

Safety Alert



Ref No: SA-015-2025

13 November 2025

Trailer overturn incidents

This alert follows [SA-010-2025](#) (issued in August) on tipping trailer overturn incidents and reinforces the importance of managing trailer stability during towing and manoeuvring.

A member has experienced two high-potential trailer overturn incidents this year, highlighting the serious risks associated with operating beyond safe working limits (see images below).

Image 1



Image 2



What happened:

Incident 1: On 23 September, at Port of Leith, a Forth Ports tractor hauling a trailer fitted with greedy boards was carrying approximately 19 tonnes of wheat and overturned while manoeuvring through an 'S' bend.

Cause of incident: The tractor and trailer were working beyond its safe working capability in relation to its height, weight, centre of gravity and travelling speed.

Incident 2: On 03 March at Port of Grangemouth, a contractor's trailer tipped over after exiting the port and turning a corner.

Cause of incident: There was a lack of understanding of how load dynamics, speed, and road positioning affect trailer stability.

Key risks identified:

- **Exceeding safe working limits:** Trailers were being operated beyond their safe working limits regarding height, weight and stability.
- **Exceeding speed limits:** Both trailers were travelling at inappropriate speeds for the trailer configuration and road layout.
- **Insufficient planning:** There was a lack of understanding of load dynamics, and consideration to types of loads being carried, traffic routes they were travelling in, and speeds they were driving.

Both incidents were preventable. In each case, excessive speed, insufficient consideration of load stability, and lack of awareness of trailer dynamics were key contributing factors.

Considerations for members:

Members may wish to consider the following actions:

- Ensure risk assessments and safe systems of work include all hazards associated with tractor unit and trailer transportation and discharge, including tipping and overturning.
- Ensure risk assessments from contractors are reviewed and that all hazards associated with hauling trailers and transporting loads on port roads are considered.
- Review traffic management plans to ensure designated transfer routes for cargo are appropriate for the vehicles and handling equipment.
- Assess whether additional traffic calming or speed reduction measures are needed in high-risk areas.
- Review operator training programmes to ensure they include the principles of load dynamics, trailer stability, and safe towing techniques.
- Encourage trailer operatives to adjust speed for trailer height, load stability, and environmental conditions, particularly before cornering or when towing tall trailers fitted with greedy boards, and when operating in traffic areas or next to walkways.

PSS would like to thank Forth Ports for sharing the details of this incident and the related learnings at the base of this alert.