

# Tool Box Talk

## COUPLING AND UN-COUPLING OF TRAILERS

Failure to observe the most basic safe working procedures in coupling and un-coupling of trailers can have severe consequences as did occur in the fatal accident at our Swadlincote site on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2010.

### Coupling

- Slowly reverse the tractor unit in a straight line towards the front of the trailer.
- **Apply the tractor unit parking brake, stop the engine and remove the keys.**
- **Check the trailer parking brake is applied.**
- Make any necessary adjustments to the trailer coupling height and slowly reverse the tractor unit under the trailer until the 5th wheel jaws engage.
- **Apply the tractor unit parking brake, stop the engine and remove the keys.**
- Carry out a visual check that the 5th wheel jaws have engaged correctly and fit the security "dog clip" or other safety device.
- Carry out a second test that the 5th wheel jaws have engaged by selecting a low forward gear and with the trailer brakes still applied slowly pulling forward.
- **Apply the tractor unit parking brake, stop the engine and remove the keys.**
- Connect the service airline (yellow) and electrical connections.
- Connect the emergency airline (red) and watch for any unexpected movement. (If the trailer moves, immediately disconnect the emergency airline (red) and check that the trailer parking brake has been applied.
- Wind up the landing legs and secure the handle.
- Fit the number plates and check that the lights work.
- Carry out visual and functional vehicle checks; release the trailer handbrake before setting off.

### Un-coupling

- Park the combination in a straight line.
- **Apply the tractor unit parking brake, stop the engine and remove the keys.**
- **Apply the trailer parking brake.**
- Remove and stow the trailer number plate and lower the landing legs.
- Disconnect all of the air and electrical services and stow safely.
- Remove the security "dog clip" and pull the release handle to disengage the 5th wheel jaws.
- Slowly draw the tractor unit away from the trailer. If the tractor unit has mechanical suspension stop when the trailer is clear of the fifth wheel.
- **Apply the tractor unit parking brake, stop the engine and remove the keys.**
- Before leaving the trailer, walk round it to check that it is in a safe condition.

Do you have any questions for me?