



Don't Trail on Trailer PM

When the fifth wheel on the Patriot missile system's tractor and the M860 trailer kingpin get in bad shape, you can't hook them up to hit the road. If they get in too bad a shape, you think the truck and trailer are locked together, but they're not. One Patriot unit watched their launcher take a spill when the truck drove off but the launcher didn't follow. And even worse, a weak kingpin can also break off during travel.

A little PM, though, will keep your Patriot trucking.

If you're operating in the desert, sand is more of a problem than rust. Grease the fifth wheel and kingpin lightly only. When the truck and trailer aren't hooked up, cover the fifth wheel and kingpin with plastic bags to prevent the grease from collecting sand. When it's time to travel, wipe off any sand from them before you hook up. Sand will cause the kingpin and fifth wheel to wear fast.

In rainy areas like Germany and Korea, corrosion is the problem. Grease the kingpin and fifth wheel monthly. Any time you can't see grease on either, grease them.

It's a good idea to check the condition of the kingpin before you hit the road. Here's how:

- Completely wipe off all grease from the kingpin and then clean it with dry cleaning solvent. That way you can easily spot problems.
- Look for cracks, gouges, and chips. Any cracks in the kingpin make it NMC, as do any nicks, chips or gouges deeper than $\frac{1}{8}$ inch.

