

Vehicle Recovery Incident- Serious Near Miss

Description of incident: An employee was driving through a pasture to a valve site when his truck became stuck in a low spot of the snow bank. There was another truck present. The one truck was equipped with two clevises that fit into a trailer hitch receiver. Each one was made by a different manufacturer. With the two trucks back to back and a tow rope connecting the clevises, the employees began their recovery. They gave the rope a “slight jerk” and the clevis on the stuck vehicle broke, becoming a projectile and narrowly missing the recovery vehicle and its driver. The piece that broke off of the clevis was never found.

Contributing Factors: The pasture was snow covered and low spots were hard to see. The clevises used are **NOT** designed for this application. As stated by the manufacturer of one of the clevises, they are to be used for winching and hoisting only. They are not designed to withstand the forces involved in a vehicle recovery. One of the devices was counterfeit and made of weaker material.



Photograph shows both clevises used in the vehicle recovery (note the bend in the pin on the left)



This photograph is a close up of where the clevis block failed