

## **OVERWEIGHT RESTRICTIONS EXPLAINED**

### **(OVERGROSS AND OVERAXLE)**

States have maximums for GVW (gross vehicle weight) and individual axle weights (front, drive and rear). The maximum weights are the same for all states as the US Department of Transportation prescribes these limits for commercial vehicles on operating on the interstate highway system.

Limiting the weight of the loaded cargo to a prescribed amount will avoid exceeding the total limitation of the tractor, chassis, container and cargo (“overgross”). However, it does not necessarily mean you are “legal”. Individual axle weight limits can be exceeded by faulty distribution of the cargo (overaxle). The US DOT overgross and overaxle limitations are provided below:

Overgross (tractor + chassis/container + cargo) = cannot exceed 80,000 lbs.

Overaxle (weight of chassis/container/cargo applied to each axle) = cannot exceed 34,000 lbs. for standard chassis, 40,000 lbs for a spreadaxle chassis, and 54,000 lbs on triaxle chassis.

### **PROPER LOADING TECHNIQUES**

To load a container properly, you have to distribute the cargo weight from the center of the container/trailer outward and evenly, thereby “spreading” the weight from the center and not overloading the axles. When you are loading, the following factors should be considered:

1. Ensure that the maximum capacity of the vehicle is not exceeded.
2. Distribute the weight evenly from the center of the container. This means from the front and rear, and side to side.
3. Do not concentrate any portion of the load over the front or rear of the container.

In order to be compliant with state and DOT regulations, follow the loading guidelines specified above and limit net cargo weights to 38,000 lbs. for a 20’ container, and 44,000 lbs. for a 40’ standard container. Remember, these are just guidelines for loading. Cargo must be loaded so that it is not overgross (80,000 lbs. total gross weight of the vehicle), and so that it is not overaxle (34,000/40,000 over drive or rear axles).