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CANEGROWERS

2013 Guidelines for Loading of Sugar Industry Cane Haulage Units for Travel on Public Roads

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. APPLICATION 2

2. INDUSTRY GUIDELINE BACKGROUND 2

3. TYPE 1 – IN-FIELD HAULAGE TRANSPORT 4

   3.1 OBJECTIVES 4

   3.2 CATEGORY 1 5

      3.2.1 OPERATING PRACTICES 5

   3.3 CATEGORY 2 7

      3.3.1 OPERATING PRACTICES 7

4. TYPE 2 – ROAD TRANSPORT 8

   4.1 OPERATING PRACTICES 8

5. REMOVAL IF SPILLAGE OCCURS 9

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This booklet has been prepared by CANEGROWERS in consultation with the Department of Transport and Main Roads and assistance from CANEGROWERS Road Safety Committee, District Officers and Gary Halliday, CANEGROWERS Burdekin.

DISCLAIMER

Front cover image: *A peak loaded cane bin*, courtesy of Gary Halliday.

1. APPLICATION

This document is an industry guideline – prepared by CANEGROWERS for transport operators in the Queensland sugarcane industry. This industry guideline was developed in consultation with officers of the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR).

This Industry Guideline has the support of TMR.

TMR's attitude to enforcement of load restraint obligations with respect to haulage of sugarcane has been expressed by TMR's Director-General as follows:

- TMR does not require loads of sugarcane billets to be covered. However, enforcement action will be taken where anything other than a minimal number of billets are dropped and where billets are dropped due to cane bins being in a poor condition or being loaded to an inappropriate level.
- TMR officers are also mindful, when determining whether enforcement action is taken, that sugarcane trash is much lighter than billets and does not pose as much of a risk to other road users. Accordingly, enforcement action is less likely to be taken where only sugarcane trash (as opposed to billets) has been dislodged from a vehicle.

2. INDUSTRY GUIDELINE BACKGROUND

The transport of harvested sugarcane from the field of harvest to delivery points (on sugar mill cane railways and at other locations) requires the seasonal repetitive use of public road infrastructure by field haul-out units and other road transport haulage units. These roads include local/ minor roads, major roads and critical roads/highways.

This activity is vital for the export of Queensland's largest agricultural crop by volume and value.

Road safety is vitally important for all road users. To ensure road safety across Queensland's sugarcane districts, a series of industry guidelines have been established. This industry guideline aims to establish "best practice" for transport of sugarcane billets on public roads – this includes minimising the potential for cane spillage by haulage units by establishing uniform requirements for compliance.

It is important that this industry guideline is adopted so that load restraints are not required to prevent billets being spilt on public roads.

Sugarcane haulage operations can be defined as two distinct types-

TYPE 1 – In-field Haulage Transport

Infield haulage units are those which may or may not travel on public roads when delivering cane to a delivery point. The legal responsibility of these units is with the driver. However, "Chain of Responsibility" obligations for total safe and efficient transport management also lies with the harvest contractor, harvester driver and the sugar mill concerned.

TYPE 2 – Road Transport

Examples of road transport include B-Doubles and semi-trailers, which deliver cane to a designated delivery point. The legal responsibility of these units is with the driver. However, "chain of responsibility" obligations for total safe and efficient transport management also lies with the harvest contractor, harvester driver and the sugar mill concerned.

Type 1 Haulage unit

Type 2 Haulage unit

3. TYPE 1 – IN-FIELD HAULAGE TRANSPORT

3.1 OBJECTIVES

The objective is to ensure that operating procedures and practices are implemented that result in the safe transport of harvested sugar cane in uncovered bins.

There are two different categories of haulage units used in the sugarcane industry:

Category 1: Haulage units limited to an operating speed of 50 km per hour.

Category 2: Haulage units with permitted operating speeds greater than 50 km per hour.

Category 1 Haulage unit

Category 2 Haulage unit

3.2 CATERGORY 1

The standard of effective loading which is acceptable to the Transport and Main Roads Department by Category 1 units results in (ideally) no cane billets being deposited on or near the road pavement area. At worst, no more than a minimal amount of cane billets being deposited on or near a road pavement area is permitted.

The cut billets of hard cane materials are distinct from leaf trash. Sugarcane billets on public roads pose a risk to road users, whereas the trash poses a minimal risk.

* Trials and demonstrations with Category 1 units hauling green harvested cane have shown that if this guideline is used effectively, any dislodged billets will fall directly downwards and will pose minimal risk to other road traffic. However, a hazard does still exist in such a situation because of the possibility of a motorcycle or bicycle losing control after encountering a billet on a road.

The chain of responsibility starts with the harvester operator filling the haulage unit and the operator of the haulage unit ensuring that spillage of cane billets will occur.

No more than minimal cane billet spillage from Category 1 units will be tolerated by TMR enforcement officers.

