

**4x4 ACCESSORIES**

# **RECOVERY STRAP GUIDELINES**





**DON'T GET CAUGHT OUT WITH INADEQUATE GEAR WHILE 4WDING BECAUSE THERE'S NOTHING WORSE THAN BEING STRANDED OFF THE BEATEN TRACK!**

**The XTM Nylon Snatch Strap would be a great addition to your next adventure.**

# GUIDELINES FOR SAFE USE OF VEHICLE RECOVERY STRAPS (SNATCH STRAPS)

## GENERAL INFORMATION

A Recovery Strap is a heavy duty nylon strap that can stretch and spring back to original length. The combination of the recovery vehicle pull, and the tension in the strap creates a 'snatching' effect that can pull a stranded vehicle free from being bogged or when the vehicle is unable to move under its own power. When used in accordance with the following guidelines, vehicles may be recovered with minimal risk of injury to people or damage to vehicle and equipment.

## KEY INFORMATION AND SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

- + Check the strap and its packaging for a stated Minimum Breaking Strength (MBS).
- + It is recommended that the Minimum Breaking Strength of the strap should be between 2 and 3 times the gross vehicle mass (GVM) of any vehicle it is used with, and that the strap must be suited to the gross vehicle mass (GVM) of the lighter of the 2 vehicles used in the recovery process.
- + Persons intending to use the strap should consider completing a nationally recognised four-wheel drive training course or contact a four-wheel drive club for comprehensive advice on the proper selection and use of the strap.
- + The strap must not be used for lifting or conventional towing.
- + Persons intending to use the strap must ensure that the strap is not damaged and is in a usable condition.
- + The strap's strength and stretch are reduced when the strap is saturated with water.
- + An object such as a recovery damper, heavy bag or blanket must be draped over the strap during use to reduce any unintentional rebound of the strap.
- + Before attempting the vehicle recovery, passengers of the vehicles involved must:
  - Exit the vehicles and,
  - Stand as far away from the vehicles as possible and,
  - Avoid standing in the path of the vehicle performing the recovery.



## WARNING

### INCORRECT USE MAY RESULT IN INJURY OR DEATH!



Vehicle **OCCUPANTS** and **BYSTANDERS** have been **KILLED** by flying projectiles (such as tow balls) when recovery straps have been attached incorrectly.

**NEVER** attach recovery straps to vehicle fittings such as tow balls, tow bars, tie-down points or tow hooks.

**ONLY** attach recovery straps to an **APPROVED** recovery point/device that is suitably rated for use with the strap.

**BEFORE** attempting a vehicle recovery all passengers must exit the vehicles and stand as far away as possible.

### IMPORTANT

- + Never attempt to recover a vehicle without all the necessary equipment.
- + Only use equipment that is properly rated for the particular situation, if in doubt don't use it.
- + Never exceed the Minimum Breaking Strength (MBS) of the strap or the Working Load Limit (WLL) of the shackles.

### SELECTING THE RIGHT RECOVERY STRAP

It is very important to use a strap that is correctly rated for the recovery. A strap with a breaking strength that is too light for the recovery may break under load. A strap with a breaking strength that is too heavy for the recovery may not stretch properly, placing more stress on the recovery points and possibly causing damage or injury.

The Minimum Breaking Strength (MBS) of the strap should be between 2 and 3 times the gross vehicle mass (GVM) of any vehicle it is used with, and that the strap must be suited to the gross vehicle mass (GVM) of the lighter of the 2 vehicles used in the recovery process. Be aware that the Recovery Strap will be under greater load if the vehicle is bogged in mud, sand or heavily loaded. If the gross vehicle mass (GVM) is not stated on the vehicle's identification plate or registration certificate, it may be available from the owner's handbook or vehicle manufacturer.

## **KEEPING PEOPLE SAFE**

Only the drivers of the stranded and recovery vehicles should be in the vehicles during a recovery. Before attempting the vehicle recovery, passengers of the vehicles involved must exit the vehicles, and stand as far away from the vehicles as possible, and avoid standing in the path of the vehicle performing the recovery.

