Truck Tarping Stats and Facts

FACTS

1. The transporting loads often involves installing tarps to protect them. With loads such as aggregates, you often need tarps to prevent material from flying out of the truck box.
2. While tarps can do a lot to safeguard and secure whatever they cover, they’re not immune to the elements. In adverse weather conditions, tarps can come loose, snap wildly, and cause real harm.
3. Tarping is the process of covering a load of a flatbed trailer with a tarp. Although it’s best done using automated tarping equipment, these machines aren’t always available, which means the truck driver must do the work manually.
4. Manual tarping is an awkward and dangerous activity. It can break bones, cause dangerous falls, cause a driver to be crushed, or lead to a truck accident.
5. Tarps are floppy, cumbersome, and can weigh over a hundred pounds. They can also catch the wind and knock the trucker off a ladder or off the top of the load. The fall distance can be 10 or 15 feet, depending on the height of the load.
6. Tarping may require standing on top of the tarped load. If you must do your work on top of a load, take care not to place your weight on voids, and keep your center of gravity low by crawling.

STATS

- Falls from 8 percent of all injuries in trucking come from tarping. With only 14 percent of total trucking miles coming from flatbed operations—where most tarping occurs.
- One regional trucking company revealed tarp-handling injuries made up 20 percent of the company’s typical injuries—a significant statistic because the company tarps only 30-40 percent of its truck loads. The company reduced

its frequency of tarp-handling injuries per million miles by 30 percent during a three-year period. The result: a direct savings of approximately $50,000.

- Many injuries occur in trucking, but the totals include overexertion and repetitive motion injuries as well as injuries from falls. Specific causes for truck falls reports that 8% of all injuries in trucking are related to tarping/untapping operations.
- Where truckers park performs tiedown/tarping and adjust the load, 14 of 36 drivers said, “a concrete apron near the loading dock” and 17 said “parking area near the facility.” 86% of drivers interviewed perform these potentially hazardous tasks in the open, away from the loading dock. This compares with the responses from shippers, 64% of whom said one of these two locations was where drivers/helpers performed the tarping function.