

Daimler Trucks North America LLC

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November 2015
NHTSA #15V-616
#15E-066

IMPORTANT SAFETY RECALL

This notice applies to your vehicles.

Subject: Fontaine Ultra LT Fifth Wheel

This notice is sent to you in accordance with the requirements of the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act.

Daimler Trucks North America LLC has decided that a defect which relates to motor vehicle safety exists on specific Freightliner Business Class M2, Cascadia, Columbia, and Coronado model vehicles manufactured April 5, 2010, through June 15, 2013.

On certain vehicles where cumulative damage has occurred and goes unnoticed during visual inspection and maintenance of the fifth wheel, the fifth wheel lock may fail to function properly and the locking mechanism of a damaged fifth wheel may fail to properly engage, increasing the result of a crash.

Fontaine Fifth Wheel will replace the Ultra TL with an Ultra NT fifth wheel.

The Recall will take approximately one hour and will be performed at no charge to you.

If you have leased this vehicle to another person, federal regulations require you to send a copy of this notice to the lessee by first class mail within 10 days of your receipt of this notice.

Please contact Fontaine Fifth Wheel at 1-844-597-7393 or ultraltrecall@fifthwheel.com to arrange to have the Recall performed or for any questions regarding this Recall.

If you are not able to have the defect remedied without charge and within a reasonable time, you may wish to submit a complaint to the Administrator, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE., Washington, DC 20590; or call the Vehicle Safety Hotline at (888) 327-4236 (TTY: 800-424-9153); or to <http://www.safercar.gov>.

WARRANTY CAMPAIGNS DEPARTMENT
Enclosure

IMPORTANT SAFETY RECALL NOTICE

Dear: Director of Maintenance

This Notice is sent to you in accordance with the requirements of the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act.

Fontaine Fifth Wheel has decided that a defect which relates to motor vehicle safety exists in Ultra LT model fifth wheels manufactured between 2009 and 2013.

! IMPORTANT !

- **Your Ultra LT fifth wheel is being recalled**
- **You should immediately inspect your Ultra LT fifth wheel for damage in accordance with the instructions below and the accompanying service bulletin and contact Fontaine Fifth Wheel at: 1-844-597-7393 or ultraltrecall@fifthwheel.com to request a replacement fifth wheel**

Why is a recall being conducted?

The defect involves a susceptibility of the fifth wheel and its locking mechanism to cumulative damage that may cause the fifth wheel lock to function improperly or a failure of the locking mechanism to properly engage. This cumulative damage is the result of the failure of operators to use proper coupling and maintenance procedures over a period of time. These practices include, but are not limited to, high coupling, a failure to conduct a proper visual inspection, a failure to ensure that the fifth wheel is in the fully open and ready to couple position prior to coupling, and failure to follow recommended maintenance practices.

Where cumulative damage has occurred and goes unnoticed during visual inspections and maintenance of the fifth wheel, the fifth wheel lock may fail to function properly and the locking mechanism of a damaged fifth wheel may fail to properly engage, increasing the risk of a crash.

What Fontaine Fifth Wheel is doing about the problem:

Fontaine Fifth Wheel will replace at no charge to you all Ultra LT fifth wheels in your fleet with Ultra NT model fifth wheels.

What you should do:

Owners should contact Fontaine Fifth Wheel at **1-844-597-7393** or ultraltrecall@fifthwheel.com to request replacement fifth wheels and to arrange for their shipment. Prior to contacting Fontaine Fifth Wheel, you should locate the nearest dealership for your particular brand of truck and provide their address to Fontaine. The fifth wheel/s will then be shipped to the dealership and you can schedule a time with the dealership for replacement of the fifth wheel/s. The time required to replace each fifth is not anticipated to exceed one hour. Fontaine Fifth Wheel will perform the fifth wheel replacement free of charge to the owner. All invoices and related documents evidencing installation of replacement fifth wheels should be sent to Fontaine Fifth Wheel, 7574 Commerce Circle Trussville, AL 35173 attention Ultra LT Recall or via email at ultraltrecall@fifthwheel.com.

In the interim, owners/operators should inspect each of the Ultra LT fifth wheels in their fleets to look for signs of any damage, including bent operating handles, wedge guides, locking wedges and locking jaws. You can determine that a particular fifth wheel is an Ultra LT model by following the instructions on the attached technical bulletin TB-059.

