



Subject: Service Bulletin - Ultra LT Fifth Wheel Damage Caused by Improper Coupling

It has been brought to our attention at Fontaine Fifth Wheel that, in some cases, operators are failing to use proper coupling techniques when operating an Ultra LT fifth wheel. Over a period of time and a number of couplings, as a result of these improper coupling techniques, cumulative damage can occur to the fifth wheel and fifth wheel locking mechanism that may cause the fifth wheel lock to function improperly. Specifically the operating lever in the fifth wheel can become bent to such a degree that the locking mechanism does not extend completely across the throat of the fifth wheel and does not seat full behind the locking jaw and kingpin. This can lead to a trailer disconnect resulting in property damage, bodily injury, and/or loss of life.

Some operators are not utilizing proper coupling techniques by 1) failing to ensure that the fifth wheel lock is fully open and ready to accept the king pin prior to coupling and/or 2) failing to have the trailer positioned at the proper height prior to coupling. Referenced below is a link to the Ultra LT Coupling Procedures (LT-161). Steps 1 and 2 of the Coupling Procedures are the specific steps that are not being performed and/or being performed incorrectly that result in the cumulative damage described above. These Coupling Procedures are not unique to this model fifth wheel and are common for all makes and models of fifth wheels in the industry. We strongly recommend that you familiarize your operators with these coupling procedures and ensure that they understand the importance of following these procedures.

Visual inspection of the fifth wheel is essential, both prior to and after coupling to a trailer. Prior to coupling to a trailer, the operator should inspect the fifth wheel to ensure that the fifth wheel lock is fully open and ready to accept the king pin. If the lock will not stay fully open, the fifth wheel has been damaged by improper coupling. The operator should immediately discontinue use of the fifth wheel and it should be replaced. After coupling to a trailer, when performing the required visual inspection of the fifth wheel, it is imperative that all four indicators of a proper coupling be verified as described in the Coupling Procedures (LT-161) Steps 3 and 4.

- The pull handle lock indicator notch should be within the lock guide plate.
- The secondary lock should be engaged behind the secondary latch.
- The locking mechanism should be engaged across the entire throat of the fifth wheel.
- There should be no space between the top surface of the fifth wheel and the trailer plate.

If any one of these four indicators of a proper coupling is absent, the fifth wheel is not properly coupled and the fifth wheel should not be operated in this condition. The fifth wheel should be inspected to determine why it is not coupling properly to the trailer. Use of a fifth wheel in this condition can lead to a trailer disconnect resulting in property damage, bodily injury, and/or loss of life.

The cumulative damage to the fifth wheel and fifth wheel locking mechanism described above can become so severe that it may become apparent to the driver when performing the required visual inspection of the back of the throat of the fifth wheel that the locking mechanism is not extended across the entire throat of the fifth wheel. It is important to inform your operators that it is not sufficient that the other three indicators that the fifth wheel is closed properly, 1) position of the pull handle, 2) position of the secondary lock, and 3) the top surface of the fifth wheel in contact with the trailer plate, are present as it is imperative that all four indicators of a proper coupling be verified prior to operating the fifth wheel. If during the inspection after coupling to a trailer, an operator notices a fifth wheel in which the inspection of the pull handle, secondary lock, and trailer plate indicate that the lock is fully closed, but the inspection of the locking mechanism indicates that it is not engaged across the entire throat of the fifth wheel, the



operator should immediately discontinue use of this fifth wheel and it should be replaced. Continued use of a fifth wheel in this condition can lead to a trailer disconnect resulting in property damage, bodily injury, and/or loss of life.

It is recommended after you receive this notice, that you perform a thorough inspection of your Ultra LT fifth wheels to determine if any have been damaged by improper coupling. After this initial inspection, the inspection should be performed again at each preventative maintenance interval of 90 days or 30,000 miles. Please review the inspection and maintenance procedures in the Ultra LT instruction book. The inspection steps are outlined below. Please also reference the attached photographs in Figures 1 – 6.

1) Perform a thorough visual inspection of the fifth wheel, including underneath, looking for bent or damaged components. Pay particular attention to the operating lever (Figures 1 & 2), the rotating jaw and cover plate (Figures 3, 4, & 5), and the wedge guide (Figure 6). If any components are bent or damaged replace the fifth wheel.

