

SAFETY ALERT



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Concerning: Safe Utility Trailing:

This bulletin is in reference to an accident that happened the latter part of last week. In the course of the accident, a truck driver was traveling on a highway in the Stettler area. A vehicle that was pulling a utility trailer was approaching from the opposite direction; his trailer broke loose and crossed over into the oncoming truck driver's lane of travel. The truck driver tried to avoid the oncoming trailer and crashed in the ditch. As a result of this, the truck driver died.

The geophysical seismic industry uses utility trailers for many applications. Carrying ATV's and / or snow mobiles and carrying specialized equipment used in the day to day operations are the main applications. Trailers are an integral part of our day to day field operations.

While there is no regulatory requirement for personnel who pull a trailer to complete and pass a recognized trailering course there is a requirement for a person to be competent. This bulletin's purpose is to serve as a reminder to all that safe trailering starts with the person who is pulling the trailer and the worker's senior who is 'directing' the said worker'. Below are some areas for which a driver and supervisor must watch for when inspecting and pulling utility trailers. The driver of the tow vehicle must ensure that:

1. The trailer does not exceed the tow vehicle manufacturer's specifications.
2. The trailer load does not exceed the trailer manufacturer's specifications.
3. The trailer load weight is distributed properly on the trailer.
4. The load must be secured safely in that any bumps or sudden stops do not dislodge the load.
5. The trailer safety chains are hooked up properly to the tow vehicle.
6. The emergency braking device is hooked up properly and the battery (if the trailer requires one) must be fully charged.
7. The trailer hitch must be of the proper 'Class' for the trailer and weight being pulled.
8. The trailer ball must be of the proper size for the trailer coupler being used.
9. The vehicle operator must be trained in the use of and be familiar with the type of braking device that the trailer has (surge, electric or hydraulic). Note: trailers of a 2000 lb or less gross trailer weight maximum rating are exempt from having an independent braking system.
10. The trailer lights must work as per the regulators requirements (running, brake, emergency and turning).
11. The trailer must have proper insurance and be licensed.
12. The trailer must be serviceable.

There are other areas that one must be diligent about also. For example recreational snowmobile trailers work well for what they were designed for. However, using these trailers in a work application was not a design application that the manufacturer had in mind when building them. They may be legal but this does not make it right to use them in an application that they were not designed for.

If interested, the Alberta Motor Association (AMA) has a trailering course (called 'RV Smart') that is applicable to our needs and is taught at there facility. It is a one half day course that costs \$279.00 + GST (non member price) and a recognized certificate is issued. Contact the AMA at 403.240.545