

Tie Down Your Loads or PAY \$\$\$

by Jim Dapp, North Jersey Bobcat, May '06

Using Restraint

Want to find an easy way to contribute to your local, county or state revenues? Just try driving past one of their patrol cars with a trailer or truck of loose equipment and learn how much your fines will be, the hard way! You and your customers can save a lot of grief by securely tying down the items being transported. Even better than saving your hard earned dollars is the fact that you may prevent an accident from taking place.

Proper chains to use when chaining down heavier equipment (like a Bobcat), to an equipment trailer:

You must use Highway grade chain. There are three grades; Grade 30, Grade 43, Grade 70. The higher the number, the greater the breaking strength of the chain. Do not use lower than Grade 43. I recommend always using Grade 70. Buy the best chain you can find. You will know if you are using improper chains after the first time you use it with binders. If the hook on the binder leaves a dimple on the chain, do not use the chain. This is not Highway grade chain. The dimple that is left, is now a weak spot in the chain link, and may break under tension.

Chain or Load Binders;

The binders you use (whether ratchet style or lever style), must be rated with a higher weight rating than the chain you are using. Use only binders that have hooks on them sized for the chain you are using. For example; if using 3/8 inch chain, the binders must be sized for us with 3/8" chain. The same goes for 5/16 inch chain.

Chaining equipment to trailer for transport:

Equipment must be chained to trailer with chains and binders on both ends of the machine. You can not use two chains and one binder. Also, the chains must be pulling against the equipment in opposite directions. When towing equipment that weighs more than 10,000 lbs., you must use a chain and binder at each corner of the machine. That means four chains and four binders. If you don't, it may result in you getting unnecessary fines. If the machine you are towing is an Excavator or a Backhoe, you must also secure the boom to the trailer with a chain or strap.

Using nylon straps to tie down:

On maintenance trailers, bungee cords are no longer acceptable. Nylon ratchet style straps must be used, and everything must be strapped to the trailer. Two types of straps to use are one inch wide (usually colored blue), and two inch straps (usually colored yellow). Use the blue straps for anything that weighs less than 100 lbs. and the yellow straps for anything heavier. Most police enforce using the yellow straps because they have 10,000 lbs. breaking strength. You can usually strap down anything with these safely, that weighs up to 1500 lbs. Fines are substantial for not following these regulations, and are even heavier if you any piece of equipment on the road.

Following these guidelines will not only keep you and others safe, but will also save you a lot of money in fines, lost time and aggravation.

Here are some very good links to go to, to find any information needed:

The site for The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration is www.nhtsa.dot.gov/

The site for The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration is www.fmcsa.dot.gov/

The site for the FMCSA Cargo Securement Rules is www.fmcsa.dot.gov/documents/cargo/cs-policy.pdf