

# SNATCH STRAP USERS GUIDE



Persons intending to use a snatch strap should consider completing a nationally recognised 4wd training course or contact a 4wd club for comprehensive advice on selection and use of a snatch strap. This guide is not a substitute for proper training.

## WHAT IS A SNATCH STRAP?

A snatch strap is an elastic recovery strap that has the ability to be stretched and then return to its original length. The combination of the elasticity of the strap and the momentum of the recovery vehicle creates a snatching effect that is extremely effective in extracting a vehicle that is stranded. Snatch straps are required to comply with Trade Practices Regulations which specify their labelling and use.

## SELECTING THE RIGHT SNATCH STRAP

It is very important that a correctly rated strap is used. A strap with a too light breaking strength may break under load. A strap with too heavy a breaking strength may not stretch properly and place more stress on the recovery points, possibly causing damage or injury. The minimum breaking strength of the strap should be 2-3 times the gross vehicle mass (GVM) of the lighter of the two vehicles in the recovery. Do not use a strap that is cut or chaffed, a damaged strap may break. Wet straps have reduced elasticity.

## KEEPING PEOPLE SAFE

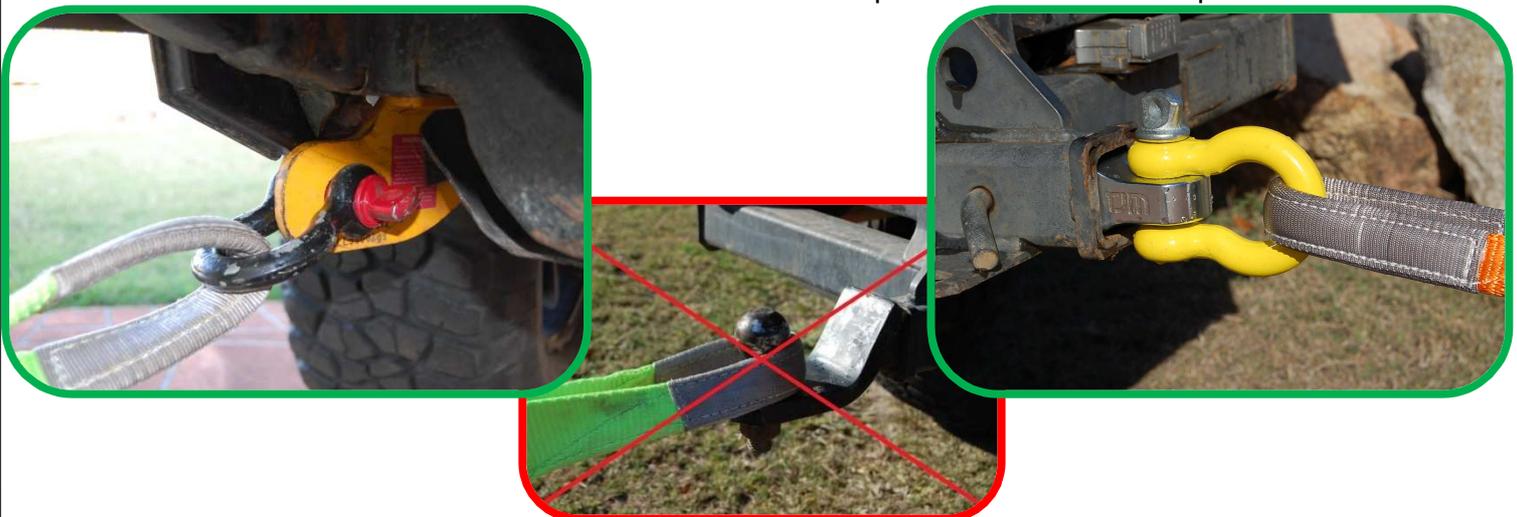
Only the drivers should be in the vehicles. All other bystanders should be at least 1.5 times the length of the strap away, to the side of the line of recovery. NEVER stand between vehicles connected by a strap.

## SETTING UP THE RECOVERY

Assess the circumstances of the stranded vehicle. If necessary dig the sand or mud from around the tyres, clear dirt and obstructions from the belly of the car. The recovery vehicle should be no more than 10 degrees off line with the disabled vehicle. It should be positioned to allow approx 2-3 meters of slack in the strap when connected to both vehicles.

## CONNECTING THE SNATCH STRAP

Ensure you have a snatch strap and not a tow strap or winch extension strap. Inspect the snatch strap to determine that it is in good condition. Position the strap on the ground between the vehicles and place a dampener midway along the strap. Connect the strap to each vehicle, there should be no twists or knots in the strap. The strap must only be connected to a rated recovery point. If a bow shackle is required then it must be a load rated shackle, minimum of 3.25t. Load ratings are marked on shackles as Working Load Limit (WLL). Screw in shackle pin until hand tight and back off half a turn. **DO NOT ATTACH THE STRAP TO A TOW BALL OR VEHICLE TIE DOWN POINT.** The strap is now 'live' do not step over.



## PERFORMING THE RECOVERY

Check all bystanders are clear, 1.5 times the length of the strap away, to the side of the line of recovery. Communication between both vehicles must be established (UHF, horn etc) with clear signals when to start and stop the recovery understood. The recovery vehicle accelerates, taking up the slack in the strap. The disabled vehicle should assist the recovery if possible by trying to drive out when the strap becomes tight. The recovery vehicle should not use excessive speed during the recovery. Start off gently and increase the speed if the attempt is unsuccessful. If not successful after 3 attempts with increasing pull then another form of recovery should be considered. Excessive speed is unsafe and can cause damage. Do not attempt to disconnect the strap until both vehicles are stationary and secured.

## JOINING STRAPS

On occasions a situation may occur where it is necessary to join 2 or more straps together to reach the disabled vehicle. **NEVER USE A METAL OBJECT, SUCH AS A SHACKLE, TO JOIN STRAPS.** If the strap breaks it can become a missile and cause damage, injury or death. The following method is recommended. Take the end of strap 1 and thread it through the eyelet of strap 2. Take the other end of strap 2 and thread it through the eyelet of strap 1. Pull tight and place a rolled up magazine or stick between the loops as shown in the picture below left.



## GENERAL CARE & MAINTENANCE

Never allow your strap to rub against sharp edges or hot surfaces. Clean your strap with warm water and mild detergent. Foreign material such as sand and dirt can permanently damage strap fibers. Allow the strap to dry thoroughly out of direct sunlight before storage. Check the full length of the strap for nicks, cuts and abrasions before and after use. If damaged, replace it. Always coil your strap for storage and avoid kinks or twists. Never use the strap as a tow rope or lifting sling. Recovery snatch straps are a consumable item and have a life expectancy. Industry opinions range between 8 & 25 recoveries per strap dependant on how well the strap is maintained and the usage that the strap is subjected to. If you have any doubt on the condition of the strap, then it should be replaced.

Should you wish to learn more about snatch strap recoveries or other aspects of 4wding, The Rum City Offroaders Inc can deliver nationally accredited driver training to its members as provided by 4wd Qld.

For more information, please email the Secretary at [rumcityoffroaders@hotmail.com](mailto:rumcityoffroaders@hotmail.com) or visit our Facebook page.

