

NZ Safety Alert

26 August 2022

Let's work together to keep ourselves and our workers safe.

Faulty tow ball and coupling cause death

A Northland trucking firm were recently sentenced for causing the death of a 9-year-old girl after a badly worn-down tow ball and coupling on a trailer caused the trailer to dislodge.

The trailer's safety chain failed, disconnecting it from the truck towing it. The trailer collided with an oncoming car the young girl was travelling in, near Mata, south of Whangārei.

On top of that, the trailer's certificate of fitness had expired, and its tyres had uneven pressure.



[MinEx data](#) on incidents with the potential to cause harm over the 57 months to Mar 2022 show 30% (1487) of all incidents involved vehicles of which 689 resulted from loss of control of a vehicle.

You need to ensure that:

1. Regular inspections of all vehicles are conducted including trailer couplings and tow balls to ensure they are safe and roadworthy.
2. Prestart checks on trucks and trailers include tyres, tow balls and couplings.
3. You identify and log the maximum weight every towing vehicle and trailer can manage, to ensure that towing componentry is rated safe for use.

Know of an incident or near miss? Please share the learnings with us.