Foot injury when hitching a trailer

WHAT HAPPENED

The Injured Party (IP) was attempting to hitch a single axle power washer water bowser onto a jeep towbar. The IP was standing by the rear tow bar while he attempted to adjust the jockey wheel as the jeep towbar was too low to allow the hitch to connect.

The IP loosened the jockey wheel securing lever and the jockey wheel assembly slid through the retaining collar causing the trailer to drop forward suddenly. A metal bar on the underside of the trailer frame struck the IP's left foot.

The IP sustained two broken metatarsal bones in his foot which will take 4 to 6 weeks to heal.

The immediate cause of the incident was a sudden change in the centre of balance of the single axle water bowser when the lever was loosened, allowing the jockey wheel to slide through the retaining collar - this resulted in the trailer suddenly dropping. A single axle trailer relies on the jockey wheel for stability.

Contributory cause - although wellington safety boots were worn by the IP, the wellington boots did not also have metatarsal protection. Metatarsal boots would have protected the IP's foot against this impact.

The root cause was insufficient planning – a dynamic risk assessment would have identified and addressed the risk of the trailer pitching forward.



Injured foot



Image of bar that struck IP

LEARNING POINTS / ACTIONS TAKEN

1. Always carry out a dynamic risk assessment before starting non routine work – what could go wrong?

2. A single axle trailer relies on the jockey wheel for stability - the centre of gravity will change as the jockey wheel is adjusted.

3. Do not loosen the jockey wheel securing lever until a trailer is securely hitched or the trailer is securely propped and chocked.

4. Ensure that safety boots have metatarsal protection built into them not just 'toe cap' protection.

5. When hitching a trailer always ensure it is parked on flat, level ground.



The bowser

LOCATION:	**MOBILE PLANT**	**ALERT STATUS:**	**Normal**
ACTIVITY:	**MAINTENANCE & HOUSEKEEPING**	**DATE ISSUED:**	**25/04/2022 19:44:38**
SUB ACTIVITY:	**N/A**	**INCIDENT No:**	**03614**