



Trailer/dolly coupling U.S.

**SAFETY
ABOVE ALL**

Safety/FM 10/28/2024

Trailer/dolly coupling: Pre- and post-trip inspections

To prevent unsafe vehicles from operating on public roadways, the FMCSA requires U.S. CMV drivers to:

- Conduct pre- and post-trip inspections. (FMCSR section 392.7 and FMCSR section 396.11)
- Record vehicle defects on the Driver Vehicle Inspection Report (M-DVIR)
 - ✓ Any vehicle defect discovered must be reported on the M-DVIR, even if it's corrected en route.
- Ensure defects are repaired before operating the vehicle.

No motor carrier or its drivers may operate a commercial motor vehicle, or cause or permit such vehicle to be operated, unless it is equipped in accordance with the FMCSR part 393.

Source: DOT

Trailer/dolly coupling: Pintle hooks and dolly fifth wheel

The operator should always check for:

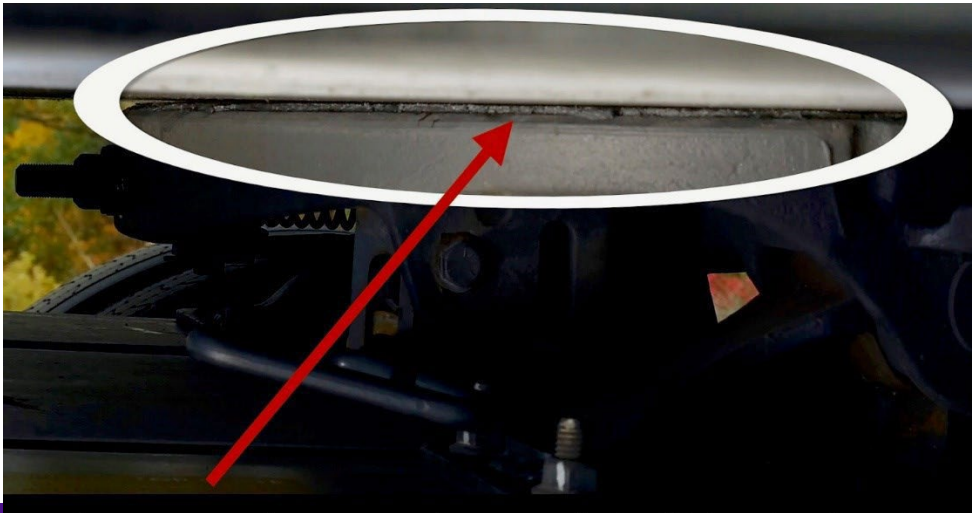
- Worn parts
- Damaged parts
- Missing parts



If any defects are found, the operator should **RED TAG** the trailer and/or dolly with notation and notify FedEx management.

Trailer/dolly coupling: For every fifth wheel model

To ensure a fifth wheel is locked, manufacturers recommend that operators perform a tug test — then exit the tractor and confirm:



There's no space between top of fifth wheel and bottom of trailer.



The jaws are locked firmly around the kingpin.

Trailer/dolly coupling: Simplex fifth wheel

To ensure fifth wheel is locked on Simplex models, the manufacturer recommends operators perform a tug test — then exit the tractor and confirm:



- The release handle is retracted into the body, and the lock indicator is down and not resting on the release handle of the fifth wheel.
- The jaws are locked firmly around the kingpin.

Trailer/dolly coupling: Process

To attach a pintle hook and complete the coupling process, the manufacturers' instructions state:

1. Open latch
2. Position dolly drawbar eye over horn of pintle hook and lower into place
3. Close latch
4. Verify latch is locked
5. Connect BOTH safety chains
6. Connect air lines (blue to blue & red to red)
8. Perform tug test
9. Get out and look
10. Perform light checks
Antilock Braking System (ABS) on the lower left side rear of trailer and tire pressure (PSI) on the left side front of the trailer. Listen for the Brake Monitoring System (BMS) in conjunction with the ABS indicators.

CAUTION!

Use dolly handles to maneuver the dolly; keep hands and fingers away from pintle hook and eye of dolly.

Hand and arm safety

The dolly manufacturer recommends that operators:

- Wear gloves.
- Follow safe-lifting practices.
- **Never use the eye of the dolly to place the dolly tongue in the pintle hook.**
- Use the hand holds to maneuver the dolly
- Lift with two points of contact.
- Avoid pinch points.
- Use a smooth, level surface.
- Do not drag the dolly around; let the tractor do the work.



Incorrect

Correct

Arm, hand and finger fractures/lacerations, along with back strains, have resulted from improper dolly manual handling.

Source: MyGroundBiz.com > Safety alert: Operator breaks finger when hooking up dolly

The FMCSA states:

- The driver is ultimately responsible to make sure the vehicle being driven is in safe operating condition.
- Federal and state laws require that the operator may not drive a vehicle unless satisfied that it is in a safe operating condition.
- Worn, failed or incorrectly adjusted components can cause or contribute to accidents. Preventive maintenance and periodic inspection procedures help to prevent failures from occurring while the vehicle is being operated.

For discussion:

How does your business prioritize the importance of safe trailer/dolly coupling?

Related Safety materials are located on [MyGroundBiz.com](https://www.mygroundbiz.com) > Vehicles/Fuel > Vehicle Regulations > Trailer and Dolly Coupling



The screenshot shows the MyGroundBiz website interface. At the top left is the FedEx Ground logo, and to its right is the MyGroundBiz logo. In the top right corner, there is a search bar labeled "Search Site C" and links for "Site" and "Contact Loc". Below the logos is a dark purple navigation bar with white text for "SAFETY", "OPERATIONS", "VEHICLES / FUEL", and "VENDORS". Underneath the navigation bar is a breadcrumb trail: "Home : Vehicles / Fuel : Vehicle Regulations : Trailer and Dolly Coupling". The main heading is "Trailer and Dolly Coupling" in a large, bold, purple font. Below the heading, there are two paragraphs of text. The first paragraph states: "These videos are available to ensure that personnel are familiar with FedEx Ground equipment, including identifying the fifth wheel and ensuring that the fifth wheel and kingpin are securely locked, consistent with the DOT Regulations and the agreement provisions." The second paragraph states: "It is the responsibility of tractor operators to ensure that the fifth wheel and kingpin are securely locked as enforced in federal regulations." Below the text is a section titled "Trailer and dolly coupling videos:" followed by a bulleted list of four video titles: "Holland Fifth Wheel", "SAF Holland FW35 Dolly with ELI-te Coupling Demonstration (video)", "Simplex Fifth Wheel", and "JOST Fifth Wheel". At the bottom of the page, there is another paragraph: "Another key part of proper assembly of equipment is ensuring the pintle hook latch is locked and both safety chains are connected to trailer. Below videos are available on the different types of trailer pintle hooks."