

# Sustainable Sugarcane Transport



## SELF-REGULATION THROUGH RTMS

*Several years ago, the freight industry embarked on a self-regulating initiative, aptly named the Road Traffic Management System (RTMS), in order to improve the safety and productivity of freight vehicles and to reduce road damage. RTMS is now well established and there is ample evidence of its positive impact in the road transport sector. In order to become RTMS accredited, members have to abide by a comprehensive set of standards that contribute to preserving road infrastructure, improving road safety and increasing productivity.*



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## SUGAR INDUSTRY INITIATIVES

In 2007, the sugar industry proactively developed a strategy to deal with vehicle overloading. This was partly in response to news that more stringent traffic regulations were being developed to address the country's premature road deterioration and its overall poor road safety record.

Working in conjunction with the national Department of Transport, and within the framework of RTMS, the sugar industry began to strategically improve all vehicle-loading practices while gathering loading data. During this period of adoption of more stringent loading requirements, mill areas were urged to test various initiatives to reduce both overloading and under loading. Initial data showed that over 30% of vehicles were overloaded by nearly 8% above legal limits and the average under loading was nearly 30%, both aspects being undesirable and increasing the cost of transport.

Over time, the project has resulted in a substantial improvement. Reduced overloading has resulted in safer vehicles, less road damage and reduced operating costs. The reduction in under loading has improved transport efficiencies, by reducing the number of trips and mill congestion. This shows how effective the Sugarcane RTMS self-regulation process has been and all stakeholders including the local and provincial authorities have played their role and have supported the initiative.

More importantly, these early initiatives have allowed the industry sufficient time to alter some of its practices.

The self-regulating exercise has placed industry in a better position to become fully compliant with the more stringent regulations which have now come into effect.

## NEW TRAFFIC REGULATIONS

The 22nd Amendment to the National Road Traffic Act (NRTA) Regulations became effective in January 2015. These amendments specify several obligations on all participants in the value chain, i.e. the consignor (the party offering goods for transport, in our case, the sugarcane farmer), the transport operator, and the consignee (the party receiving the goods - the mill).

One aspect of the regulations deals with overloading. Previously, the liability for overloaded vehicles seemed to fall squarely on the transport operator. Now, the consignor, transport operator and consignee may all be regarded as parties to the transgression if they have been negligent in fulfilling the obligations placed on each of them by the new regulations. While it is not possible to deal with obligations of all parties comprehensively in an article of this nature, some of the implications for the sugar industry are summarised below.

- The regulations apply to consignors transporting more than 500 tons per month (any material, not just sugarcane).
- Written contracts must exist between all parties.
- Growers must have a method of determining that vehicle mass limits and axle mass limits are not exceeded.



- Growers must keep records of the mass of every load transported from their farm.
- The cane must be securely loaded so that it cannot dislodge or spill.
- Transport vehicles must carry detailed documentation relating to, inter alia, vehicle details, goods details, consignor and consignee details, contractual obligations, insurance particulars.
- The mill has to reject any consignment that is more than 2% overloaded.


While these amendments to the National Road Traffic Act may appear onerous, the sugar industry recognises its value in ensuring well-managed, sustainable, productive and safe freight operations.



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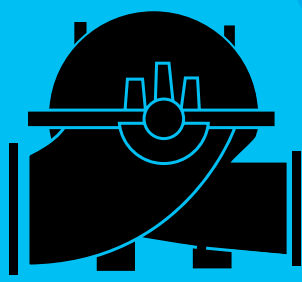


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