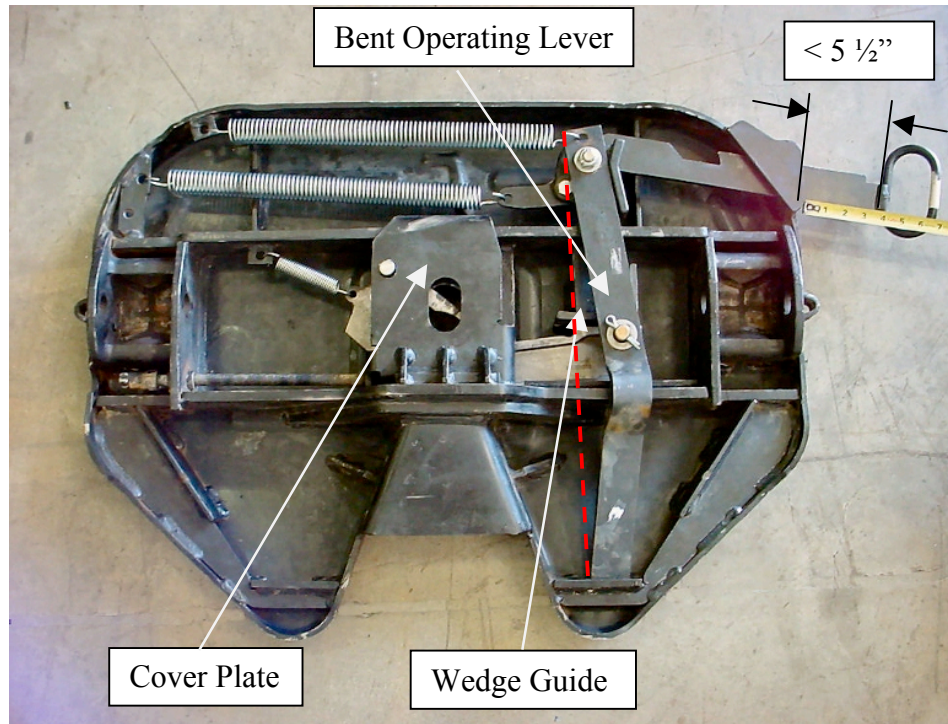
2) In addition to the visual inspection, this functional check is recommended. Without a king pin in the fifth wheel, extend the pull handle to the full open position, release the pull handle, if the pull handle retracts partially into the fifth wheel this is an indication that the fifth wheel and/or fifth wheel lock has been damaged and is not functioning properly. Measure the distance from the edge of the handle plate to the edge of the pull handle ring, this dimension should be greater than 5 ½” (Figure 2). If this dimension is less than 5 ½” (Figure 1) then the fifth wheel and/or fifth wheel lock has been damaged by improper coupling and the fifth wheel should be replaced. Continued use of the fifth wheel with bent or damaged components can lead to a trailer disconnect resulting in property damage, bodily injury, and/or loss of life.

In addition to the Ultra LT Coupling Procedures (LT-161), we have an Ultra LT Instructions handbook (LT-149) and a Coupling Video. This material will assist you in training your operators on proper fifth wheel coupling procedures. Please contact your sales representative or customer service at 1-800-874-9780 to obtain copies of this training material. Outside the United States call 205-661-4900. This training material is also available online at www.fifthwheel.com. The specific links for this material are listed below.

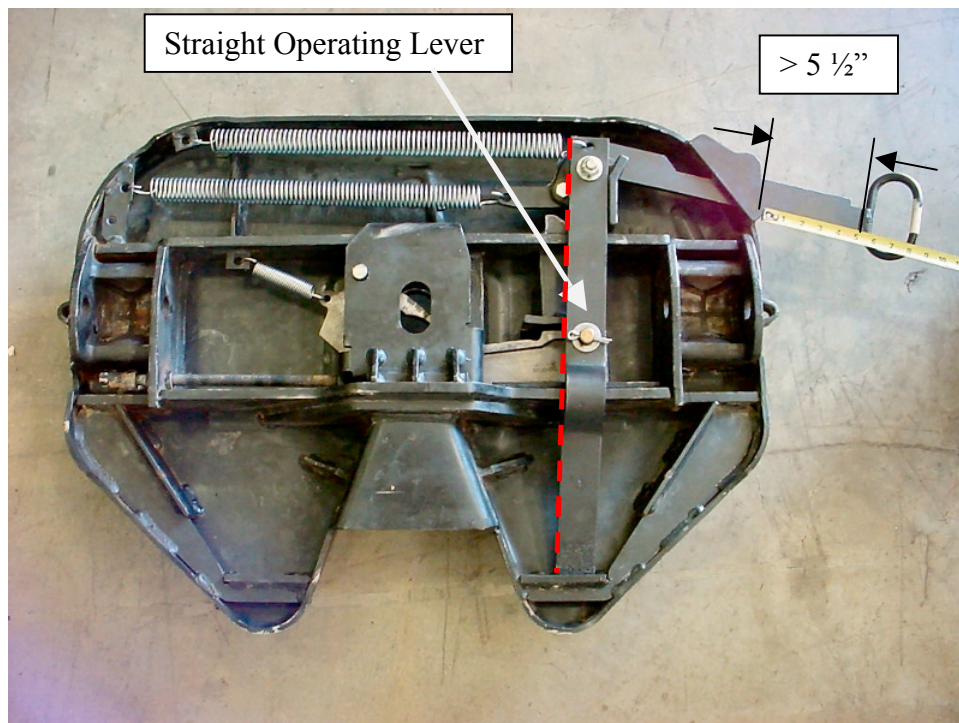
Instruction Handbook LT-149 - http://www.fifthwheel.com/pdfs/literature/LT-149_UltraLTInstructions.pdf
Coupling / Uncoupling Flyer LT-161 - http://www.fifthwheel.com/pdfs/literature/LT-161_LT_HD-HR-Couple-Uncouple.pdf
Coupling Video - http://www.fifthwheel.com/video_no_slack_coupling.html