## **SETTING UP THE RECOVERY**

Assess the circumstances of the stranded vehicle. If it has bottomed out, clear out under the body so it rests on the wheels. The recovery vehicle should be placed in line with stranded vehicle (no more than 10° off the straight line) for either a forward or reverse recovery operation. The distance between the vehicles should be 2-3 metres less than the un-stretched length of the Recovery Strap. Establish agreed signals between the vehicle drivers using radios (preferably), hand signals or the vehicle horn.

## **CONNECTING THE RECOVERY STRAP**

Carefully inspect the Recovery Strap to determine that it is in good condition. If the strap is wet, dirty, cut or chaffed, it will not perform properly. A wet strap may reduce in strength by up to 20% and a damaged strap could break. Do not allow the strap to come into contact with hot surfaces or sharp edges.

Roll the strap out between the vehicles making sure there are no twists and leave approximately 2-3 metres of slack between the vehicles. Joining two Recovery Straps together should be avoided wherever possible (most retailers will carry varying lengths of strap). **NEVER USE A METAL OBJECT**, such as a shackle, to join straps. If the strap breaks the metal object could become a missile and cause damage, serious injury or death.

Check your vehicle handbook for recovery point locations or use correctly rated and fitted aftermarket recovery points. **DO NOT CONNECT TO A TOW BALL OR TIE DOWN POINT.** Connect the Recovery Strap to correctly rated recovery points on both vehicles. If a shackle is required to connect the strap to the vehicle recovery point, use load rated shackles only (load ratings are marked on shackles as WLL or Working Load Limit). Bow shackles are suitable for this purpose and should be rated at least 3.2t. To correctly tighten the shackle pin, screw the pin until it seats then back it off approximately 1/2 to 1 turn. Over tightening may lead to seized pins from the force exerted during recovery process.

To reduce the risk of vehicle damage and personal injury, hang a suitable recovery damper over the Recovery Strap at its midpoint. This will restrict the whipping action of the strap should it break.

Finally, check all the connections and clear bystanders to stand as far away from the vehicles as possible. **NEVER** allow bystanders standing in the path of the vehicle performing the recovery (Refer to **KEEPING PEOPLE SAFE**).

## **MAKING THE RECOVERY**


1. Before the recovery operation begins, drivers must agree on the point to which the stranded vehicle will be recovered to. They also need to agree on the signal to use when that point is reached (radio, hand signal or horn blast).
2. With communications maintained between both vehicles and the Recovery Strap secure, the recovery vehicle should gently accelerate to take up the slack, then proceed at approximately 10-12 km/h. For best results the stranded vehicle should be in 1st gear (or 2nd Low) and should assist the recovery by trying to drive out approximately 3 seconds after the recovery vehicle starts to move.
3. If the vehicle is not recovered on the first attempt, check under the stranded vehicle for obstacles, reset the slack in the Recovery Strap and try again with a little more speed. **NOTE:** Excessive speed or a continual jerking action while using a Recovery Strap may result in damage to the recovery point, chassis, or drive line of both vehicles.
4. When the stranded vehicle reaches the agreed recovery point, the driver should advise the recovery vehicle to stop by using the pre-determined signal. After the recovery vehicle stops, the recovered vehicle should also stop (but not before the recovery vehicle has).
5. Where proper use of a Recovery Strap is unsuccessful, use an appropriate sized recovery winch to recover the stranded vehicle.
6. **Do not attempt to remove the strap until both vehicles are stationary and secured.**
7. **NOTE:** Recovery Straps require rest periods between use to allow them to return to their original length and capacity. Excessive pulls over a short period of time can cause heat build up resulting in possible failure.

## **GENERAL CARE AND MAINTENANCE**

- + Never allow your strap to rub against sharp objects or hot surfaces.
- + Avoid twists and kinks after washing, and when dry, always coil your strap for storage.
- + Clean your strap with warm water and a mild detergent then allow for a thorough drying time before storage. Foreign material such as sand and grit can permanently damage the strap fibres.
- + Check the full length of the strap for nicks and cuts before and after use; if damaged, replace it.
- + Never use the strap as a lifting sling.
- + Inspect shackles for damage before and after use. If the pin is hard to turn, the shackle has been overstressed and needs replacing.

## **ALWAYS FOLLOW THE RECOVERY STRAP GUIDELINES FOR SAFE USE**

Compiled by the Australian 4WD Industry Council in conjunction with the 4WD Industry to assist safe use of Recovery Straps.



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