Special care should be taken to inspect fifth wheels after known or suspected improper coupling attempts and instances in which preventative maintenance has not been performed per Fontaine's instructions. Where the damage to the fifth wheel caused by improper coupling procedures is severe, drivers may notice during their required visual inspection of the fifth wheel that the locking mechanism of the fifth wheel does not extend across the entire throat of the fifth wheel. In some instances where the fifth wheel locking mechanism has been damaged, the driver may notice excessive slack in the fifth wheel connection as he/she operates the vehicle. Accompanying this letter is a Service Bulletin illustrating examples of damage to look for during an inspection.

Where any damage is noted to the fifth wheel during an inspection it should be immediately taken out of service. If no damage is noted during an inspection, the fifth wheel should be cleaned and greased according to Fontaine's maintenance instructions including, Fontaine's cold weather maintenance procedure at: www.fifthwheel.com/pdfs/technicalbulletins/TB-008.pdf. Operators should also be reminded of proper coupling procedures. Instructional materials and videos can be found at: <http://fifthwheel.com/support-obsolete-products.html> and <http://fifthwheel.com/fifth-wheel-training.html>. Undamaged fifth wheels may continue safely in service until such time that an Ultra NT replacement is available.

If you no longer own the vehicle on which the Ultra LT subject to this recall was installed please forward the contact information for the new owner to Fontaine Fifth Wheel at **1-844-597-7393** or ultraltrecall@fifthwheel.com.

If you are the lessor of a vehicle on which an Ultra LT is installed please forward a copy of this notice to the lessee within ten days to comply with federal regulations.

If you have already paid to have your Ultra LT replaced within a year of this recall, you may be eligible for reimbursement for the replacement fifth wheel. If your Ultra LT fifth wheel was covered under Fontaine's factory warranty this reimbursement does not apply to you. To learn more about what you need to do to obtain reimbursement please contact Fontaine Fifth Wheel at 1-844-597-7393 or ultraltrecall@fifthwheel.com.

If after having attempted to take advantage of this recall you believe you have not been able to have your fifth wheel remedied without charge and within a reasonable amount of time, you may submit a complaint to the Administrator, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 1200 New Jersey, Ave, S.E., Washington, D.C., 20590; or call the toll-free Vehicle Safety Hotline at 1-888-327-4236 (TTY: 1-800-424-9153); or go to <http://www.safercar.gov>.

We apologize for any inconvenience this safety recall may cause you, but your safety is our first concern. If you have further questions regarding this recall please contact Fontaine Fifth Wheel at **1-844-597-7393** or ultraltrecall@fifthwheel.com.

Sincerely,

Fontaine Fifth Wheel



November 12, 2015

Subject: Service Bulletin - Ultra LT Fifth Wheel Damage Caused by Improper Coupling

Dear "Director of Maintenance",

It has been brought to our attention at Fontaine Fifth Wheel that, in some cases, operators are failing to use proper coupling techniques when operating an Ultra LT fifth wheel. Over a period of time and a number of couplings, as a result of these improper coupling techniques, cumulative damage can occur to the fifth wheel and fifth wheel locking mechanism that may cause the fifth wheel lock to function improperly. Specifically the operating lever in the fifth wheel can become bent to such a degree that the locking mechanism does not extend completely across the throat of the fifth wheel and does not seat full behind the locking jaw and kingpin. This can lead to a trailer disconnect resulting in property damage, bodily injury, and/or loss of life.

Some operators are not utilizing proper coupling techniques by 1) failing to ensure that the fifth wheel lock is fully open and ready to accept the king pin prior to coupling and/or 2) failing to have the trailer positioned at the proper height prior to coupling. Referenced below is a link to the Ultra LT Coupling Procedures (LT-161). Steps 1 and 2 of the Coupling Procedures are the specific steps that are not being performed and/or being performed incorrectly that result in the cumulative damage described above. These Coupling Procedures are not unique to this model fifth wheel and are common for all makes and models of fifth wheels in the industry. We strongly recommend that you familiarize your operators with these coupling procedures and ensure that they understand the importance of following these procedures.

Visual inspection of the fifth wheel is essential, both prior to and after coupling to a trailer. Prior to coupling to a trailer, the operator should inspect the fifth wheel to ensure that the fifth wheel lock is fully open and ready to accept the king pin. If the lock will not stay fully open, the fifth wheel has been damaged by improper coupling. The operator should immediately discontinue use of the fifth wheel and it should be replaced. After coupling to a trailer, when performing the required visual inspection of the fifth wheel, it is imperative that all four indicators of a proper coupling be verified as described in the Coupling Procedures (LT-161) Steps 3 and 4.

