

# DENNISON Trailers get to grips v

**A**t the recent Mondello Truck Show a major topic being discussed was the whole area of load restraint and vehicle safety, particularly around curtainsiders trailers. The Road Safety Authority (RSA) has undertaken a multi-agency approach with the Gardaí and Health & Safety Authority over recent years to increase awareness of load safety.

Speaking to David Dennison (pictured), Head of Innovation at Dennison Trailers, David stated that while the issue of safety was important in curtainsiders, he said that the issue of safety on flat trailers has steadily climbed up the agenda in recent years. "The safety issues on flat trailers led to a number of safety features having been introduced as options or standard features. The real big issue, however, was the strength of the headboard."

The Dennison Trailer platform range now features an ENXL certified headboard with a rated payload of 29 tonnes in use. This feature came about because the steel industry in the UK required that headboards had to have some strength certification. Initially the industry was happy with a strength calculation from the manufacturers, then Dennison's decided that the best way for their customers to assure steel mills, was to get the headboard certified to a known European standard. David explained that the company used the UK's VCA (Vehicle Certification Agency) to test the headboard to the well known European standard EN12642 XL. The VCA is one of 28 Agencies in the European Community to certify trailers for type approval. This is also the same standard used to certify curtainsiders as meeting acceptable strength standards.

"The headboard has been a standard feature of Dennison's trailers for about two years now, and the feedback is that it has added significantly to safety. In one case a trailer was involved in an accident, the trailer overturned and the trailer owner firmly believes that if it was not for



the headboard, the cab would have been crushed." The Dennison headboard is now certified up to heights of 1800mm. From David's point of view the real benefits are that both the cab and driver get extra protection. "Any rogue product that becomes loose, particularly steel tubes etc., are restrained as the tests were geared to the strength involving forward motion of product and how it could be stopped. Therefore driver safety is increased."

Other safety features that have been raised centred around load security and working at height regulations. "An issue that has come up is that rope-hooks were being used to restrain loads on trailers whereby the straps were attached to hooks. It is important to be clear that the rope-hooks are only for tying

sheets down for weather protection." While straps are used regularly for restraining loads, some customers were looking for a more secure lashing point. Dennison has developed a tie-down point that has been tested to a load security rating of 2 tonnes. While this is an optional feature, it has proved very popular with hauliers, especially on the Irish Sea crossings where weather extremes require the additional strength.

The issue of load restraint is a European topic and there are common themes arising such as tie down points, but some of Dennison's customers also have specific requirements. Where possible the team at Dennison try to offer the benefit of their experience to give cost effective but workable solutions. In one case a leading UK aggregate company needed a safety harness fitted that drivers and staff loading the trailers could fit a fall arrest harness. David explained how Dennison fitted a very simple system that resolves the issue for the customer, and also presented a way to retrofit it to the rest of their fleet. "The customer required their employees to climb on the platform of the trailer to ensure the cover was properly secured and that there was no dust coming from the bags of aggregate being carried. This meant the whole area of working at height regulations came into play. The customer had various suggestions put forward by their Health & Safety advisors, including a complex and costly A frame system at the front and rear of the trailer."

Dennison came up with a very simple system which involves two posts front and rear. The customer was then able to attach a steel wire certified to the necessary standards and attach a fall arrest harness. A quick and simple solution, but highly effective and meeting the required Health & Safety requirements.

Returning to the issue of trailer strength, this was highlighted at the Load Security element, part of the *Fleet Transport Ireland's Best Truck Driver Finals* competition at Mondello, which used a Dennison



# s with load restraint and security



curtainsider certified to meet EN 12642 XL. The company used TUV Nord in Germany to undertake the tests concurrently while at the Mondello Truck Show. The schedule involved two days of intensive tests with all aspects of the trailer covered in dynamic trials involving internal cargo that moves. Investigation of forward motion, side motion and the impact on the curtains as well as

reverse impacts of cargo movement were recorded. "The tests were carried out to replicate the effects of cargo that moves if not properly restrained," explained David.

The key point that David picked up from the TUV Nord crew was that the curtains and body features need to be seen as the last defence when product becomes loose, and

that best load security is implemented by tying the cargo to the bed of the trailer. David was delighted to get the certification for Dennison's curtainsider range, which was tested to 4.64 metres overall height for the Irish & UK markets. The curtain is available with XL certification as an option.

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