

Safety Alert

Steering Trailers

Steering trailers (“stringing trailers” “pole trailers”) are designed to help rigid loads manipulate corners more effectively and are heavily used in the transportation of pipe and power poles.

Steering trailers utilize turntables on the front and rear of the trailer. The bottom of the turntable is connected to the trailer running gear in the rear and connected to the fifth wheel plate on the front. The top of the turntable is connected to the load platform. The top and bottom of the turntable are connected through ball bearings on the outer ring of the turntable. Steering cables cross from the front to rear of trailer and connect to the casing on the front turn table and the running gear frame on the rear trailer.



Picture 1: Ball Bearing Turntable (blue arrows show ball bearings)



Picture 2: Front Turntable



Picture 3: Rear Turntable

Recently, a subcontractor experienced a mechanical failure at the front turntable. While manipulating a loaded trailer in a pipe yard, wear on the ball bearings resulted in the separation of the top and bottom portions of the turntable.



Picture 4: Failed Turntable



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Path Forward

All trailers utilizing turntables must be inspected prior to utilization on any project. Following the initial inspection, all trailers utilizing turn tables must be inspected at least every 3 months while hauling on the project.

In order to inspect the integrity of the turntable:

1. Ensure weight of trailer is within the rated lifting capacity of equipment (i.e. forklift)
2. Ensure weight of trailer is within the rated capacity of all rigging
3. Rig equipment to the rear of trailer (load platform or center pole) behind turntable
4. Slowly raise trailer
 - a. Never place yourself under a suspended load during the inspection
5. Check for separation between top and bottom portions 360° around the turn table
 - a. **Any separation must be documented and reported to master mechanic**
 - b. **Separation of 3 millimeters or greater vertically or 2 millimeters or greater horizontally must result in the trailer being placed out of service**
6. Repeat process for opposite turn table by rigging on cab side of turntable.
7. Ensure that turntable bolts are torqued properly as determined by bolt size.
8. Ensure turntable is greased every 14,000 miles or every 3 months, whichever comes first.

NOTE: 1 millimeter is approximately the width of a credit card



Picture 4: Vertical separation of top and bottom portions of turntable when lifted



Picture 5: Vertical separation of top and bottom portions of turntable when lifted. Wire in between gap is approximately 3 millimeter



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