- The pull handle lock indicator notch should be within the lock guide plate.
- The secondary lock should be engaged behind the secondary latch.
- The locking mechanism should be engaged across the entire throat of the fifth wheel.
- There should be no space between the top surface of the fifth wheel and the trailer plate.

If any one of these four indicators of a proper coupling is absent, the fifth wheel is not properly coupled and the fifth wheel should not be operated in this condition. The fifth wheel should be inspected to determine why it is not coupling properly to the trailer. Use of a fifth wheel in this condition can lead to a trailer disconnect resulting in property damage, bodily injury, and/or loss of life.

The cumulative damage to the fifth wheel and fifth wheel locking mechanism described above can become so severe that it may become apparent to the driver when performing the required visual inspection of the back of the throat of the fifth wheel that the locking mechanism is not extended across the entire throat of the fifth wheel. It is important to inform your operators that it is not sufficient that the other three indicators that the fifth wheel is closed properly, 1) position of the pull handle, 2) position of the secondary lock, and 3) the top surface of the fifth wheel in contact with the trailer plate, are present as it is imperative that all four indicators of a proper coupling be verified prior to operating the fifth wheel. If during the inspection after coupling to a trailer, an operator notices a fifth wheel in which the inspection of the pull handle, secondary lock, and trailer plate indicate that the lock is fully closed, but the inspection of the locking mechanism indicates that it is not engaged across the entire throat of the fifth wheel, the



operator should immediately discontinue use of this fifth wheel and it should be replaced. Continued use of a fifth wheel in this condition can lead to a trailer disconnect resulting in property damage, bodily injury, and/or loss of life.

It is recommended after you receive this notice, that you perform a thorough inspection of your Ultra LT fifth wheels to determine if any have been damaged by improper coupling. After this initial inspection, the inspection should be performed again at each preventative maintenance interval of 90 days or 30,000 miles. Please review the inspection and maintenance procedures in the Ultra LT instruction book. The inspection steps are outlined below. Please also reference the attached photographs in Figures 1 – 6.

1) Perform a thorough visual inspection of the fifth wheel, including underneath, looking for bent or damaged components. Pay particular attention to the operating lever (Figures 1 & 2), the rotating jaw and cover plate (Figures 3, 4, & 5), and the wedge guide (Figure 6). If any components are bent or damaged replace the fifth wheel.

2) In addition to the visual inspection, this functional check is recommended. Without a king pin in the fifth wheel, extend the pull handle to the full open position, release the pull handle, if the pull handle retracts partially into the fifth wheel this is an indication that the fifth wheel and/or fifth wheel lock has been damaged and is not functioning properly. Measure the distance from the edge of the handle plate to the edge of the pull handle ring, this dimension should be greater than 5 ½” (Figure 2). If this dimension is less than 5 ½” (Figure 1) then the fifth wheel and/or fifth wheel lock has been damaged by improper coupling and the fifth wheel should be replaced. Continued use of the fifth wheel with bent or damaged components can lead to a trailer disconnect resulting in property damage, bodily injury, and/or loss of life.

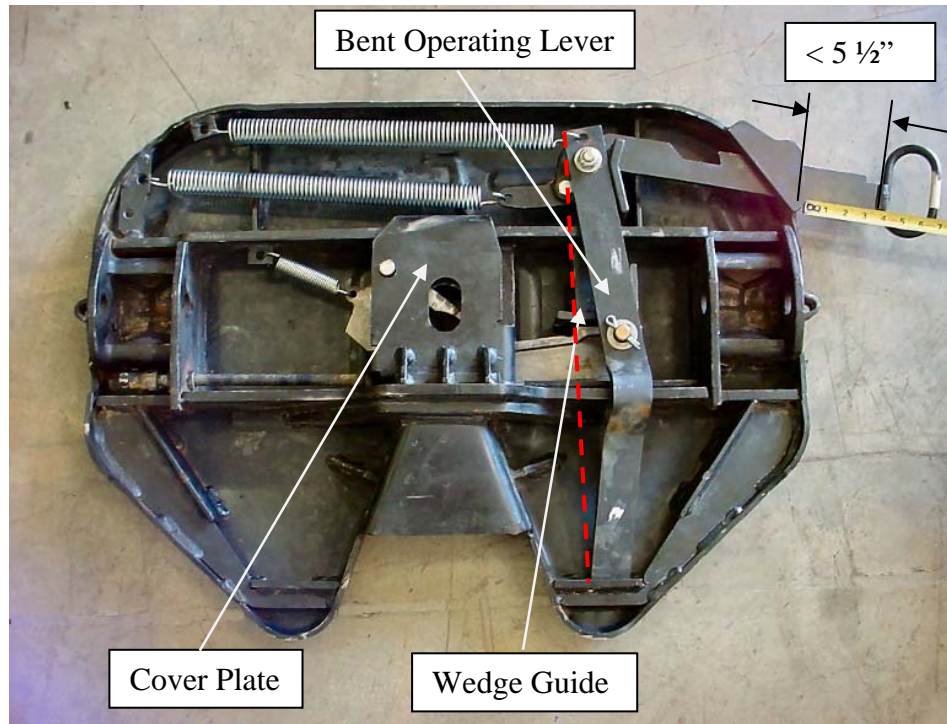
In addition to the Ultra LT Coupling Procedures (LT-161), we have an Ultra LT Instructions handbook (LT-149) and an Ultra LT Coupling Video (LT-166). This material will assist you in training your operators on proper fifth wheel coupling procedures. Please contact your sales representative or customer service at 1-800-874-9780 to obtain copies of this training material. Outside the United States call 205-661-4900. This training material is also available online at www.fifthwheel.com. The specific links for this material are listed below.

