



Safety Alert

Loss of bolts on towing hitch

23 October 2020

The following pages of this safety alert were issued by Highways England's supply chain partner:

Kier Highways

SHE ALERT

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Issued by: Kier Highways SHE Department
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Loss of bolts on towing hitch

What happened

After returning to the depot on 21st October 2020 it was identified that a series of bolts attaching the towing hitch to the body of a Green Mech woodchipper trailer unit were missing / insecure. Of the bolts that hold the mechanism together, two were missing completely and two had worked loose.

A visual check had been carried out that morning and recorded prior to the trailer leaving the depot. No issues were identified.

At the end of his shift, the driver did another visual inspection. It was at this point that the missing bolts were identified. As a result of the driver's thorough action, all similar plant was quarantined until an engineer could attend site to carry out a thorough inspection on all of the units

When checked, the bolts on the rest of the contracts fleet were intact and tensioned correctly.

During the day, the machine is known to have travelled 28 miles around a busy, urban strategic network and so there was clearly high potential for a serious incident if the trailer unit had become detached whilst moving.

Remedial Action taken

The machine in question remains in quarantine awaiting replacement parts. All other machines have had the bolts re-torqued to ensure they are secure. The bolts involved have now had visual indicators fitted to enable users to easily identify if any bolts have worked loose in future.

Action Required

- Any contract using trailer units with a similar towing hitch arrangement must arrange for a thorough inspection of the securing bolts by a competent person as soon as possible.

Prior to using any towable equipment, drivers must always:

- Carryout and record an inspection of the trailer
- Immediately report any defects found to your Supervisor/Line Manager/ Transport Manager as appropriate.
- DO NOT USE THE TRAILER IF YOU SUSPECT A DEFECT!



If any piece equipment is identified as potentially defective, it MUST be taken out of service and quarantined until it has been inspected by a competent person.