



35 MacDonald Ave,
Dartmouth, NS, B3B 1C6
Tel: 902 468 6696
Toll Free NS: 1 800 971 3888
Fax: 902 468 8843
Web: www.constructionsafetyns.ca

Sample General Safe Work Practice for Loading/Unloading Trailers

Tarping and untarping is demanding on the body that puts extra strain on your arms, back, and legs.

Ergonomic related issue

Lifting/lowering, grasping and pulling

The tarp can be very heavy and is often awkward to move and unfold.

Strong winds and poor weather conditions can add to the difficulty in handling the tarp.

Carrying

A folder tarp is heavy and awkward to carry and may quickly overload and fatigue your muscles increasing the chance of an injury.

Consider the following:

- Do not attempt any physically demanding work immediately after driving for a long period as many of your muscles are in a fatigued state
- Use two or three smaller sections of tarp so it is easier to handle.
- Get assistance from others if possible.
- During poor weather conditions, position the trailer in an area to try to protect from the elements (i.e. side of a building to protect from strong winds).
- Park the trailer on level ground. Any inclines will increase the resistance when pulling portions of the tarp.
- Use material handling equipment such as a fork lift to move the folded tarp into position. If this is not possible, try to get assistance from other workers.
- Use a tarp system that eliminates the need to carry the tarp such as a system that rolls and stores the tarp.
- To make it easier to move the tarp on the load get some air movement under it by moving it up and down.
- Use a tarp made out of lighter materials.
- Do not make sudden or 'jerking' movements when lifting or pulling the tarp as it can overload your muscles/joints.
- Use your arms, legs, and body to lift, lower and pull the tarp.

Please note: This document is for information purposes only as a guide. The safe job procedures (SJP) and safe work practices (SWP) created for your workplace should reflect your organizations processes, equipment and hazards as identified by a hazard analysis. Construction Safety Nova Scotia does not assume responsibility for the use of information in this document. If assistance is needed to complete a SWP and SJP for your organization please contact CSNS member services at constructionsafetyns.ca or 1.800.971.3888.



35 MacDonald Ave,
Dartmouth, NS, B3B 1C6
Tel: 902 468 6696
Toll Free NS: 1 800 971 3888
Fax: 902 468 8843
Web: www.constructionsafetyns.ca

Awkward Posture

Pulling the tarp and tying it down can result in awkward bending, reaching, and twisting. Consider the following:

- Use a wide base of support for increased stability.
- Proper footwear (based on the conditions) to keep base stable.
- Avoid over reaching and keep the tarp close to your body.
- Prevent twisting by keeping your feet and shoulder square to the task being performed.
- Pull tarp towards your body.

Gripping/Grasping

Lifting and pulling the tarp requires a high amount of grip strength. The weather conditions such as a humid, rainy or cold day can make it more difficult to grasp the tarp.

Consider the following:

- Wear non-slip or slip resistant gloves.
- Grasp the tarp and not ropes or straps. Ropes or straps can break and weaken.
- Use both hands to pull the tarp to reduce the chance of overstraining the shoulder.

Other control measures

There are a number of alternative methods of tarping using manual and mechanical equipment which can reduce or eliminate many of the physically demanding tasks. Investigate alternative ways to reduce the physical demands with your employer and work place committee or representative.