

# Tips for Loading Rail Cars Safely

## TIP 1

### KNOW THE RULES.

The American Association of Railroads (better known as the AAR), the governing body for railroads, sets official guidelines and requirements, for shipping by rail. Both the AAR and the railroads it governs employ professionals who can help you navigate these rules.



## TIP 2

### PROPERLY PLACE AND SECURE THE LOAD.

Properly placing and securing products is critical to their safe arrival. Weight must be evenly distributed throughout the rail car, both side to side and end to end, and items must be properly secured utilizing the requirements of the AAR or Origin Carrier.



## TIP 3

### FOLLOW THE RIGHT LOAD PLAN.

AAR loading diagrams provide guidelines for how to load specific types of freight. But beware: following the wrong diagram can have negative consequences, so ask an expert to point you toward the right diagram for your freight.



## TIP 4

### USE THE RIGHT PACKING MATERIALS.

In the rail industry, packing materials are called "dunnage." Dunnage fills the gaps and adds extra cushioning to protect products from shifting or breaking during the course of the trip. Types of dunnage include air bags, rubber mats and cardboard fillers.



## TIP 5

### DON'T GO IT ALONE.

While understanding the basic principles of loading rail cars is essential, always consult with the railroad before shipping any product to make sure your products are properly loaded and meet all AAR requirements.



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