Instruction Handbook LT-149 - http://www.fifthwheel.com/pdfs/literature/LT-149_UltraLTInstructions.pdf
Coupling / Uncoupling Flyer LT-161 - http://www.fifthwheel.com/pdfs/literature/LT-161_LT_HD-HR-Couple-Uncouple.pdf
Coupling Video LT-166 - <http://www.fifthwheel.com/video-ultra-coupling.html>

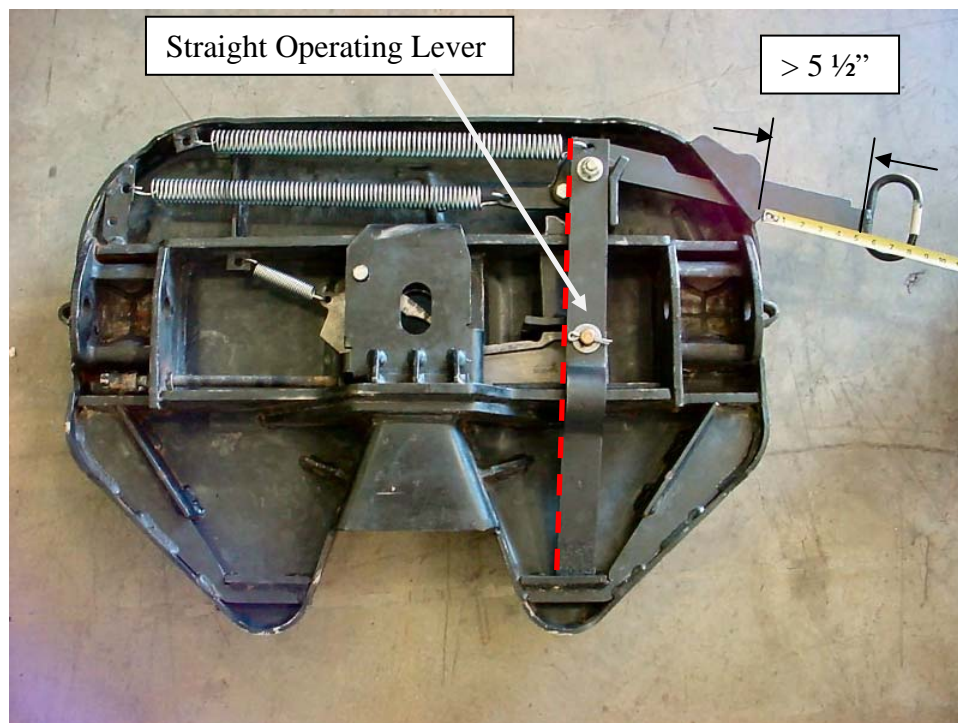
If, after following all of the recommended actions contained in this notice, you continue to experience damage caused by improper coupling with your Ultra LT fifth wheel, please contact your sales representative or customer service at 1-800-874-9780. Outside the United States call 205-661-4900.

