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Item 5 of the provisional agenda

REGULATION No. 55 (Mechanical couplings)

Proposal for draft amendments to Regulation No. 55

Submitted by the expert from the United Kingdom *

The text reproduced below was prepared by the expert from the United Kingdom to insert into Regulation No. 55 a provision to attach a secondary coupling device to an unbraked O₁ trailer. The modifications to the existing text of the Regulation are marked in **bold** characters or as strikethrough.

* In accordance with the programme of work of the Inland Transport Committee for 2006-2010 (ECE/TRANS/166/Add.1, programme activity 02.4), the World Forum will develop, harmonize and update Regulations in order to enhance performance of vehicles. The present document is submitted in conformity with that mandate.

A. PROPOSAL

Paragraph 2.1., amend to read:

- "2.1. "mechanical coupling devices and components means" all those items on the frame, load-bearing parts of the bodywork and the chassis of the motor vehicle and trailer by means of which they are connected together to form the combination of vehicles or the articulated vehicles. **It also includes a secondary coupling device as defined in paragraph 2.16.** Fixed or detachable parts for the attachment or operation of the mechanical coupling device or component are included."

Insert a new paragraph 2.16., to read:

- "**2.16. "Secondary coupling device" means a chain, wire rope, etc., fitted to a Class B coupling head, capable in the event of separation of the main coupling, of preventing the trailer drawbar from touching the ground and providing some residual steering action on the trailer.**"

Annex 5, insert a new paragraph 13., to read:

"**13. SECONDARY COUPLING DEVICES**

- 13.1. Secondary coupling devices are intended to be fitted on specific O₁ trailers which are not fitted with a braking system.**
- 13.2. Secondary coupling devices shall be fitted with a suitable fastening method at either end which permits easy fitment to the trailer and to the attachment points of towing brackets as stated in paragraph 1.5. of this annex."**

Annex 6, insert a new paragraph 3.10., to read:

"**3.10. Secondary coupling devices**

- 3.10.1. The technical service shall ensure that the strength of the secondary coupling device shall prevent the drawbar of the trailer, when loaded to its technically permissible mass, from touching the ground if the main coupling separates."**

Annex 7, insert new paragraphs 1.6. and 1.6.1., to read:

"**1.6. Attachment of secondary coupling devices**

- 1.6.1. The attachment of the secondary coupling to the trailer and the towing vehicle shall prevent the drawbar of the trailer, when loaded to its technically permissible mass, from touching the ground if the main coupling separates and provide residual steering of the trailer."**

B. JUSTIFICATION

GRRF requested the expert from the United Kingdom to prepare a proposal to clarify the requirements for a secondary coupling device and incorporate it in Regulation No. 55.

Currently, there is a requirement in Regulation No. 13 for braked trailers to be fitted with a device which automatically applies the brakes in the event of a separation of the main coupling. Alternatively for trailers with a maximum authorised mass not exceeding 1500 kg, a secondary coupling (chain, wire rope, etc.) may be fitted which in the event of a separation of the main coupling will prevent the tow bar from touching the ground and provide some steering.

Regulation No. 13 stipulates:

"5.2.2. Vehicles of category O

5.2.2.1. Trailers of category O₁ need not be equipped with a service braking system; however, if a trailer of this category is equipped with a service braking system, it must satisfy the same requirements as a trailer of category O₂.

5.2.2.9. The braking systems must be such that the trailer is stopped automatically if the coupling separates while the trailer is in motion. However, this provision shall not apply to trailers with a maximum mass not exceeding 1.5 tonnes, on the condition that the trailers are equipped with, in addition to the coupling device, a secondary coupling (chain, wire rope, etc.) capable, in the event of separation of the main coupling, of preventing the drawbar from touching the ground and providing some residual steering action on the trailer."

It is not absolutely clear from paragraph 5.2.2.9. above that this provision applies to unbraked O₁ trailers. However, from a road safety perspective, it is paramount that such a coupling is fitted to unbraked trailers. Therefore, it seems reasonable to remove the secondary coupling provision from Regulation No. 13 and incorporate it in Regulation No. 55.

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