



# Consumer Safe Loading Guide

Brought to you by your NMEDA QAP Dealer



[www.NMEDA.org](http://www.NMEDA.org)

Your NMEDA Quality Assurance Program (QAP) dealer does everything we can to provide consumers with reliable and safe transportation, but it is ultimately the consumer's responsibility to safely load the vehicle after leaving the dealership.

In this guide, we will help you understand and determine the capacity limitations of your vehicle and how you can benefit from using safe loading practices.

## Dealer and Consumer Responsibilities

### The NMEDA QAP Dealer:

- Provide this loading guide to the consumer
- Assist the consumer in attaining a vehicle appropriate for anticipated usage
- Help the consumer with their questions about the load carrying capacity of each vehicle they are considering for purchase
- Never sell a vehicle that cannot be loaded safely by the consumer
- Never add equipment or weight that would overload the vehicle

### The Consumer:

- Read this material and ask any questions they may have to the dealer
- Locate vehicle labeling (see Vehicle Labeling on next page) and understand its meaning
- Ask the NMEDA QAP Dealer for assistance in understanding the Load Carrying Capacity as needed for the vehicle(s) they are considering for purchase
- Be honest and realistic with weights for the number of occupants, number of wheelchairs, securement/transfer equipment, and luggage that they anticipate to transport, including trailer towing and exterior cargo storage boxes
- Load and operate the vehicle without overloading the vehicle

## Important Industry Jargon, Definitions, and Acronyms

It's important to understand the terminology and critical elements that we will use in this guide. The strict definitions can be found online or by asking your dealer. In this guide, however, we will breakdown these terms into easier to understand language.

**Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR)** is the maximum amount specified by the vehicle manufacturer for the total weight of the vehicle (including all passengers and cargo) that can be carried for safe operation.

**Gross Axle Weight Rating (GAWR)** is the maximum amount specified by the vehicle manufacturer for the total weight that can be placed on the axle for safe operation. There will usually be a different rating for both the front and the rear axle.

**Tongue Weight Rating (TWR)** is a number in pounds and is the maximum amount of weight that can be placed on the tongue (or hitch) of a vehicle.

**Curb Weight** is the weight of the vehicle when all the fluids are full (including the gas tank) and there is no cargo or occupants inside.

**Cargo** is anything other than persons placed into or on the vehicle. For example, a scooter placed on a hitch-mounted lift is cargo, whereas a driver is not cargo. Cargo weight is the combined weight of all cargo.

**Occupants** are all persons traveling in the vehicle. Occupant weight is the combined weight of all persons traveling in the vehicle.

**Load Carrying Capacity** is a calculation of the GVWR minus the Curb Weight and is the maximum amount of total weight that can be placed in the vehicle for safe operation. For example, if the GVWR is 6,050 lbs. and the Curb Weight is 5,000 lbs., the Load Carrying Capacity is 1,050 lbs. and that means that the maximum combined weight of all cargo plus the combined weight of all persons traveling in the vehicle can be no more than 1,050 lbs. for safe operation.

# Safe Loading Practices

**Never overload the vehicle** – Remember that the Load Carrying Capacity (in lbs. or kgs.) is found on the Tire Placard (and may be reduced if there is a Reduction Label) must never be exceeded. The “load” is the combined weight of everything that is placed into or onto the vehicle and includes the total weight of all passengers, wheelchairs, scooters, luggage, and any loose cargo.

**Be especially cautious when all seats are full** – All vehicles are required to have enough load capacity for 150 lbs. per seating position. When you have a full vehicle with all seats occupied be especially careful about any additional weight you may load into the vehicle. If you think you are close to the weight limit (GVWR), do some simple math and add up the estimated weights for all people and cargo and if that number exceeds what is written on the Tire Placard (including any reduction) then re-evaluate your load and needs before driving.

**When you have items that are heavy** – Do your best to balance weight front to rear and side to side.

**When transporting wheelchairs or scooters** – For people who use or transport wheelchairs you should visit and orient to the Ride Safe Brochure from the University of Michigan. Ride safe materials in French, Spanish, and English can be found on the web at: <http://travelsafer.org>

**Loose cargo** – Should always be properly secured so it does not move and does not block driver’s view.

**Equipment operation** – Know how to use the vehicle and mobility equipment such as ramps, lifts, securement devices, and their backup systems as appropriate.

## Vehicle Labeling

All vehicles are required by law to have labels applied that assist the consumer in safely operating a vehicle.



These labels are all located on or near the “B” Pillar. This is the vertical beam near where the door opens.



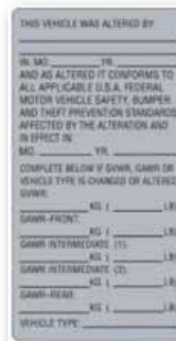
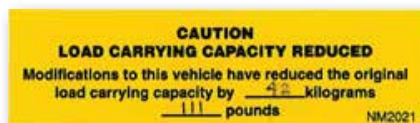
The **Tire Placard** label (required) is typically found on the “B” Pillar or may also be on the driver’s door edge. The load carrying capacity can be found on this label where it says “the combined weight of occupants and cargo shall never exceed.”

TIRE AND LOADING INFORMATION			
SEATING CAPACITY TOTAL 6		FRONT 2	REAR 4
The combined weight of occupants and cargo should never exceed 430 Kg or 1152 Lbs.			
TIRE	SIZE	COLD TIRE PRESSURE	SEE OWNER'S MANUAL FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
FRONT	225 R17 94H	41 PSI	
REAR	225 R17 94H	38 PSI	
SPARE	T125 R18	61 PSI	



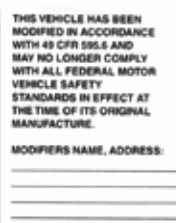
The **OEM Certification** label (required) is also found on the “B” Pillar and lists the vehicle’s Weight Ratings such as the GVWR and GAWR.

The **Load Carrying Capacity Reduction** label (required only if the Load Carrying Capacity noted on the Tire Placard Label has been reduced by more than 100 pounds or 1.5% of the GVWR). The Load Carrying Capacity Reduction Label (when applicable) is placed next to the Tire Placard and indicates the amount of weight that the Load Carrying Capacity has been reduced.



The **Alterer** label (required if the vehicle was converted) is found adjacent to the Certification label and will show the true weight ratings as they may have changed from the OEM during the conversion process.

The **Make Inoperative** label (optional) is required to be placed on the “B” Pillar on any vehicle which one or more federal motor vehicle safety standards have been taken out of compliance and contains the name and address of the modifier.



The **QAP** label (optional) is placed on any vehicle modified with mobility equipment and sold by a NMEDA QAP dealer and is a certification from the dealer that the vehicle was modified in accordance with the QAP Rules and Guidelines and will have a unique serial number that is traceable to the dealer (or dealers if multiple QAP labels are applied) who performed the modification or who sold the vehicle.

**There are many dangers in operating an overloaded vehicle. The following are examples of the dangers, but this is not a complete listing:**

- Excessive tire wear and/or failure can occur
- The vehicle will have increased stopping and starting distances
- May void vehicle warranties
- Overall decreased driver and passenger safety
- Increased mechanical wear and tear
- Increased risk to other drivers and the public sharing the road
- Increased risk for property damage
- Increased risk of losing control of the vehicle
- Increased risk of loss of control during a turn including risk of rollover