

ALERT 14 – 14

IMPROPER PRE-TRIP INSPECTION LEADS TO RUNAWAY TRAILER

WHAT HAPPENED:

A tractor trailer was making a left hand turn onto an access road. The trailer became uncoupled from the tractor resulting in an uncontrolled decent down a hill. The trailer was then involved in a collision with a security shack located at the bottom of the hill.

Note: See photos.




WHAT CAUSED IT:

- Failure to check/monitor/observe: Driver conducted inadequate tug test & brake checks, however this was not adequate. The employee failed to verify that the pin/washer was flush against the fifth wheel, ensuring a secure lock.
- Failure to identify hazard/risk: Driver failed to identify that cold conditions (-35°C) could affect the functioning of the fifth wheel. Frozen grease and snow build up under the fifth wheel contributed to the decreased function of the fifth wheel locking mechanism.
- Lack of knowledge/situational awareness: Units were brought up on a winter road, causing significant snow and ice buildup around the fifth wheel plate which made the grease stiffer than normal. The driver was not aware that partially locked jaws (i.e. yolk not fully engaged) could still result in a successful tug test.

CORRECTIVE ACTIONS: To address this incident, this company did the following:

- The company reminded all drivers that physical checks alone are not adequate to determine a solid coupling, particularly with winter conditions and a fully loaded trailer.
- The company instructed all drivers the before initiating a trip and as part of the pre-trip inspection, confirm that:
 - The pin/washer is flush against the fifth wheel ensuring a secure lock,
 - There is no gap between the fifth wheel & trailer,
 - Locks are completely closed around kingpin,
 - A pull test is performed.
- The company also reminded all employees that the fifth wheel and coupling mechanisms must be fully cleaned and cleared of any snow, ice, or debris before trailer engagement.

Credit to: Enform Safety Alert 09-2014

	<p>Fifth wheel pin/washer out of locking position</p>
	<p>Pin/washer is not sitting flush against fifth wheel</p> <p>To ensure a secure lock, the pin/washer must be flush with the 5th wheel.</p>
	<p>Snow and ice not cleaned properly before trailer coupling</p>

The Corrective Actions stated in this alert are one company's attempts to address the incident, and do not necessarily reflect the position of IADC or the IADC HSE Committee.