



Tow coupling safety alert

Recently there have been two instances where trailers have detached from the truck tow coupling. In both instances oncoming traffic had to take evasive action to avoid a collision with the detached trailer.

Investigation into the cause of the detachment identified that there was evidence that the tow drop pin had not fully engaged due to debris packed in the lower bush. It was also noted that the outlet hole beneath the bush was blocked due to stones and other material. This appears to be a particular issue with logging trucks where the trailer is placed on the back of the truck when empty (piggy-backed). This can lead to dirt and other foreign material settling on wet and oiled surfaces and becoming compacted preventing full engagement of the drop pin. Two other cases have been identified where the release handle had insufficient force to hold the drop pin in place, or the lock plungers were not fully engaged.

When inspecting a pin type coupling for condition and performance ensure that:

- there is no material present in and around the lower drop pin bush and the outlet hole beneath which could prevent full engagement of the drop pin
- the release handle has a strong downward force or resistance when raising the drop pin to connect/disconnect a trailer
- any form of locking mechanism engages fully without any physical assistance.



Release handle must exhibit strong resistance when raising the drop pin

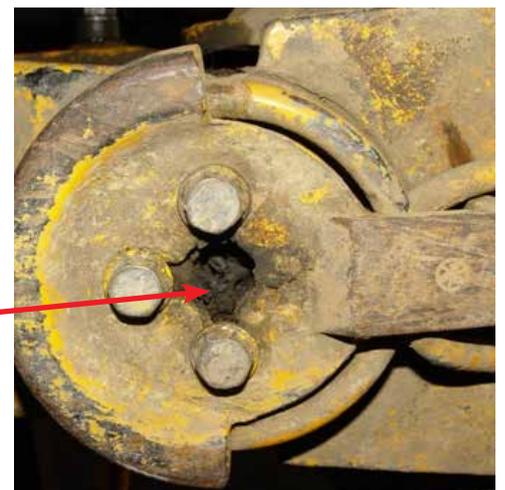
Both locking plungers to be fully engaged without any physical assistance

Lock plunger to be fully engaged (seated) into recess



Locking plunger not engaged

This outlet hole must be completely clear of any stones or dirt etc



Axle-stop/retention devices - important warning

There have been a number of accidents involving truck and trailer units where the trailer has lost an axle due to a broken main leaf spring. Axle stop devices which would have retained the axle were either defective or missing.

Usually air suspended trailers have a single main suspension leaf spring fitted on each end of the axle. The suspension springs serve two primary purposes. One is to enable the vehicle to maintain suspension height. The other is to locate and maintain axle position. If a main spring breaks the axle then becomes detached at that end. Obviously if the axle is unrestrained it may depart from the vehicle - unless another mechanism is employed to keep the axle in place and reduce potential for the axle to come fully adrift from the vehicle.

Usually these main springs have auxiliary retention devices (axle stops) fitted. The retention device is typically a steel band, strap/strop/slinger that wraps around the spring eye (where the axle is mounted to the trailer chassis) and is then run either side of

the spring to terminate at the main spring to axle junction. The manufacturer has fitted them for the sole purpose to retain the axle in the event of a catastrophic main spring leaf failure. There is a growing tendency to remove these devices when they are damaged or broken because to the casual observer they serve no useful purpose.

The VIRM requires a defective suspension component, such as an axle stop, to be rejected at CoF. A cracked, broken or missing axle stop would fall into this category. Vehicle Inspectors must ensure that these safety devices are thoroughly inspected as the consequences of failing to identify a fault may be catastrophic, as the example below clearly illustrates.



Example of a new arm complete with bush and safety retention device



>> continued next page

Axle-stop/retention devices - important warning (continued)



A dramatic example of what can happen if the retention devices are not in place:

The only item left holding the axle in place when the arm failed on the right-hand side was the shock absorber. Once this failed the brake had no retardation effect on the trailer and the axle is free to move out the back of the trailer.

Information for heavy vehicle operators and drivers on the NZTA website

We have added a page titled **Information for heavy vehicle operators and drivers** to the NZTA website.