Sincerely,

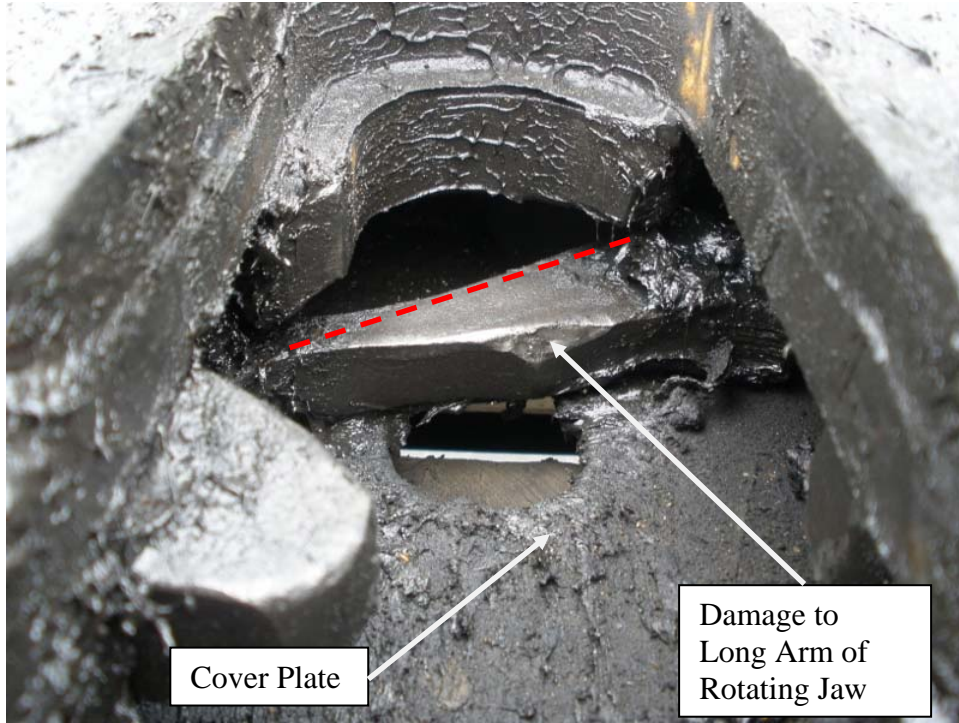
Steven Mann
Vice President - Engineering
Fontaine Fifth Wheel



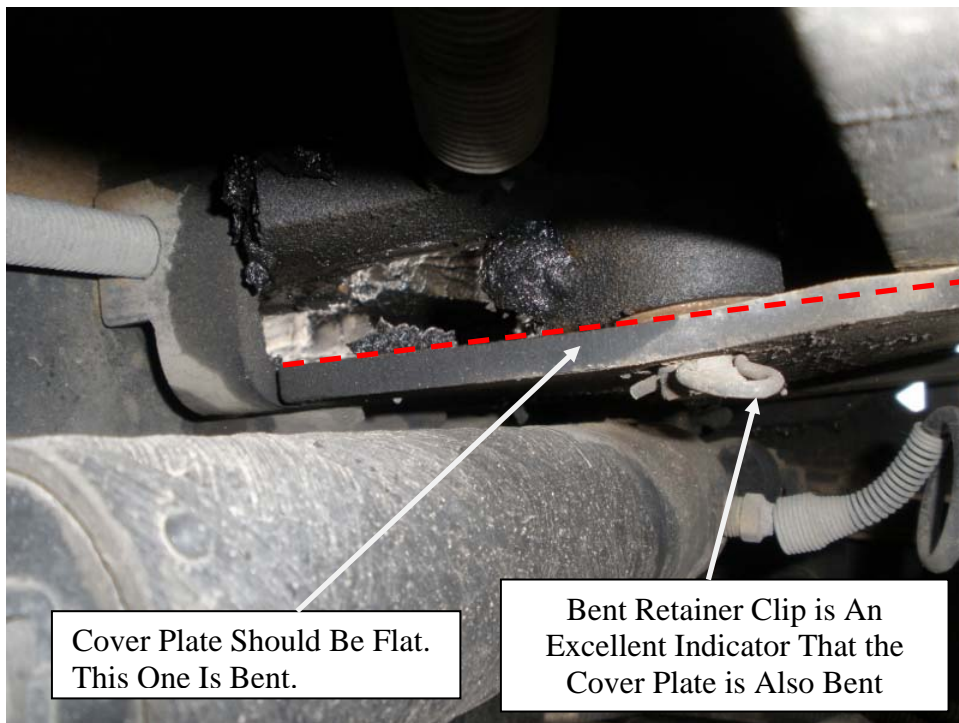
Bent Operating Lever – Pull Handle Dimension $< 5 \frac{1}{2}$ "
Figure 1



