

\* \* \* \* \* **SAFETY ALERT** \* \* \* \* \*

April 11, 2009

**Attention owners of Scamp 16' or 19' models**



If your Scamp 16' or 19' trailer is equipped with an AL-KO axle there may be a design problem that could affect you. This bulletin was prepared to raise awareness amongst owners. If your camper is one of these models, its axle should be inspected to determine if there is any damage.

**What is the basis for this alert?**

In October 2007 several Scamp owners reported cracked and fatigued axle brackets. These reports were made by members of the Yahoo Scampers group. (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/scampers/>)

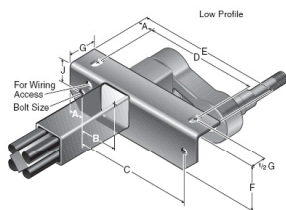
From member reports to date the trailers involved were mainly the heaviest models, 19' fifth wheels. However, the same failure mode has affected some 16' Scamps. Both models use the same axle.

From these reports it seems model years 2001 to 2007 were involved. Member photos from 2000 and earlier models do not show the problem configuration, and the Scamp factory changed the axle design mid 2007 to address the issue. The model year alone is not sufficient so inspection is highly recommended.

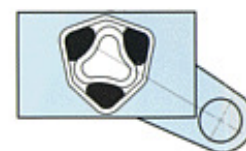
**Should your trailer be inspected?**

Your Scamp trailer may or may not be at risk of experiencing this problem. The first thing to determine is if your axle was made by AL-KO or Dexter. The way to tell the difference is by the shape of the axle beam.

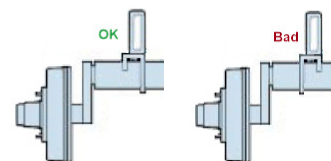
Dexter axle beams are square. None of the reports involved these axles.



AL-KO axle beams are hexagonal. Only these axles appear to be involved. Shape is **not** the problem, it just aids identification.



The problem is **not** the brand of axle. It involves how the top brackets were configured. So the next step is to identify their orientation. These brackets attach the axle to the trailer frame. They have a large side which surrounds the axle beam, a flat top section 2-2.5" wide, and a smaller side which is also attached to (but does not surround) the axle beam. The axles with the potential problem have two combined features. (a) The large side of the bracket is oriented facing outwards as shown on the far right. (b) Instead of their outside edges lining up the large side of the bracket is offset 0.5-1" outside the frame.



An additional feature to look for is the location of the welds attaching the axle brackets to the frame. The top bracket has two bolt-hole slots. The weld segments following the edge of the frame form a straight line. If that line passes through these slots then the axle is at risk for this problem and should be inspected for possible damage.



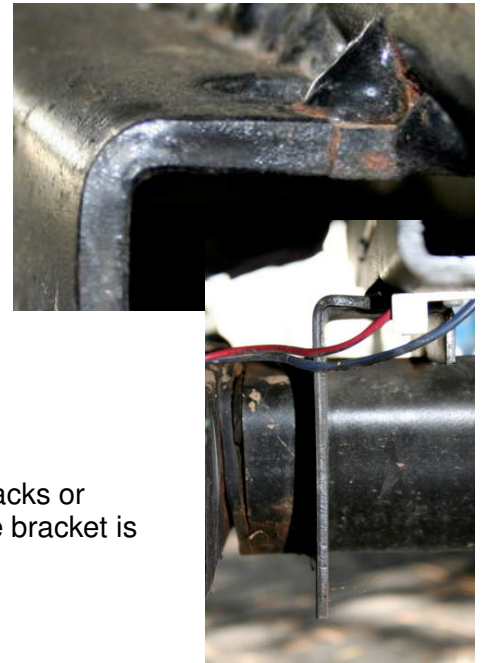
## **What to look for during the inspection?**

To conduct the inspection, try contacting RV, trailer, or welding shops in your area. You want someone qualified to make the assessment. It helps if the person has experience with trailer axles.

There are two key features to inspect for. One is cracks in the axle brackets. The other thing to look for is if the axle brackets are bent. During the inspection it would be a good idea to record some key measurements and take photographs if possible. It would also be good to note the fillet weld geometry.

### 1. Cracks

From the axle failures reported to date the initial cracks were consistently located along the edge of the welds as shown here enlarged (right, above). These photos were taken from the road side of the trailer. The curb side was a virtual mirror image. Both cracks extended into the rear bolt-hole slot.



### 2. Bent brackets

The wider view photo (right, below) shows how the bracket was bent slightly. All angles should be 90 degrees.

### 3. Important measurements

Check the offset between the frame and axle bracket outside edges. Even if no cracks or distortion is apparent, the axle may still be at risk of future damage if the large side bracket is offset 0.5-1" past the trailer frame as show here.

### 4. Other features to note

The geometry of the weld bead likely plays an important role in crack initiation. The fillet weld shown here (above) is concave. Note the shape of your welds, and photograph if possible.

## **What to do if your axle is damaged?**

Damaged axles should be reported to Scamp Trailers (800/346-4962). Even if your trailer is out of warranty, this is a safety issue. They will provide instructions for next steps.

To help other owners track reports of this problem, please post a message to the Yahoo Scampers group (web address below). Be sure to note the year and model of your Scamp, along with the scale weight if possible. This helps us all understand and accurately share the appropriate risk factors. You can email me directly if you prefer.

## **What to do if your axle is configured this way but not damaged?**

Stay tuned for more information and updates posted to the Yahoo Scampers group (web address below). As more information becomes available, updates will also be made to this document.

<http://www.kamperbob.com/eggcentral/ScampAxleAlert.pdf>

Even if your Scamp does not have this problem, you might be able to share useful information. For example, we have not nailed down which month in 2001 the problem axles were introduced. Unfortunately, production and customer records were lost when the Scamp factory was destroyed in a fire on January 13, 2006.

<http://scamptrailers.com/About/2006FireRebuilding.aspx>

One owner with a 1995 Scamp had the axle replaced in June 2001 (to address a different problem). Cracks were found on that axle in October 2007. Additional reports (good and bad) from more Scamp owners can only improve our understanding of the extent of this potential problem and which trailers might be at risk.

Thanks for your cooperation.

Bob (kamperbob at gmail dot com)

Moderator of Yahoo Scampers group (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/scampers/>)