



## Drilling Equipment Transportation Fatality



### What happened?



A driver was recently convicted of causing death by dangerous driving, sentenced to five years and four months' imprisonment, and disqualified from driving after being involved in a fatal road incident while transporting a drilling machine on a trailer. The equipment had been secured with only a single ratchet strap, despite additional securing equipment being available. The strap used was later found to be worn and in poor condition.

While the vehicle was travelling along a rural road and negotiating a bend, the machine became unstable and fell from the trailer into the opposite carriageway. The falling equipment struck an oncoming vehicle, resulting in catastrophic and fatal injuries to the driver. Investigators later identified several serious failings, including inadequate load securing, the use of damaged restraint equipment, and the vehicle and trailer being overloaded. The court concluded that the incident was entirely preventable and resulted from unsafe load-securing practices.

### What went wrong?



The driver was not trained safe loading and securing of the machine and any associated equipment. In which lead to the drilling machine not being secured correctly to the trailer, and inappropriate methods and equipment were used to restrain the load.



### Outcome and Lessons Learnt

When drillers transport drilling machines and/or the associated equipment on public highways, they are also acting as drivers and are therefore entirely responsible for the safe loading and securing of the machine and any associated equipment.

Drillers must be fully aware of:

- the vehicle and trailer structure
- anchor points and securing locations
- appropriate methods of securing loads, particularly for drilling machines which often have a high centre of gravity.
- axle loads and gross vehicle weight limits
- correct weight distribution

Drivers responsible for transporting equipment must be trained in safe load-securing procedures. Employers have a duty under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 to ensure employees are competent to carry out their work safely. This includes ensuring drivers understand how to correctly secure loads, inspect restraint equipment, and ensure vehicles and trailers are suitable for the load being carried.

Employers must ensure that all personnel responsible for transporting drilling machines or associated equipment are properly trained, instructed and competent in safe load-securing or lashings practices. This includes understanding the correct methods of securing plant, the use and inspection of ratchet straps or chains, the capacity and condition of restraint equipment, and the limitations of the vehicle and trailer being used. Drivers must also be familiar with vehicle and trailer weight limits, axle loads, anchor points and correct load distribution, as well as knowing the weight of their loads. Companies are reminded to review their procedures to ensure that suitable training, supervision and checks are in place so that loads are always secured safely before vehicles leave site.