Undamaged Operating Lever – Pull Handle Dimension $> 5 \frac{1}{2}$ "
Figure 2



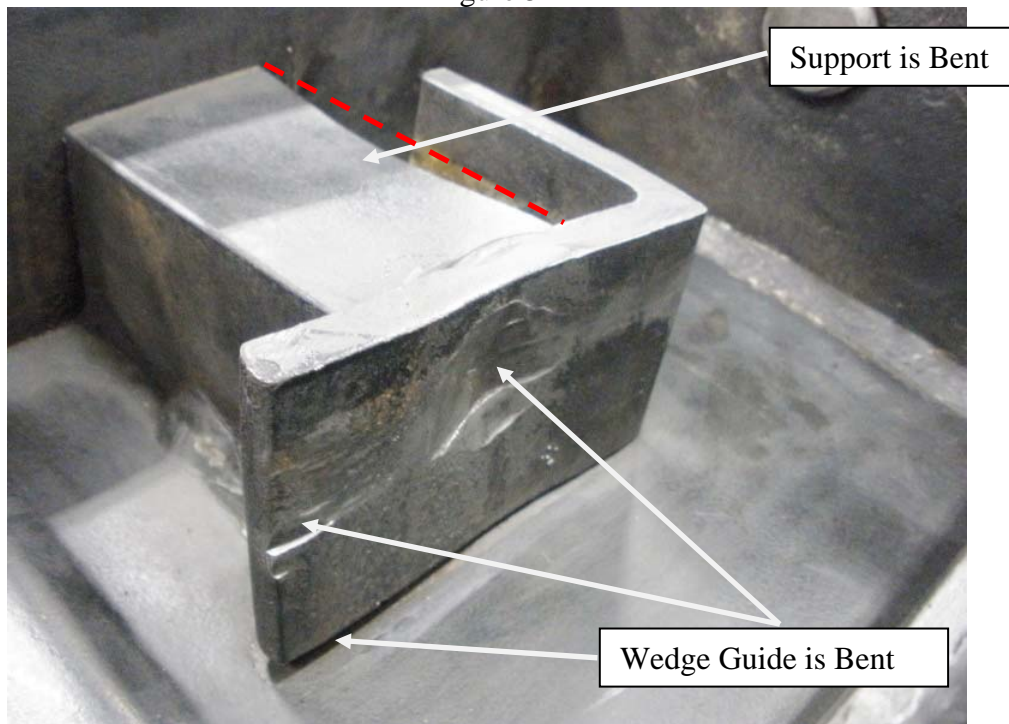
Damage to Rotating Jaw Caused By High Coupling, Resulting in a Bent Cover Plate
Figure 3



Bent Cover Plate
Figure 4



Damaged Rotating Jaw Caused By Improper Coupling
Figure 5



Wedge Guide Damage
Figure 6

How do I identify if I have an Ultra LT Fifth Wheel?

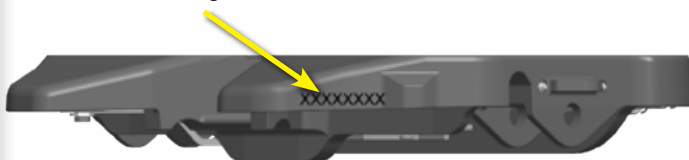
Method 1: Identify the Model Number

Model number location



Method 2: Provide the serial number to Fontaine Fifth Wheel at 844-597-7393 or ultraltrecall@fifthwheel.com and someone will be able to tell you if you have an Ultra LT fifth wheel.

Location of 9 Digit Serial Number



Serial number engraved directly into the right side of fifth wheel skirt. Note: position 5 and 6 of the serial number indicates the year built. Serial number is always 9 digits.

If the model number identified using method 1 is on this list, you have an Ultra LT Fifth Wheel.

Ultra LT Model Numbers

- AA4LWO675012
- AA4LWO775012
- AA4LWO875012
- AATPL4000
- SL4APB6250
- SL4APB7250
- SL4APB8250
- SL4LWI675012
- SL4LWI775024
- SL4LWO675012
- SL4LWO675016
- SL4LWO675024
- SL4LWO675036
- SL4LWO775012
- SL4LWO775016
- SL4LWO775024
- SL4LWO775036
- SL4LWO875012
- SL4LWO875016
- SL4LWO875024
- SL4LWO875036
- SL4SMB6875
- SL4SMB7875
- SR4LWO675012
- SLTPL4000
- SRTPL4000