3.2.1 OPERATING PRACTICES

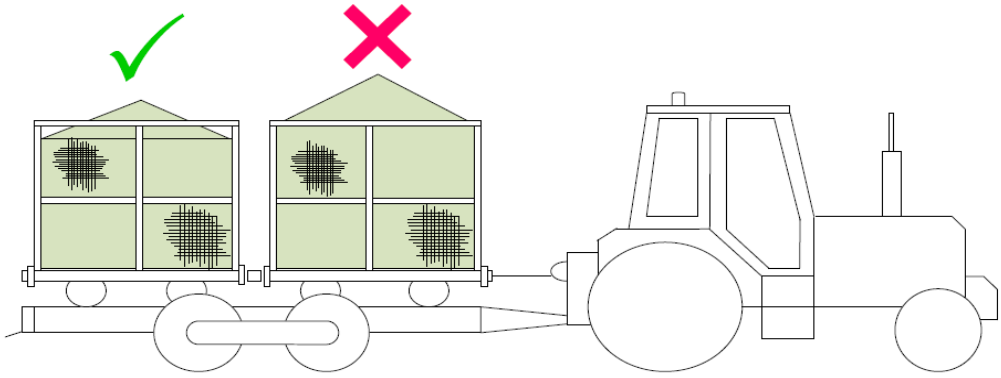
Cane transported in Category 1 vehicles must be loaded in a manner such that hard billet material is unlikely to be dislodged from the vehicle on public roads.

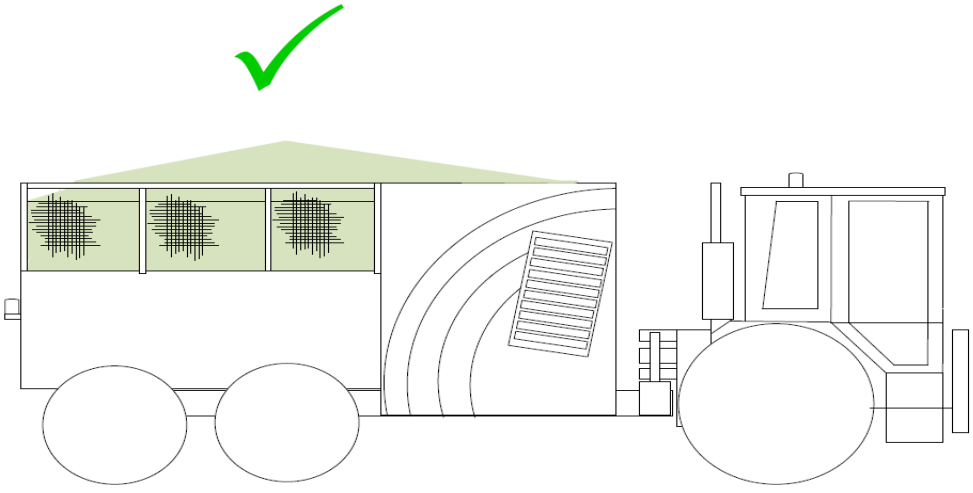
Cane bins must be loaded in a manner such that the resulting freeboard (vertical distance between the top rail of the bin and the lower edge of a cane peak) is sufficient to contain any settling which, by nature of the trip, is likely to occur.

NB *Any loss of cane billets is to be removed as soon as possible by the vehicle operator or the contractor. Failure to do so may subject the operator for liability for an infringement notice.*

Examples of freeboard peak loading

The vertical distance between the top rail of the bin and the lower edge of a cane peak ***must*** be sufficient to contain any settling. The bins may remain uncovered.





3.3 CATEGORY 2

Vehicles must be loaded and operated in such a manner so as to ensure that ideally no and, at worst, no more than minimal billet spillage can occur. Cane billets falling from the top of a unit travelling at a speed greater than 50km per hour may present a hazard to other road users.

The onus is on the harvester operator filling the haulage unit and the operator of the haulage unit to ensure that cane billet spillage from Category 2 units is avoided.

3.3.1 OPERATING PRACTICES

Cane transported in Category 2 vehicles must be loaded in a manner such that hard billet material will not be dislodged from the vehicle on public roads under the prevailing conditions.

Cane bins must be loaded in a manner such that the resulting freeboard (vertical distance between the top rail of the bin and the lower edge of a cane peak) is sufficient to contain any settling which, by nature of the trip, is likely to occur.

Consideration should be made for loading variations affected by cane billet length and cane variety. Haulage contractors should test average fill weights to ensure haulage vehicle loaded mass is not exceeded.

NB *Any loss of cane billets is to be removed as soon as possible by the vehicle operator or the contractor. Failure to do so may subject the operator for liability for an infringement notice.*

4. TYPE 2 – ROAD TRANSPORT

4.1 OPERATING PRACTICES

Cane transported in Type 2 vehicles must be loaded in a manner such that hard billet material will not be dislodged from the vehicle on public roads.

Cane bins must be loaded in a manner such that the resulting freeboard (vertical distance between the top rail of the bin and the lower edge of a cane peak) is sufficient to contain any settling which, by nature of the trip, is likely to occur.

In the case of trucks, B-doubles and semi-trailers, care must be taken that there is no risk of spillage by ensuring that the load will not spill over the top.

NB *Any loss of cane billets is to be removed as soon as possible by the vehicle operator or the contractor. Failure to do so may subject the operator for liability for an infringement notice.*

5. REMOVAL IF SPILLAGE OCCURS

Ideally, no billets should be spilt on or near a public road pavement area.

In the event that any more than minimal spillage of billets occurs (for whatever reason) the billets are to be removed as soon as possible by the vehicle operator and contractor so that the billets no longer present a hazard to other road users.

Further, in the event of any more than a minimal amount of billets are spilt on or near a public road pavement area, all (or other) members of the harvesting crew should be notified and appropriate action taken to prevent a recurrence.

All types of units must remove spilt billets on public roads.

TMR officers should be aware of the difference between cane trash and cane billets.

However, TMR does not wish to see excessive amounts of leaf trash being deposited on roadways – enforcement action may occur if this happens.