If, after following all of the recommended actions contained in this notice, you continue to experience damage caused by improper coupling with your Ultra LT fifth wheel, please contact your sales representative or customer service at 1-800-874-9780. Outside the United States call 205-661-4900.

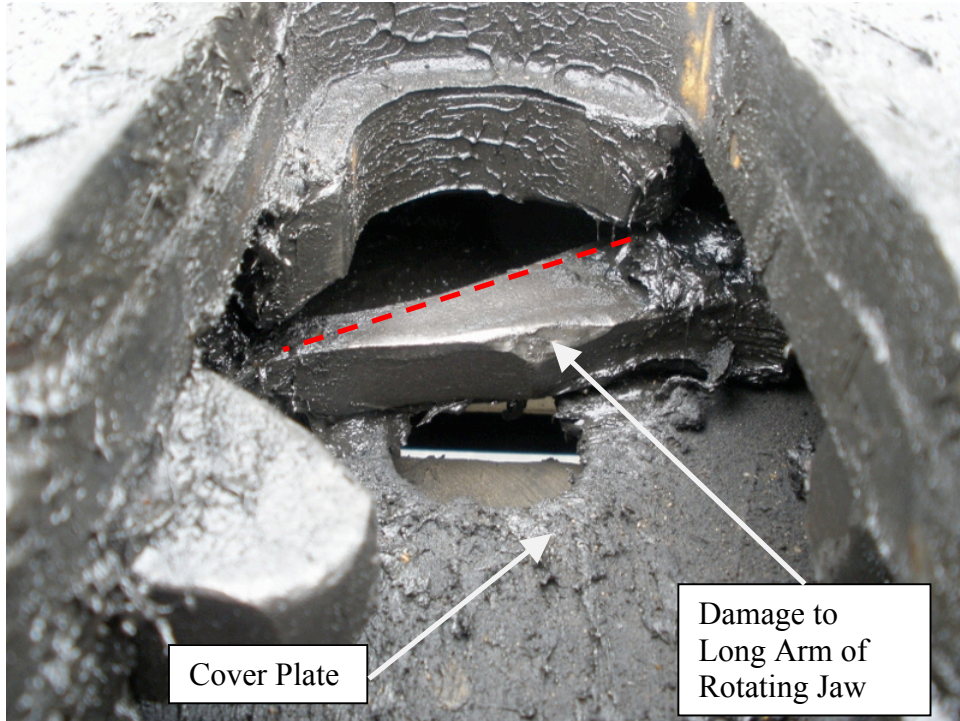
Sincerely,
Steven Mann
Vice President - Engineering
Fontaine Fifth Wheel



