

# Changing Trailers

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## Checking Turntable Type (ball race or greasy plate)

Check to see if your prime mover has a fixed turntable or one that turns on the bottom plate (ball race type)

If the turntable has a turning bottom plate, ensure that there is a block secured behind the king pin on the trailer. If there ISN'T don't hook up to the trailer – report it to the Operations Supervisor immediately.

If the turntable is a fixed type (greasy plate type) ensure that there is NOT a block secured behind the king pin on the trailer. If there IS don't hook up to the trailer – report it to the Operations Supervisor immediately.

## Trailer Coupling

Proper procedures for coupling and uncoupling trailers are extremely important. Doing it the wrong way will not only damage equipment but it may also lead to a serious road accident involving loss of life or personal injury.

## Coupling

- Check that all coupling devices are compatible and that all flexible connections are long enough and free from interference during coupling. If using 'PBR' style air fittings, ensure that the outer barrel is rotated about a quarter turn so that the notch in this part is alongside the semicircular position of the fixed part (NOT THE FLAT SIDE). This ensures that both parts are locked together (do not just simply rotate the barrel).
- Align the prime mover and trailer squarely, check that the turntable jaws are completely open and that the heights of both the top turntable and the bottom of the skid plate are the same – if they are not, wind the landing legs up or down to suit.
- Use your mirrors to correctly line up the vehicle and reverse the prime mover under the leading edge of the trailer with great care.
- Apply the brakes on the prime mover and get out of the cabin.
- Check that the turntable is going under the skid plate squarely (that it has not turned) and that there will be sufficient clearance between the front of the trailer and the rear of the cabin/sleeper box when the combination is fully 'hooked up'.
- Check that there will be sufficient clearance between the trailers landing legs and the rear of the prime mover chassis when finally 'hooked up'.
- Connect the airlines electrical connection ensuring that the couplings are clear of the drive shaft and any other protruding parts or equipment but long enough to avoid damage during cornering.

- Return to the prime mover and apply the trailer brakes to ensure that they operate correctly – test this twice and reapply.
- Note: If the trailer's air supply is empty, fill out a Vehicle Repair Request Form so that the fault can be rectified.
- Once you are sure that both vehicle couplings are at the same height, back slowly under the trailer in a straight line until the vehicles are locked together.
- Do a tug test by attempting to move gently forward.
- Leave the cabin after securing the brakes and visually check that the jaws are locked around the king pin. Do not rely on the position of the quick release lever to tell if the unit is locked together – get under the trailer and visually check.
- Raise the landing legs and prepare to move off.
- Test the brakes and perform another tug test before moving.

## Uncoupling

- Position the vehicle and ensure that the ground is firm enough to support the trailer's landing legs (use timber or steel supports if in doubt).
- Apply the trailer's emergency brake control – this will place the trailers spring brakes (maxi's) to 'on' – move gently backwards to place weight on the trailer's king pin and the turntable jaws, ensuring that the trailer's brakes are firmly applied at the same time.
- Apply the prime movers brakes (maxis) and leave the cabin – use chocks at front and back of the rear wheels of the trailer if required.
- Lower the landing legs until the trailer's weight is off the prime mover's turntable.
- Disconnect the air and electrical couplings and place them clear of any entanglement.
- Release the turntable jaws and ensure that they remain open.
- Re-enter the cabin and drive gently forward stopping before completely clear of the trailer.
- Secure the prime mover and leave the cabin – check that the trailer's landing legs are supporting the trailer correctly.
- Release the brakes and pull clear of the trailer.

## Driver Responsibility

It is the driver's responsibility to personally couple and uncouple trailers to the primary vehicle. No other person is to be between the primary vehicle and the trailer being coupled / uncoupled under any circumstances. Should the driver require a guide, the guide is to be well clear of both the vehicle and the trailer and is to have been trained in this procedure.

The driver is to engage the primary vehicle parking brake every time they leave the cab to hitch or unhitch a trailer.

The airline is not to be connected or disconnected unless the trailer is locked into the coupling system of the primary vehicle.

## Ringfeder System

- Check the area where the truck is to be positioned, for hazards. This could be a 'puncture hazard', collisions or danger to pedestrians in the vicinity. If available, position the offsider to guide you while reversing but you must stop if you lose sight of the offsider while reversing.
- Release the locking pin on the Ringfeder on the towing truck.
- Reverse the truck to within approximately 1 – 1.5 metres of the Ringfeder drawbar on the trailer.
- Apply the park brake in the truck and satisfy yourself that the height of both the Ringfeder on the truck and the Ringfeder eye on the trailer are at the same height to allow connection.
- If the height is correct, proceed to the next step. Otherwise adjust the height as required. (You may need help to do this).
- If the height is correct, reverse the truck until the Ringfeder and eye connect.
- Apply the park brake in the truck and check the connection. If they are properly connected the release handle will return fully to its pre-release position. If not, the truck may need a small forward and back 'nudging' action to complete the connection.
- If the connection is complete, retract the temporary leg to 'locked up' position; connect air brake hoses and electrical lead plug.
- With the trailer brake on, carry out a 'tug test' to ensure the Ringfeder connection is properly connected.
- Check brakes and lights. If all are in good working order, the trailer may be used. If not, advise your Operations Supervisor so appropriate action can be taken.

## To Drop (Disconnect) Trailer

- Position trailer in a safe and legal position.
- Apply truck park brake.
- Remove air lead and electrical connection between the truck and trailer.
- Lower the temporary Draw Bar Support Leg and ensure it is in such a position to prevent collapse. Chock the trailer wheels if necessary.
- Release the locking pin on the Ringfeder.
- Slowly draw away from the trailer until clear.