



MarketingNews

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Proper Securement of Equipment on Open-top Cars

BNSF needs your help. Recently we have experienced several incidents in which tie down components on open top rail equipment have come loose during transit, resulting in train delays. Fortunately, no accident or injury has resulted from these situations.

Loose or dragging components include:

- Tarpaulins
- Cables (from centerbeam flatcars)
- Chains (from chain-equipped flatcars)
- Web straps (from Flexibeam and pipe flatcars)
- Hopper doors

When this occurs, unsecured tarps can tear or flap in the wind and loose web straps may drag and wrap around car axles--all of which create serious safety hazards. AAR regulations stipulate that shippers and receivers are responsible for making certain these items are secured prior to movement of both loaded and empty railcars.

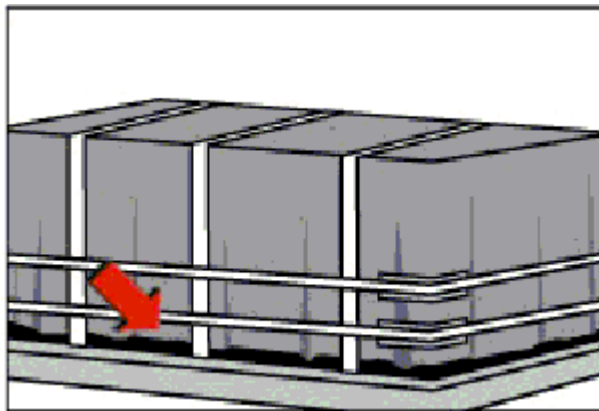
Tarpaulins

Please ensure that you and your customers adequately secure tarps, especially at the corners which are most apt to catch wind. The Association of American Railroads Open Top Loading Rules, General Rules 1.2.26 through 1.2.28 specify the requirements for the use of tarpaulins in loading.

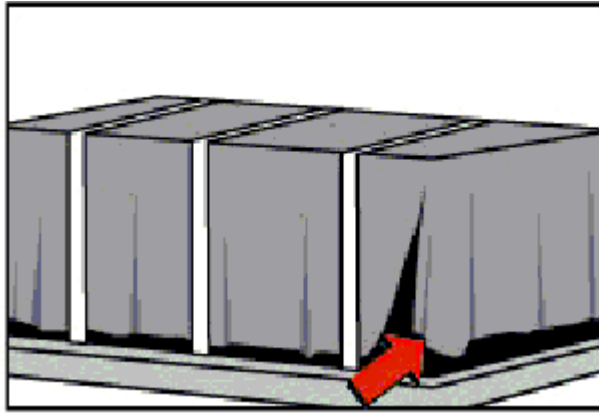
The rules require that the means of securement should be designed to work in conjunction with the type of load and that the tarps should be of adequate construction to resist tearing or other forms of degradation. Of particular importance is Rule 1.2.28, quoted below, dealing with safety appliances:

*Tarpaulins or other covering must **not** be secured to or otherwise obstruct ladders, handholds, grab irons, hand brakes, safety walkways, railing or other safety appliances.*

Below are illustrations of the consequences of a properly secured and an improperly secured tarp:



Properly Secured



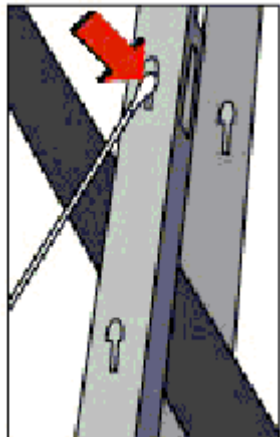
Improperly Secured

Straps, Cables and Chains

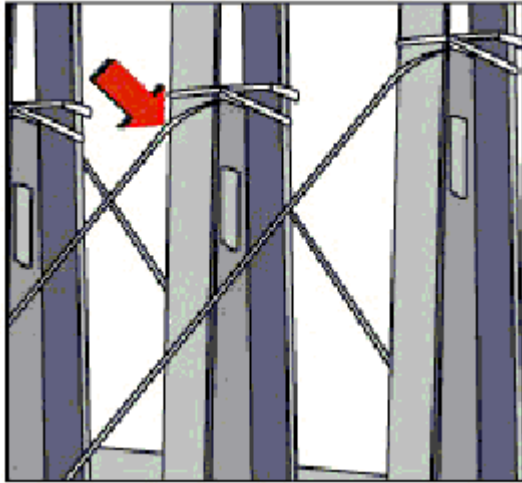
It is also important to make sure devices that secure loads--such as web straps, cable tie downs and chain tie downs--are properly attached on both loaded and empty equipment. *Each car is stenciled with this requirement.* The Open Top Loading Rules, Rule 27 of the National Railroad Freight Committee's Uniform Freight Classification 6000-K, Section 5 states:

*Consignee is required to return and **secure** to same car all railroad-owned securement devices removed to complete unloading, store chains, ratchets, tension devices and other appurtenances in appropriate facility and close all bottom outlets.*

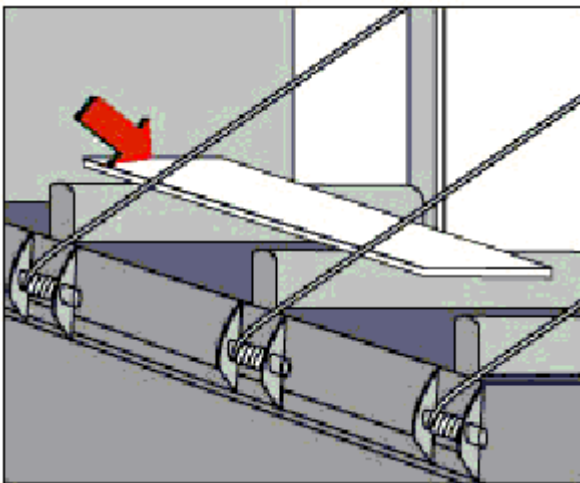
Detailed instructions for re-securing straps can be found on the BNSF Web site at http://www.bnsf.com/vicc/capacity/new_81ft_flexibeam.html. In addition, below are illustrations of acceptable and unacceptable cable/chain tie down practices.



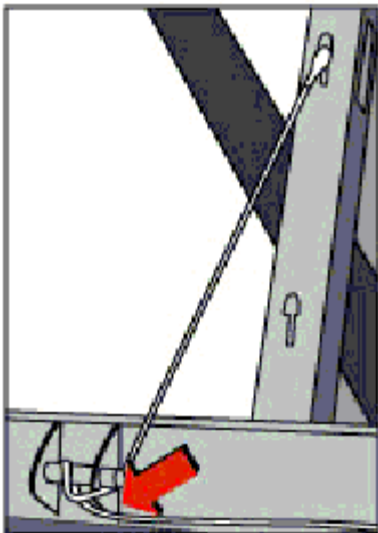
Proper method of securing chain end of cable tie down: chain link is threaded through the keyhole and dropped down in slot.



Acceptable but not best practice. Excess cable is wrapped around post.



Not acceptable: loose dunnage.



Not acceptable: cable is positioned under rounded winch attachment bracket, which could displace in transit resulting in a loose or unattached cable.

Lastly, please ensure that when cars are unloaded, all non-permanent dunnage is removed from the cars and attached dunnage is secured prior to releasing the empty car for movement.

Questions regarding these items can be addressed to gerry.palazzolo@bnsf.com.