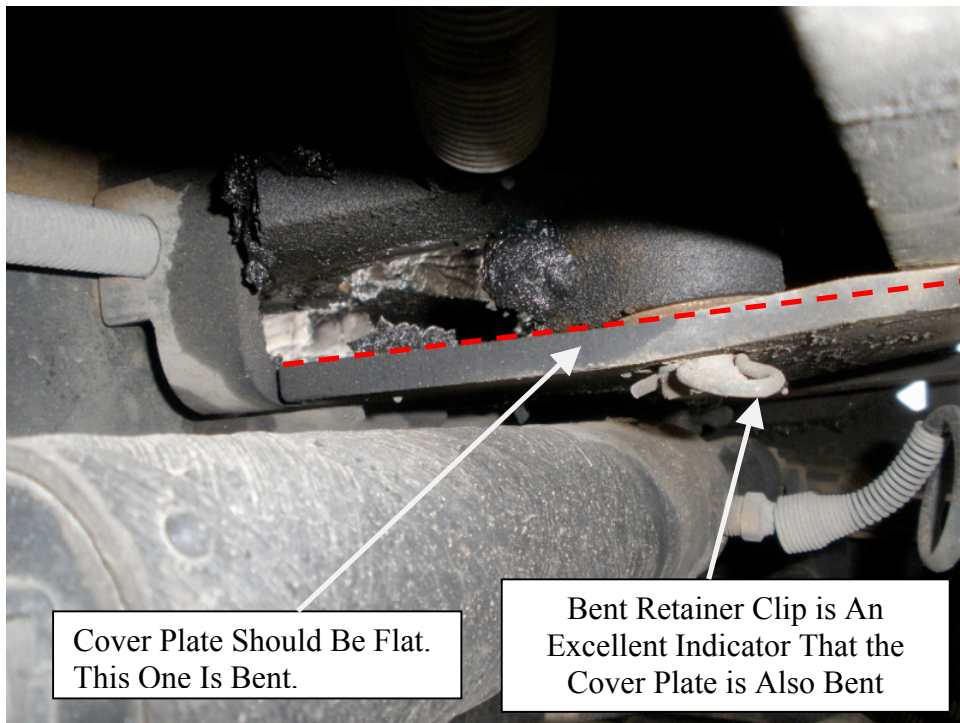
Bent Operating Lever – Pull Handle Dimension < 5 1/2”
Figure 1



Undamaged Operating Lever – Pull Handle Dimension > 5 1/2”
Figure 2



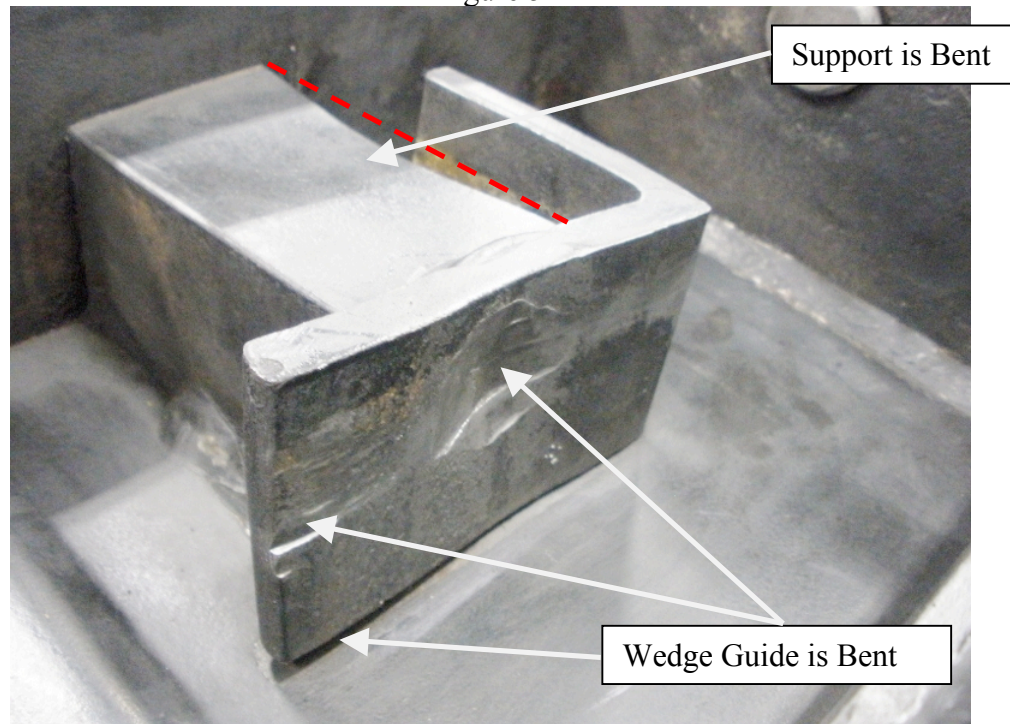
Damage to Rotating Jaw Caused By High Coupling, Resulting in a Bent Cover Plate
Figure 3



Bent Cover Plate
Figure 4



Damaged Rotating Jaw Caused By Improper Coupling
Figure 5



Wedge Guide Damage
Figure 6