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RAIL INDUSTRY SAFETY AND STANDARDS BOARD
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Loading of Rail Freight

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Document control

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Approval

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Code Change Procedures

The RISSB maintains the master for this document and publishes the current version on the RISSB website.
Any changes to the content of this publication require the version number to be updated.
Changes to this publication must be approved according to the procedure for developing management system documents.
The RISSB will identify and communicate changes to this publication.

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1 Introduction

This Code of Practice for Loading of Rail Freight is intended as an aid to Australian Rolling Stock Operators (RSOs) to describe common practice for loading of freight on rail vehicles.

This Code of Practice is intended for application on all Australian railways (with the exception of sugar cane and light railways), but each operator may choose whether or not to adopt the information contained within this Code of Practice.

The scope of this Code of Practice is limited to the loading of rail freight only.

2 Scope and application

The purpose of this Code of Practice is to provide RSOs and consignors with requirements and recommendations for the loading, restraint and securement of a wide range of freight commonly transported on rail vehicles. The retention and proper configuration of loading in or on rail vehicles is a critical issue with regard to safe transit and the prevention of damage to rail tracks, infrastructure and persons.

Rail Infrastructure Managers (RIMs) and RSOs may require compliance with the requirements and recommended practices of this Code of Practice for track access or transport of loading.

Compliance with the requirements and recommendations of this Code of Practice will —

(a) provide a significant level of uniformity in loading practices and procedures used on the interstate network, providing a greater level of confidence and acceptance of loads by RSOs and RIMs;

(b) minimise the incidence of load shifts and the subsequent delays to trains and the delivery of goods, thereby increasing train performance and reducing costs;

(c) significantly reduce the risk of adverse dynamic performance and the derailment potential of vehicles due to overloading and uneven load distribution, reducing maintenance costs and potential recovery and reparation costs;

(d) reduce the risk of injury to persons and damage to loads, rolling stock and infrastructure;

(e) reduce the costs to RIMs, operators and consignors associated with the above aspects; and

(f) form an acceptable part of a rail safety management plan.

Incorrect load positioning and distribution, and/or inadequate load restraint and securement, can result in train delays and the creation of hazardous transit conditions.

The consequences of these conditions can be —

(a) unacceptable eccentric or uneven loading laterally (side to side) or longitudinally (end to end) leading to poor vehicle dynamic performance;

(b) overloading of a vehicle with the risk of damage to or failure of bearings, wheel sets, wagon structure, fittings and infrastructure;

(c) unacceptable axle loads, producing excessive forces in the track structure;

(d) movement of the load during transit, affecting load distribution, load outline and infrastructure clearances, including possible loss of the load from the vehicle;

(e) increased potential for injury to loading and unloading staff, and persons on passenger platforms (which can be crowded at times), or on or near the running lines;