

NATF Redacted Operating Experience Report

Vehicle Leaf Spring Failure

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Topic

Vehicle Leaf Spring Failure

Description

While dumping chips, a vegetation management (VM) contractor crew took a few minutes to inspect and grease the hoist and under carriage of the truck they were using. During inspection, they noticed that one of the leaf springs on the truck was broken. This contractor had been experiencing repeated leaf-spring failures on certain model trucks with an over-center aerial device over a span of several months. These failures led to unsafe situations in which the vehicle was immediately taken out of service for repair.

Lessons Learned

1. Thorough inspection of all equipment before each use is critical.
2. Equipment issues are not always obvious or easily detectable, and a second set of eyes completing a fit-for-use review can be helpful.

Actions Taken

1. The VM contractor reached out to technical support services of the vehicle and over-center aerial device manufacturers. Both entities reported back that they have not received any bulletins, recalls, or leaf failures within a given model year / serial number.
 - a. The vehicle manufacturer did note seeing this when the bolt near the leaf spring hanger is not inspected after the rear chassis gross axle weight rating has been compromised.
2. The VM contractor has resorted to replacing the leaf springs and has raised awareness about this issue across the company.
3. All employees operating this model truck must complete a thorough leaf-spring inspection daily to ensure the vehicle integrity.

Extent of Condition

The leaf-spring failure was found on multiple trucks. Therefore, the extent of this issue is broad, and all vehicles of this make should be carefully reviewed on a continuous basis. See figure 1 on next page.

Figure 1 - Broken Leaf Spring