The concept is to create a page to enable industry stakeholders to find quick links to our resources, guides and information for heavy vehicle operators and drivers. For example, licence, TSL, RUC, heavy vehicle information and safety, CoF etc.

Other relevant information will be added as and when it becomes available so check it out from time to time to see if there is anything new. You might want to bookmark/add to favourites for easy reference too.



For more information

Visit the NZ Transport Agency website: at www.nzta.govt.nz/vehicle/your/heavy-vehicles

New resource for HPSV operators

Is your passenger service vehicle compliant?

Heavy passenger service vehicle signage and other requirements



A number of issues relating to large passenger service vehicle (PSV) interior and exterior signs have been identified at roadside inspections carried out by NZTA Transport Officers and NZ Police. Further issues, including other interior and exterior defects in relation to the PSV Rule, have also been detected during fleet reviews and audits carried out by NZTA staff.

As a way of assisting operators to maintain their vehicles in a compliant state NZTA has published a new resource titled **Is your passenger service vehicle compliant?** The aim of this guide is to assist large PSV owners and operators to meet their legal operating obligations. It's a guide only and not an exhaustive list of requirements – these are detailed in the relevant legislation. However, many of the requirements are those specified in the VIRM. People applying the guidance in this booklet must also ensure they meet the requirements of all relevant legislation and regulations.

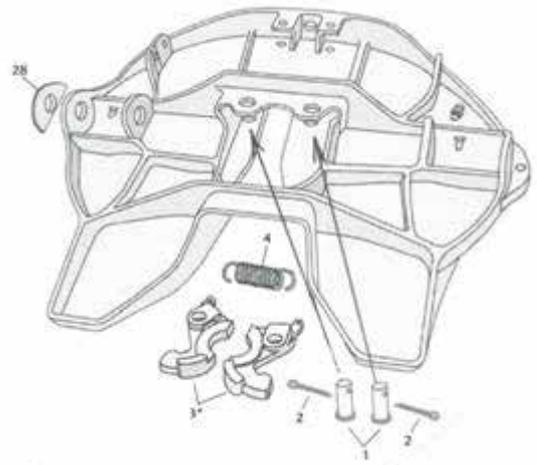
The booklet has been added to the web page **Information for heavy vehicle operators and drivers** (see article above) or via www.nzta.govt.nz/resources/is-your-psv-compliant. It will be featured on our home page for a short while and inspectors are encouraged to have a read of this resource.

Holland FW31 series fifth wheels - warning

There have been problems with some of these (and potentially with other makes) where the headed pivot pins for the locking jaws may move upwards through the main body of the fifth wheel and eventually foul on the kingpin mounting bolt heads.

There is a risk of semi-trailer disconnection because the alignment of the jaws can be affected.

The original type pins are secured with ¼" split pins but some may have been replaced with pins with circlips and grease nipples. When you are inspecting fifth wheels please look underneath and ensure that all these pins (marked '1' in the picture), if visible, are all sitting in the correct position with their fixings (cotters, circlips, etc.) intact.



ORS and entering TSL numbers

It is important for the Operator Rating System (ORS) to make sure that the TSL number entered against an inspection is entered correctly. This means that inspectors need to:

1. Use the correct TSL number, which means the number on the TSL label or the number advised by the operator, and
2. Enter the TSL number correctly on the checksheet and Landata (NZTA currently corrects about 2000 TSL numbers every six months, mostly errors such as transposed digits), and
3. If a TSL number cannot be obtained, fail the vehicle and enter the TSL fault code VLP.

Of course, the above applies to all vehicles that require a TSL, not just vehicles subject to ORS. We appreciate everyone's efforts in helping improve the CoF data integrity.

Our contact details

For general enquiries, or contact information about the NZ Transport Agency please check our website www.nzta.govt.nz or email us at info@nzta.govt.nz

UNISYS

0800 587 287
(for technical assistance and reporting staff movements)

0800 243 687
(for problems with user access codes and passwords)

TRC

0800 108 809
(for phone inquiries from members of the public)

We welcome your feedback. Please send any comments to:

Operations Support
NZ Transport Agency
Private Bag 6995
Wellington 6145

Email: vehicles.unit@nzta.govt.nz