



## **MONTHLY SAFETY MEETING**

**January 2019**

# **Make 2019 a Safe Year**

Tow truck operators transport cars and trucks, aid motorists, and keep streets and highways clear. Traffic never stops, so tow truck operators are called out at all times of day, year-round. The job involves personal safety, driving, heavy equipment, and traffic safety, so operators should learn safety basics for all truck operations not just towing equipment.

Mind your personal safety, ensure that someone is tracking or has a record of your planned route. Don't enter a situation that looks or feels dangerous, be calm and diplomatic when dealing with customers and others that be involved. When exiting your truck, be aware of the traffic around you, look and think before you make a move. To avoid a fall, use the steps and handles getting in and out of the truck; never jump in or out of the cab or bed.

Maintain your fitness for the job which may require stretching, bending, lifting, and climbing. Use good body mechanics and lifting techniques to avoid back injuries. Don't strain, twist, or over-reach, and avoid extreme or awkward positions as much as possible.

Drive defensively and stay alert. Avoid alcohol, drugs, and medications that cause drowsiness. Follow safe hours of service guidelines. Wear your seatbelt. Obey speed limits and road regulations. Don't multi-task while driving and keep your eyes and mind on the road at all times. If you must use your two-way radio or cell phone find a safe location and pull over. When arriving on scene, use your lights or a light bar to signal your intentions to other motorist. Follow the local laws for towing when it comes to lighting practices.

Know your equipment rating and capacity; overloading may cause an accident. Be aware of your truck height for maneuvering under overpasses and bridges. Inspect the truck before each use. Check the utility body and mounts and fix broken bolts, cracked welds, or stress fractures. Inspect the chains and hooks on the rig, make sure the security pins are not bent or falling out and the chain has no bent, stretched, or hammered links. Inspect your tires daily and check the tire pressure.

Inspect the winch and cable often, keep it clean and lubricated; repair or replace if necessary. Use hooks and clamps rated at the same capacity as the wire or chain. Maintain 3 to 5 wraps on the winch drum and rewind it periodically to lay the cable flat and even. Watch the lines so that they don't get tangled; placing continued pressure can shear the cable and send it flying at high speed. Check all hydraulic cylinders, pressure hoses, and all other related parts for leaks or damage. For those with advanced hydraulics with electrical controls, both remote and stationary, we suggest you test everything before heading out on the road.

Use extreme care when loading and unloading vehicles. Do not allow anyone to get in the way of loading or unloading vehicles. Protect the service area around you. Follow the manufacturer's recommendations for loading and securing the load. On rollbacks, we recommend strapping all four wheels to secure the vehicle to the bed. This is the most acceptable practice for today's vehicles. The winch cable with one tie down is not an accepted practice to secure the load. Refer to your towing manual for proper towing instructions. This recommendation applies to both wheel-lift trucks and rollbacks and all other medium and heavy-duty equipment. Do not leave tools, chains, hooks, or other equipment on the bed, they could become hazardous projectiles in travel.

If you are required to possess a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) we suggest that you follow all the rules and regulation required by the Federal Highway Administration and your local jurisdictions.

## **Your Personal Safety**

**Your personal safety is equally important, we recommend that you consider the following to be standard equipment used for your daily operation.**

- Eye Protection
- Gloves
- High Visibility Clothing (ANSI Rated)
- Safety Shoes
- Hard Hats
- Fire Extinguisher
- Wheel Chocks
- Fire Blanket
- Triangular Reflectors
- Flash Lights
- First Aid Kit
- Communication devices, cell phone etc.