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**JOST**

## Untraceable fifth wheel spotted in Gauteng

When it comes to critical safety equipment one thing stays constant. Make sure the equipment is traceable by checking for a manufacturer's name, serial and batch number. If this information is not available the fifth wheel or any other critical safety item it is not roadworthy.

Here are some pictures of just such a fifth wheel spotted in the Gauteng area.

There is no name plate, no batch number, no serial number, no max imposed load rating, no max D-Value rating, no max GCM rating, no date of manufacture, no origin visible anywhere on this fifth wheel.

This fifth wheel is not legal and is not allowed to be fitted on any South African licensed vehicle. Any vehicle fitted with this unit will not be able to pass COF.

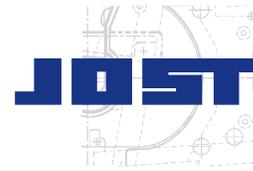


The following question is: where would you find spares for this fifth wheel, and how do you maintain it? On closer inspection it was found that Jost spares do not fit in the locking mechanism of this untraceable fifth wheel.





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Looking at South African conditions and applications it is also important to match the strengths and weaknesses of the fifth wheel to the environment it has to operate in. This fifth wheel has an E-Type mounting on the pedestal (pin and bush). As South Africans we are all aware of the deteriorating road conditions in the country. The only thing standing between the shock load of the trailer and the drivetrain of the towing vehicle is the shock absorption offered by the fifth wheel. In this case with the pin and bush type mounting as seen here, there will be little to no shock absorption offered by the fifth wheel.

The damage resulting from the impact through the fifth wheel will negatively impact on the gearbox, diff, clutch, wheel bearings etc. of the truck or interlink suspension. The drivetrain and axle components now have to absorb the shock caused by inferior road conditions. The damage caused by this shock load is now transferred as wear on the expensive drivetrain and axle components.



This handle has no wear indicator; even though it does have an adjusting bolt there is no way of knowing when the locking mechanism components (if obtainable) need to be replaced. Should this fifth wheel have been legal, this would unnecessarily complicate maintenance requirements.

Be careful of unknown and untraceable critical safety items. In case of a failure always ensure that those products are backed by a reputable manufacturer.