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Guidelines for Safe Use of Vehicle Recovery Straps

KEY INFORMATION & SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Check strap and packaging for minimum breaking strength (or breaking strength) of this strap
- It is recommended that the Minimum Breaking Strength of the strap should be between 2 and 3 times the vehicle's gross vehicle mass (GVM).
- Strap must be suited to the GVM rating of the lighter of the two vehicles used in the recovery process
- Consider completing a nationally recognized Four Wheel Drive training course or contact a reputable Four Wheel Drive club or Four Wheel Drive accessory retailer for more comprehensive advice on the proper selection and use of your recovery equipment.
- The motor vehicle recovery strap must not be used for lifting or conventional towing.
- Ensure the strap is not damaged and is in usable conditional
- The strap's strength and stretch are reduced when the strap is saturated with water.
- Something like a recovery damper, heavy bag or blanket must be draped over the strap during use to reduce any unintentional rebound of the strap.
- While the strap is being used, any people outside the vehicles involved in the recovery must be kept at a safe distance (recommended at least 1.5 times the length of the un-stretched strap) from the point of recovery in any direction and NEVER in the line of recovery.
- 'WARNING - Always follow product instructions. It is important to correctly attach the strap to a vehicle. A standard tow ball or vehicle tie-down point is not designed for this purpose and amy result in the strap or a vehicle component detaching from a vehicle and striking and seriously injuring or killing a person. Only attach the strap to a vehicle recovery point or device that is suitable rated for use with the motor vehicle Recovery Strap. Incorrect use has previously resulted in serious injury and death.'

IMPORTANT

- Never attempt to recover a vehicle without all the necessary equipment
- Only use equipment that is properly rated for the particular situation. If in doubt, don't use it.
- Never exceed the Minimum Breaking Strength of the strap or Working Load Limit (WLL) of shackles.

SELECTING THE RIGHT RECOVERY STRAP

It is very important the correctly rated strap is used. A strap with a 'too light' breaking strength may break under load. A strap with 'too heavy' breaking strength may not stretch properly and more stress will be placed on the recovery points, possibly causing damage or injury. The minimum breaking strength of the strap should be between 2 and 3 times the Gross Vehicle Mass (GVM) of the 'lighter' of the two vehicles used in the recovery process. Be aware that the recovery strap will be under greater load if the vehicle is bogged in mud, sand or heavily loaded. If the GVM is not stated on the identification plate of a vehicle or its registration certificate it could be available from the owner's handbook or from the vehicle manufacturer.

KEEPING PEOPLE SAFE

Only the drivers of the stranded and recovery vehicle should be in those vehicles. Nobody else should be in or on those vehicles. Ensure bystanders stay at least 1.5 times the un-stretched strap length away, to the side of the line of recovery. NEVER stand between vehicles connected by a Recovery Strap.

SETTING UP THE RECOVERY

Assess the circumstances of the stranded vehicle. If it has bottomed out, clear under the vehicle body so it rests on its wheels. The recovery vehicle should be placed in line (no more than 10° off the straight line) with

the stranded vehicle, for either a forward or reverse recovery operation. Distance between vehicles should be 2-3 meters less than the un-stretched length of the recovery strap. Establish agreed signals between the vehicle drivers, by radio (preferable), hand signals or vehicle horn.

CONNECTING THE RECOVERY STRAP

Carefully inspect the recovery strap to determine that it is in good condition. If the strap is wet, dirty, cut or chaffed, it will not perform properly. A wet strap may be 20% under strength, a damaged strap may break. Do not allow the strap to contact hot surfaces or sharp edges.

Roll the strap out between the vehicles, and make sure there are no twists and leave about 2-3 meters slack between the vehicles. The joining of straps should be avoided wherever possible (Retailers carry varying lengths of strap). NEVER USE A METAL OBJECT to joint straps – if the strap breaks it can become a missile and cause damage or injury.

Check your vehicle hand book for recovery point locations, or use correctly rated and fitted aftermarket recovery points. DO NOT CONNECT TO A TOW BALL OR TIE DOWN POINT. Connect Recovery strap to recovery pint, for any recovery point requiring the use of a shackle to attach the strap, use only load rated shackles. Only connect to correctly rated recovery points on the vehicles, with only 'Load Rated' shackles. Load ratings are marked on shackles as WLL (Working Load Limit). Bow Shackles are suitable for this purpose and should be rated at least 3.25t. To correctly tighten shackle pins, screw the pin until it seats then back off about ½ to 1 turn. Over tightening may lead to seizer pins, due to the force exerted during recovery operations. To reduce the risk of vehicle damage and personal injury, hang a suitable recovery damper blanket, over the recovery strap approximately midway to restrict the whipping action of a strap should it break.

Last thing – check all connections and clear bystanders to a safe distance (1½ times the un-stretched recovery strap length) to the side of the recovery operation and NEVER in the line of recovery.

MAKING THE RECOVERY

- Before the recovery operation drivers must agree on the point to which the stranded vehicle is to be recovered and the signal (radio, hand signal or horn blast) when that point is reached.
- With communications maintained between both vehicles, and recovery strap secure, the recovery vehicle should gently accelerate, taking up the slack and proceeding at no faster than 10-12kpm. For best results the stranded vehicle should be in 1st gear (or 2nd low), and the driver should assist the recovery by trying to drive out approximately 3 seconds from when the recovery vehicle moves off.
- If the vehicle is not recovered on the first attempt, check under the stranded vehicle, again, for obstacles, reset the slack in the recovery strap and try a little more speed by the recovery vehicle. NOTE: excessive speed or continual jerking action whilst using a recovery strap may result in damage to the recovery point, chassis and drive line of both vehicles.
- When the stranded vehicle reached the agreed point the driver should advise and the recovery vehicle should stop, then the stranded vehicle should stop.
- Where proper use of a recovery strap is unsuccessful, use and appropriate sized recovery winch.
- Do not attempt to remove the strap until both vehicles are stationary and secured.
- NOTE: recovery straps require rest periods between use to return to their original length and capacity. Excessive pulls over a short period of time can cause heat buildup and possible failure.

GENERAL CARE AND MAINTENANCE

- Never allow your strap to rub against sharp or hot surfaces
- Avoid twists and kinks, after washing, and when dry; always coil your strap for storage
- Clean your strap with warm water and a mild detergent, allowing thorough drying before storage. Foreign material such as sand and grit can permanently damage the strap fibers.
- Check full length of straps for nicks and cuts before and after use. If damaged, replace it.
- Never use the strap as a lifting sling.
- Inspect shackles for damage; if pins are hard to turn, shackle has been overstressed. Replace it.

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TRAIL-GEAR
by Trail Gear Inc.
Head office: 5356 E Pine
Ave, Fresno, CA 93727,
USA
www.trail-gear.com
Made in China