of your vehicle and load combined cannot exceed **12.5 metres**.

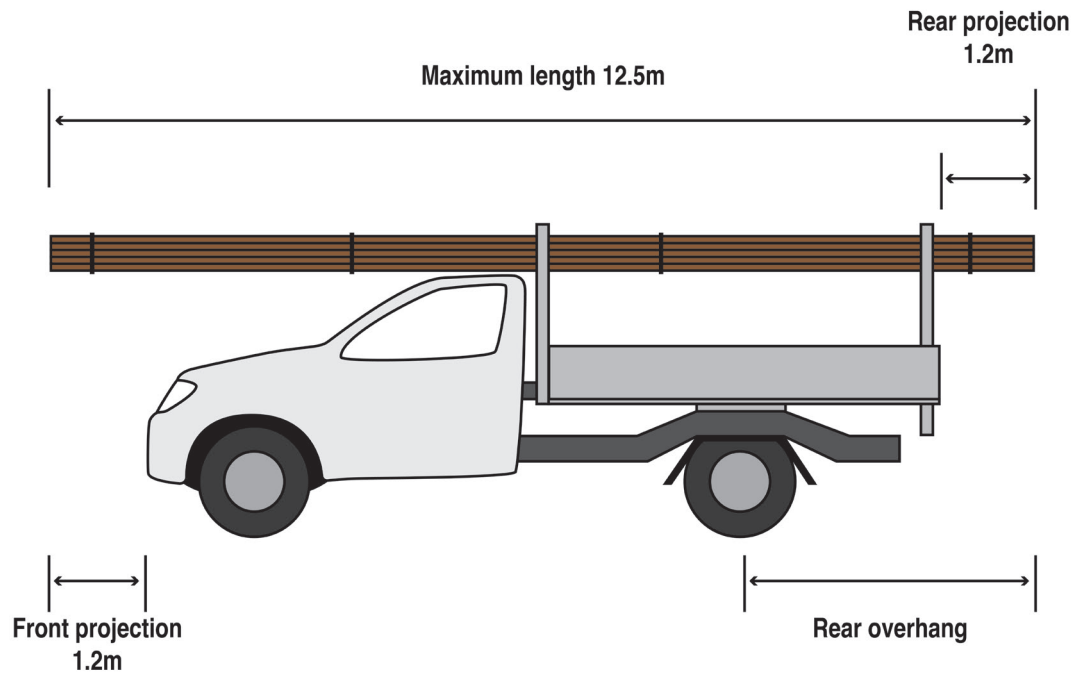


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### Front overhang

Your load must not project out more than **1.2 metres** in front of your vehicle.

Front overhang is measured from the very front of the vehicle to the end of the protrusion.



### Width

Your load must not stick out more than **150 mm** from either side of your vehicle.

The total width of your vehicle **including the load** must not exceed **2.5 metres**.

Width is measured from the **outermost point** on each side of the vehicle.



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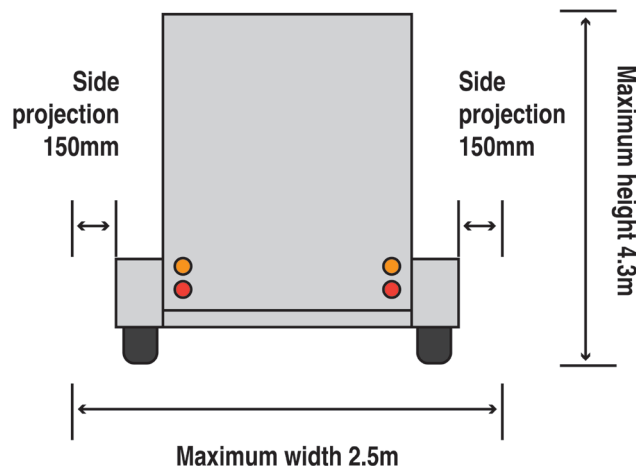
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### Height

Your vehicle and load combined must not be taller than **4.3 metres**.

Always consider:

- The **stability** of your vehicle.
- Any **low-clearance hazards** along your route (e.g. bridges, trees, overhead signs).



### Responsibilities

If you are responsible for loading, moving, or unloading a vehicle – or if you operate a business that does – you must ensure all **mass and loading requirements** are followed.

Failing to comply may result in a **maximum penalty of \$2,500**.

For more information, refer to:

- **Road Traffic (Light Vehicle Mass and Loading Requirements) Regulations 2013.**
- **Load Restraint Guide for Light Vehicles** by the National Transport Commission.



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### About the SA Police Road Safety Centre

The SA Police Road Safety Centre leads the way in road safety education across South Australia. Our programs help reduce road trauma by building the awareness, knowledge, and skills of all road users – supporting safer journeys through lifelong learning.

#### Want to learn more?

Explore our full range of programs and resources:

[www.police.sa.gov.au/road-safety](http://www.police.sa.gov.au/road-safety)

Or simply **scan the QR code** in this fact sheet to go straight to our road safety page.

#### Book a FREE road safety session

We offer engaging, practical sessions for schools, community groups, and organisations.

✉ [SAPOL.RoadSafetySection@police.sa.gov.au](mailto:SAPOL.RoadSafetySection@police.sa.gov.au)

#### Stay connected

Follow us on Instagram for tips, updates, and road safety insights:

📷 [@sapolroadsafety](https://www.instagram.com/sapolroadsafety)



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