

# NATF Redacted Operating Experience Report

## Broken Bucket Cover Strap Results in Fall

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## Topic

Broken Bucket Cover Strap Results in Fall

## Description

Upon finishing work for the day, a line technician involved with restoration efforts from an ice storm was driving a bucket truck to a hotel when it began to drizzle. After arriving at the hotel, he and a co-worker decided to cover the bucket to keep the rain from filling the bucket overnight.

The co-worker was on the side of the truck that has the platform for accessing the bucket, and the line technician went to the opposite side of the vehicle where there is no platform. The line technician had one foot on top of the bin and the other foot on a metal cover, which allowed him to work on the bucket cover.

While cinching the cover, the nylon strap broke causing the line technician to lose his balance and fall approximately five to six feet to the ground. During the fall, his chest struck the outrigger, which was in the raised position. The employee sustained a contusion to his sternum from the impact of striking the tip of outrigger before falling to the pavement. The employee was checked out and released.

The bucket truck, estimated to be eight to ten years old, is a center-rear mount with a two-person bucket. One side of the vehicle has a platform that provides entry into the bucket. While one person can install the cover, both sides of the bucket need to be accessed due to the jib location, which is on the side with no platform. The cover needs to be worked under the jib. The nylon cover strap broke where it passes through the metal buckle for tightening. This was the original cover, and it is suspected the strap broke due to age.

## Lessons Learned

1. There was no room to lower the boom in the hotel parking lot. (When on the jobsite, the bucket is generally lowered, and then the cover can be installed with employees on the ground.)
  - a. It is not always possible to lower the bucket to the ground, so there are times when the cover is installed inside the service center garage or at other locations.
2. This type of truck, which has a center-rear mount with a two-person bucket, is common in the company's fleet.

## Actions Taken

1. Added a second platform to allow access on all six rear-center mount double bucket trucks.
2. Added a second platform as a standard design with the bucket truck manufacturer.
3. Added the bucket cover strap to the annual preventive maintenance check.
4. Changing out the metal buckle-type strap to a cinch-style strap.

## Extent of Condition

Six similar vehicles existed in the fleet, and all were upgraded. The fleet mechanics were exposed to the same condition/situation when accessing the bucket controls. Previously, new trucks were designed with only one platform.