

PF Olsen Toolbox Safety Alert 65

Date: September 2023	Focus Group: Log Transport
Topic: Drawbar Springs	Issued by: Mike Spiers, Nic Steens

Background and Incident: Working together a truck driver and loader operator connected the trailer to the truck. While the driver went to set the bolsters the loader operator lifted the front of the trailer dolly to reposition the trailer. This repositioning placed strain on the pigtail drawbar spring (used to hold the drawbar up off the ground), which snapped, and sent parts of it as a projectile hitting the driver’s safety helmet.

Injury Details: The driver was uninjured as the safety helmet absorbed the impact. Nonetheless, this incident could have caused serious harm, had it hit the driver.

Risk Awareness: This incident has demonstrated a risk for mechanical failure during repositioning. Loader operators need to be mindful not to lift the trailer too high when repositioning the trailer while it is connected to the coupling on the truck. This will reduce the tension applied to the drawbar spring.

Safe Behaviours:

- Keep the trailer as low to the ground as possible during repositioning, prior to loading. Lifting a trailer too high, at a steep angle, increases strain on the spring.
- Drivers must retreat to a safe zone during repositioning e.g., forward of the cab guard but definitely away from the line of fire.
- Conduct regular maintenance checks of the drawbar springs (for wear and stress fractures). The LTSC is currently looking into ‘lifespan’ recommendations.

For Site Manager:

Print and complete the following:

1. Discuss with employees/operators:
2. Place on-site notice board or in file:

Site Manager: _____ **Date:** / /
(initials)

