

# Towing and Recovery Hooks

BY WES WILBURN



The r-hook is attached to the rear tie-down slot and is pulling down. Notice the shoulder of the hook is in line with the direction of the pull and it helps "lock" the r-hook into the tie-down slot.

Here is the view from the opposite side. The force the r-hook applies to the tie-down slot is distributed not only at the bottom of the tie-down slot, but also at the top of the hole due to the curving arm of the r-hook.

The mini j-hook is used quite often. The hook does have a very small load bearing area and can have a tendency to come out of the tie-down slot(s) if complete tension is not maintained.



There are several choices of hooks designed for transporting automobiles. The most common choices are found on what is known in the towing industry as a transportation cluster, which is a group of hooks attached to one another by a series of large welded oval rings. The hook which normally make up a transportation cluster are the mini j-hook, t-hook and r-hook.

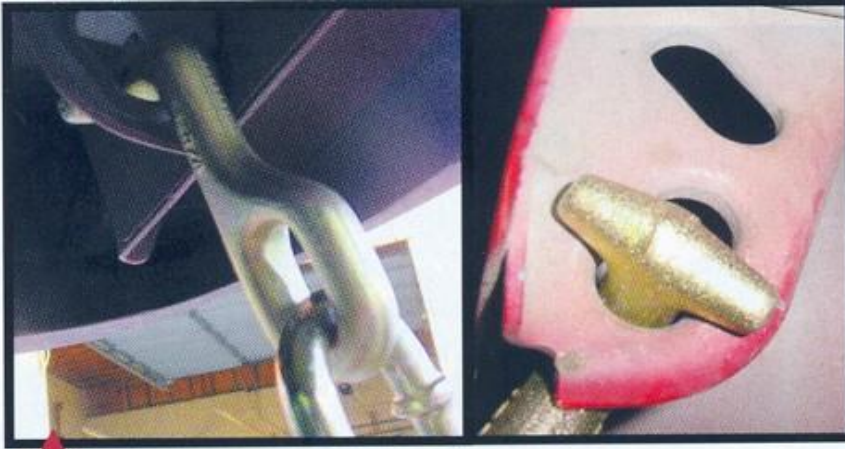
"These are the most commonly requested hooks in both our new truck sales department and our catalog sales," said towing industry supplier and national trainer Danny Horton of Horton Truck and Equipment Company.

When choosing a hook for any towing or recovery job, consider the forces you will need to apply, the load rating of the hook and the designed usage of the hook. Also consider factors including load-bearing surfaces, a tendency to disconnect easily and ability to support the attachment point due to design of the hook.

I believe the r-hook is a better choice when it is available for many reasons:

1. The larger load-bearing area it employs as it is attached to a vehicle.
2. When an r-hook is installed in a correct body attachment point, it has a reduced chance of disconnecting from that body attachment point as opposed to a mini-j or t-hook.
3. The way an r-hook is designed with its large shoulder helps support the surface it is attached to.
4. The r-hook can be used in any direction as long as the load is applied over the shoulder of the hook, (see photo).
5. Most car manufacturers design their tie-down slots for use with the r-hook.

*See Recovery Hooks  
On Page 30*



The t-hook was once the standard of the automobile transportation industry. Its twin wings gave it a larger load-bearing surface and somewhat of a lock on the tie-down slot it was designed for. This hook was designed to be used at 90 degrees to the slot only. When used in many of the current tie-down slots, looseness from side to side can be observed.



On the right side of this picture is a large j-hook, which is rated to the same capacity as the chain to which it is attached. The chain is looped and the grab hook is attached back onto the chain which many times can be a preferred method of attachment.

As far as I know, all of the hooks I mentioned are designed and recommended for loading and tie-downs during towing and transport operations and some light recovery conditions such as loss of traction and other very light pulls. The only hooks that are designed and recommended for recovery are forged j-hooks and a grab hook attached back onto a chain after looping the chain around whatever is to be pulled. **TT**

All of these  
grade 70  
5/16" forged  
hooks have a  
Working Load  
Limit of 4700