

May 27, 2005

10125839

U.S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Office of Defects Investigation
NVS-210, 400 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20590

To Whom It May Concern:

I would like to place what I believe to be a serious safety defect on record.

VEHICLE: 2003 Haulmark Industries, Inc. Low Hauler LH7X12WT2 motorcycle trailer

VIN: 16HPB12273A [REDACTED]

EQUIPMENT: Optional tongue-mounted spare tire holder

INCIDENT: On May 20, 2005 when stopping for lunch after negotiating a mountain road in western New Mexico, I noticed that the welded stud (bolt) holding the spare wheel / tire on my trailer had detached from its mounting plate. The tire and wheel had fallen, but luckily had landed and remained on the tongue of the trailer. Because the tire did not make it to the ground, there was no crash.

CURRENT STATUS: On Monday May 23rd I went to the Haulmark manufacturing facility in El Mirage, AZ and asked to speak with someone in charge of the safety of their trailers. I showed a gentleman named Tracy pictures of the failure. He asked me to bring the trailer to their facility the next day and leave it for repairs. I did. On Wednesday the 25th I was notified that the trailer was ready to be picked up, and I physically picked it up on Thursday the 26th.

I was told that the mounting hold had a bad weld, and that a new bolt had been properly welded into place. I was assured that the trailer was now safe. There was no cost to me for this repair.

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE:

- The enclosed letter marked #1 is a letter I left with Haulmark when I dropped the trailer off for repairs.
- The pictures marked #2 and #3 are pictures of the failure.
- The pictures marked #4 are pictures of the repair.

[REDACTED]
PEORIA, AZ

2005 JUN 10 AM 4:17

Michael
6/13/05

May 27, 2005

COMMENTS:

- I have no reason to believe that the repair was not done correctly. I also have no reason to believe that it was. The tire mount looks just like it did prior to the failure. I fail to see where the weld has any kind of penetration into the head of the bolt.
- Had the tire fallen to the ground, I believe that it is highly likely that the trailer would have hit it. This could very well have caused a serious crash.
- It seems to me that the mounting stud should be pressed into the mounting plate similar to the way that a wheel stud is pressed into the hub.
- I don't believe that something potentially this dangerous should have a single point of failure. It seems that (1) there should be more than one mounting stud, or (2) there should be some sort of a backup catch to prevent the tire from reaching the ground in the event of a failure.

Please accept this letter as a formal statement of my concern over the safety of this product.

Sincerely,



May 24, 2005

Tracy
Haulmark Trailers
8230 N El Mirage Rd
El Mirage, AZ 85335

Tracy,

SUBJECT: L-7X12WT2, VIN #16HPB12273A [REDACTED]

As we discussed yesterday, I'm dropping off my Low Hauler so that you can determine why the stud holding the spare tire failed causing the wheel and tire to fall off it's mount, and then properly fix it.

As we also discussed, I consider this a very serious safety issue. I inspected the trailer while stopped at a scenic overlook in a mountainous area of New Mexico; it appeared fine. About twenty-five miles later when I stopped for lunch, the wheel/tire had broken off and was lying on the trailer's tongue. I believe that it's pure luck that the tire didn't fall to the ground, likely with disastrous results.

I'm enclosing the pictures that you have already seen, along with a couple taken of the stud. As it turns out, it's really not a stud; it appears to be a bolt that was poorly welded onto the backing plate. It seems that this part should be built using a pressed-in stud with a high shear strength. I'm also concerned about the weld holding the backing plate to the upright. If welded by the same welder, it may not have adequate penetration as well. I would appreciate your having someone in Haulmark's engineering department review this failure to determine whether it's a potential design defect, or simply a bad weld.

You said that you would try to have the trailer ready for me by Friday. That would be great, but know that I'm more interested in having the repair done properly than I am of getting the trailer back quickly. I frequently travel with my wife and grandkids, and some expensive motorcycles in the back. I need to be 100% confident that the trailer is safe.

My contact information is as follows:

Home	[REDACTED]
Work	[REDACTED]
Mobile	[REDACTED] (most of the time this phone works best)
E-Mail	[REDACTED]

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

PEORIA, AZ

