

## HARD TO OPEN

### COMPLAINT:

Driver reports that the fifth wheel will not unlock from the trailer king pin.

### CONDITION:

The fifth wheel cannot be unlocked by pulling the handle or (in the case of an air-actuated lock) applying the air).

### DIAGNOSIS:

Make sure there is no pressure applied to the lock mechanism by the way the vehicle is parked or from the trailer king pin.

The following procedure will help in determining if the problem is in the fifth wheel or in the way the tractor/trailer is uncoupled.

1. Be sure the tractor and trailer are on level ground.
2. Lock the trailer brakes and back the tractor into the trailer.
3. Set the tractor brakes.
4. DO NOT empty the air suspension before opening the fifth wheel.
5. Lower the landing gear to the ground and crank the gear another one and one half turns.
6. Open the fifth wheel.
7. Drive the tractor slowly forward until the king pin is away from the lock area. Continue to drive forward slowly, allowing the air suspension to compensate for the lack of weight. Driving forward too quickly will cause the tractor to “squirt” out from under the trailer and may cause the king pin to catch on the rear cross member of the tractor.

If the fifth wheel will now open, the problem was due to a load being applied to the lock by the king pin.

If the wheel still will not open, strike the spring loaded wedge stop rod firmly with a hammer - two or three times. The wedge stop rod resembles a bolt and is located on the opposite side of the fifth



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wheel from the lock handle. Striking the wedge stop rod will release the wedge in the lock mechanism.

Note: If the wedge stop rod is turned in too far it will cause binding on the secondary lock and the inability to open the fifth wheel.

If the fifth wheel still will not open, more severe procedures may need to be taken. One procedure would be to get under the fifth wheel and pry the wedge back. Under no conditions should the fifth wheel be cut from the tractor or trailer.

Once the fifth wheel has been opened and the trailer released from the tractor, the following should help eliminate the cause in the future.

**THE CAUSE:**

The hard to open issue occurred due to the way the tractor and trailer were coupled.

**THE CURE:**

Review Fontaine's video on coupling/uncoupling a trailer. Additional copies may be ordered directly from Fontaine.

**THE CAUSE:**

The hard to open issue occurred due to a mechanical problem with the fifth wheel or worn parts in the lock mechanism.

**THE CURE:**

1. Check the wedge stop rod for proper adjustment.  
See: TB-012 Adjustment of Wedge Stop Rod.
2. Check for proper lubrication of the top plate and the lock mechanism. See: Scheduled Maintenance or Pre-Service Procedure or TB-08 Cold Weather Maintenance.  
Pay special attention to the proper lubrication of the jaw and wedge. See: Fontaine Fifth Wheel Information Handbook - Section II.
3. Check for proper positioning of the wedge stop rod.  
See: TB-012 Adjustment of Wedge Stop Rod.



#### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

##### **Additional information is available as follows:**

1. Fontaine Fifth Wheel Instructions Handbook
2. No Slack II 6000 Top Plate Exploded View & Parts List
3. Technical Bulletin TB-012 - Wedge Stop Rod Adjustment
4. Technical Bulletin TB-013 - Fifth Wheel Coupling for Air Ride
5. Fontaine Schematic Catalog

#### **TYPICAL ACTION DESCRIPTION:**

Set wedge stop rod gap to 1/4" and fifth wheel functioned properly. Report any condition of looseness (slack) to mechanic for proper adjustment procedures. \*Advise driver not to attempt to adjust wedge stop rod setting \*\*Drivers may utilize wedge stop rod to unlock hard to open wheel by tapping with hammer\*.

#### **WARRANTY:**

See Warranty Standard; or Warranty Claim Procedure / SRT Chart for additional information.

#### **GENERAL COMMENTS:**

Videos, Technical Bulletins and Instruction Handbooks for all necessary maintenance and repair of Fontaine Fifth Wheel products are available at no charge by calling (800) 874-9780.