The Retail Logistics Supply Chain Code of Practice was launched in November 2006 (then a Code of Conduct), with transport giants Toll and Linfox, and retail majors Woolworths, Coles and Metcash the original signatories.

The RLSC is a voluntary scheme led by industry that is designed to ensure that all participants are aware of their responsibilities in the supply chain when they control or influence the carriage of freight. To date, more than 50 members have joined the RLSC, including both large and small businesses.

The Code adopts a risk management approach consisting of a 10 point code of conduct which supports a clear chain of responsibility in freight logistics, involving all parties in the operation, from the supplier and retailer to the carrier and logistics provider.

Benefits of joining the RLSC
The RLSC Code of Practice provides:

- A consistent interpretation and application of complicated and fragmented legislation at state and territory level
- An audit tool which is kept up to date with the latest amendments to legislation
- An audit framework document detailing each party’s responsibilities and obligations
- Coverage of an end-to-end supply chain
- A self-audit framework that results in specific actions to improve compliance

See overleaf for examples

Registration of the RLSC as a Code of Practice
In September 2011, the RLSC was registered as a Code of Practice under Victoria’s Road Safety Act 1986. Registration of the Code means that if a company is charged with a breach under one of the provisions of the Act, it can use the Code to provide the basis of a ‘reasonable steps defence’.

The RLSC is a licence to the National Logistics Safety Code (NLSC). With the Heavy Vehicle National Law set to commence in 2013, ALC will now work towards having the RLSC and the NLSC registered under the new law which will help companies better understand their Chain of Responsibility requirements.
Examples of how the RLSC has assisted businesses which have signed up to the Code

**Coles**

The structure and tools of the RLSC have provided a consistent framework by which Coles, along with its partners can work openly together to gain a transparent and consistent view of our compliance with CoR and fatigue management. There is little doubt that since becoming a signatory to the RLSC in 2006, that our level of understanding and subsequent improvement in practices has assisted in our confidence in being compliant with relevant legislative requirements.

**Linfox**

Linfox has been involved with the RLSC and has been using the audit tool since the code's inception. We have found the ideology of the process around Chain of Responsibility, compliance and safety to be an integral part of the overall Linfox Safety System and a valuable addition to our current safety systems which ensure we highlight any unsafe practices.

**Toll**

Toll and Woolworths undertook a secondary Freight Partnership Audit (PAR) for the Woolworths DC in August 2007. The Code specifically allows for audit results to be “challenged”, in this case Toll took up their right of challenge; the process was done in a harmonious manner on a ‘no blame basis’ but with one objective in mind – to resolve any issues to the satisfaction of all parties. The issue concerning the store’s practices was resolved within six hours of the audit.

**Metcash**

The RLSC has been the backbone of our Chain of Responsibility (CoR) compliance assurance systems since Metcash became a foundation signatory in 2006. The Code’s audit framework has provided a clear and consistent gap analysis tool for our large and small DC’s across Australia, highlighting areas where we are able to improve our compliance. The Code has also been a key factor in raising awareness and achieving the necessary cultural change in terms of CoR compliance within Metcash and our supply chain.

**Woolworths**

We have been using the audit tool provided to members since we first signed up to the RLSC in 2006 and have found it an efficient and thorough way of determining our level of compliance. We have found the process of Partnership Audit Reviews to be particularly useful as it uses the knowledge and experience of a supply chain partner to uncover unsafe practices.

**CCA**

CCA was one of the first Suppliers to join the RLSC in 2008. The Audit Framework that was developed by the RLSC was of great assistance to us in completing an Independents gap analysis to identify the areas we need to improve our focus.